



community choices unit three

ask

What are social services and how does access to social services impact the sustainability of a community?

acquire

- Student & teacher handouts
- Powerpoint presentation
- Newspaper articles

explore

- Interactive powerpoint presentation
- Article analysis

analyze

- Case study
- Compare and contrast with Canadian model
- KWL chart

act

- Reflective paragraph



community choices

unit three

U3L1 | Access to social services: Taking care of citizens

This lesson examines social services and how they contribute to a more sustainable community. Students will engage in a range of independent and group activities to critically analyze the impacts of social services.

subjects: Geography, Business, Economics, English, Civics

timing: **Activity 1**

KWL chart – ‘K’ & ‘W’ columns | **10–15 minutes**

Activity 2

Social Services in Canada Timeline Handout | **75 minutes**

Activity 3

A country case study | **75 minutes**

Activity 4

Comparing Oil Wealth Management in Norway to Canada | **75 minutes**

Activity 5

Reflective paragraph | **30 minutes**

Activity 6

KWL chart – ‘L’ column | **10 minutes**

learning goal

- To define what a social services is and examine the history of social services in Canada.
- To examine how access to social services and the range of services provided impacts a community's overall well-being.
- To compare and contrast how three of the world's biggest oil producing countries use oil revenue. (Venezuela, Norway, and Canada) to invest in social services.

success criteria

- Completion of the **L** column (‘What I **L**earned’) in the KWL chart.
- Completion of reflective paragraph.
- Completion of a Country Case Study.
- Completion of the Comparing Oil Wealth Management Group Assignment.



community choices unit three

U3L1 | Access to social services: Taking care of citizens

ask

- What is a social service?
- How has oil revenue been invested in Canada? What benefits have Canadians felt?
- How has oil revenue been invested in Norway? What benefits have Norwegians felt?
- How has oil revenue been invested in Venezuela? What benefits have Venezuelans felt?

acquire

'Access to Social Services' PowerPoint presentation

Activity 1

KWL chart

Activity 2

Social services in Canada timeline

Activity 3

A country case study
Common Threads country profiles (video and Word document)

Activity 4

Comparing Oil Wealth management in Norway to Canada
Managing Oil Wealth: The Alberta/Canada Model vs. the Norwegian model
www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/commentary/managing-oil-wealth
Norway's Sovereign Wealth holds lessons for Canada
www.cbc.ca/news/business/norway-s-sovereign-wealth-holds-lessons-for-canada-1.3002803
Norway has a nest egg. Should we? Is Norway's net egg a lesson for Canada?
www.thestar.com/news/world/2014/08/23/norway_has_a_nest_egg_should_weis_norways_nest_egg_a_lesson_for_canada.html

Activity 5

Reflective paragraph

Activity 6

KWL chart

explore

Activity 1 | KWL chart

- Students independently complete the 'What I know' & 'What I want to know' columns of their KWL chart.
- Teacher presents interactive Access to Social Services ppt

Activity 2 | Social services in Canada timeline

Students work in small groups (3–4 students) to complete social services handout. Students share answers with the class and teacher provides any necessary clarification.



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U3L1 | Access To Social Services: Taking Care Of Citizens

analyze

Activity 3 | A country case study

Students in pairs research the Venezuelan OR Norwegian case study. Students will ensure that their research answers the following questions:

What social services are available in Venezuela/Norway?

How has the government's commitment (priorities and financial backing) to social services changed over the past decades?

How have the social indicators (eg. education, infant mortality, and crime) changed in the past decades?

What correlations do you observe between the accessibility of social services in the country and the quality of life for citizens in the country?

Activity 4 | Comparing oil wealth management in Norway to Canada

In groups of three, students will each read a different article and discuss in their groups the main points of the article they read (see handout).

Students will complete an oil investment comparison between Norway and Canada.

act

Activity 5 | Access to social services—Reflective paragraph

Students will individually write a reflective paragraph that answers one of the following questions.

- a Why might a country that provides social services to its citizens be more equitable?
- b Why is a 'welfare state' (a country that provides more accessible social services) more sustainable?
- c Why is a 'welfare state' (a country that provides more accessible social services) less sustainable?

Activity 6 | KWL chart

Students will complete the 'L' column from Activity 1.

references

Managing Oil Wealth: The Alberta/Canada Model vs. the Norwegian model
www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/commentary/managing-oil-wealth

Norway's Sovereign Wealth holds lessons for Canada
www.cbc.ca/news/business/norway-s-sovereign-wealth-holds-lessons-for-canada-1.3002803

Norway has a nest egg. Should we? Is Norway's net egg a lesson for Canada?
www.thestar.com/news/world/2014/08/23/norway_has_a_nest_egg_should_weis_norways_nest_egg_a_lesson_for_canada.html



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U3L1A1 | KWL chart—Social services

overview

In this activity you will begin thinking about what social services are and what is available in your community. You will reflect on your current level of knowledge and generate questions to guide your learning. After participating in the lesson activities you will summarize what you learned.

learning goal

- To define what a social service is and examine the history of social services in Canada.

success criteria

- Completion of the K and W columns.

Inquiry question

- What do I need to know about social services?

The KWL chart is a “**pre-learning**” activity that:

- a** Identifies the things you may **already know** about the topic.
- b** Suggests **areas of interest** and investigation for you and your teacher.
- c** Helps you to **reflect on what you learned** at the end of a particular area of study.



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U3L1A1 | KWL chart—Social services

Instructions

Complete the first two columns and share these ideas with a partner and then the class. You should expand your list using the ideas of others in your class. At the end of the lesson, identify what you learned.

K what I know about the topic	W what I want to know about the topic	L what I learned about the topic




What are some services you expect from your community?

- Think
- Pair
- Share





- Clean air
- Access to education
- Access to medical care
- Housing
- Food
- Clean water
- Job opportunities





What is a SOCIAL SERVICE?

Social Services are activities or programs offered to promote well-being.



www.funboxcomedy.com
prc.dartmouth.edu
www.sharefoodbringhome.org





What are some examples of social services?

- Health care
- Dental care
- Education
- Community Centres
- Job training
- Subsidized Housing






How do we access those things in our communities in Canada?

In major urban centres there are offices to access these services.
Not easily accessible in rural areas.








Are there disparities in these services provided in different parts of Canada?

Where?

Why?

a common threads resource 



Start timeline exercise...

a common threads resource 




Milestones in building Canada's current safety net

Up until the early 20th century, the family, and the church were expected to care for its members. Children, the elderly, and the ill needs were met by the community.

As industrialization drew people into urban areas away from farms, a need for social services was identified by the government.


Provincial governments began funding private and church charities, as well as, providing some services directly.


a common threads resource 



In 1914 the *Workmen's Compensation Act* of Ontario came into law.

This act provided financial compensation for workers who were injured on the job site and could no longer participate in the work force.


a common threads resource 



In 1927 the *Old Age Pension Act* is brought into law.

The federal and provincial governments fund pensions for citizens 70 years and older. This law excludes First Nations people.

This law demonstrated that the government had an obligation to provide a network of social services for its citizens.

a common threads resource 



In 1940 *Unemployment Insurance Act* is Canada's first national social insurance program.

a common threads resource 



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U3L1A2 | A timeline of social services in Canada

overview

In this activity you will learn about the history of social services in Canada and complete a historical timeline of milestones in the introduction of social services in Canada.

learning goal

- To define what a social service is and examine the history of social services in Canada.

success criteria

- To complete a timeline of the history of social services in Canada.

Inquiry Question

- How have social services come to be in Canada?

- Complete a rough draft of the timeline in the space provided below using the information gathered from the PowerPoint presentation
- Research two–three more events that added to the social services in Ontario or federally
- Research two–three events that removed or weakened existing social services availability in Ontario or federally
- Complete a final copy of your timeline on a separate sheet of paper

Your timeline will include:

- a title
- the 11 events from the PowerPoint presentation plus four–six events that you researched.
- a legend (Colour code the events that added/strengthened social service accessibility to Canadians, and in a different colour events that removed/weakened accessibility.)



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U3L1A2 | A timeline of social services in Canada

1914

pre-industrialization

1927

1940

1952

1962



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U3L1A2 | A timeline of social services in Canada

1966

1971

1978

1985

2001



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U3L1A3 | A country case study

overview

In this activity students will explore the country case studies (Norway and Venezuela). After watching the videos and reviewing the country profiles, students will look at how citizens are taken care of by their respective governments.

learning goal

- To understand what social services are available to citizens in Norway and Venezuela and how this compares to Canada.

success criteria

- Completion of a research essay.

Inquiry question

- What social services are available in other countries (Norway and Venezuela) and how does this compare to Canada?

Students in pairs research the Venezuelan OR Norwegian case study. Students will ensure that their research answers the following questions:

- a What social services are available in Venezuela/Norway?
- b How has the government's commitment (priorities and financial backing) to social services changed over the past decades?
- c How have the social indicators (eg. education, infant mortality, and crime) changed in the past decades?
- d What correlations do you observe between the accessibility of social services in the country and the quality of life for citizens in the country?



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U3L1A4 | Comparing oil wealth management in Norway to Canada

overview

In groups of three, you will each read a different article and discuss in your groups the main points of the article you read and then complete the questions as a small group.

learning goal

- To compare oil wealth management in Norway to Canada

success criteria

- Students will complete an oil investment comparison between Norway and Canada.

Inquiry question

- How has oil wealth management differed between Norway and Canada?

1. Each member of your group will read one of the articles below.

Managing Oil Wealth: The Alberta/Canada Model vs. the Norwegian model
www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/commentary/managing-oil-wealth

Norway's Sovereign Wealth holds lessons for Canada
www.cbc.ca/news/business/norway-s-sovereign-wealth-holds-lessons-for-canada-1.3002803

Norway has a nest egg. Should we? Is Norway's net egg a lesson for Canada?
www.thestar.com/news/world/2014/08/23/norway_has_a_nest_egg_should_weis_norways_nest_egg_a_lesson_for_canada.html

2. Report to your group about the article that you were responsible for reading.
3. As a group complete the below questions on a separate sheet of paper:
 - a Why is Canada/Alberta compared to Norway in these articles?
 - b How has the Norwegian principle 'Natural resources belong to the people' reflected in its policies around oil revenue? How is this different than the Canadian government's? (Name three differences on how Canada and Norway manage their respective oil industries.)
 - c When did Canada privatize Petro Canada? Why do you think the federal government sold this asset? What is a benefit and/or consequence of privatization of a natural resource?
 - d What is the Heritage Fund? When was it created?
 - e Compare the Heritage Fund to the Norwegian Government Pension Fund. Explain at least one similarity and one difference between these two funds.
 - f Although the provincial government is responsible for managing its natural resources, how could the federal government regulate the Albertan oil industry to increase the benefits for Canadian citizens?
 - g How has Norwegian oil wealth subsidized the cost of living for some Norwegians and arguably contributed to a more equal and sustainable society?



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U3L1A5 | Reflective paragraph

overview

In the activity you will individually write a reflective paragraph on how the accessibility of social services impact a society.

learning goal

- To understand how the availability of social services can impact citizens and the great society.

success criteria

- Completion of a reflective paragraph.

Inquiry question

- How does access to social services affect a society?

Your task is to individually write a reflective paragraph that answers **one** of the following questions.

- a Why might a country that provides social services to its citizens be more equitable?
- b Why is a 'welfare state' (a country that provides more accessible social services) more sustainable?
- c Why is a 'welfare state' (a country that provides more accessible social services) less sustainable?



community choices unit three

ask

How do art and media
influence society?

acquire

- Student handout
- Articles
- PowerPoints
- Poster paper
- Paints
- Brushes

explore

- What is art?
- Elements of art
- Philosophies of Art
- How are influences our views on society?

analyze

- Article analysis
- Art in the Street analysis

act

- Create a work of art for your community



community choices

unit three

U3L2 | Media/influence of art on society

This lesson has students contemplate the role of art and media in their lives. Students will explore what art and the media are, look at bias in the media, reflect on the value of art in developing a sense of space and community. Students will then take these lessons and create a piece of art they feel would change the culture of the school community for the better.

subjects: Art, Philosophy, Media, Geography, Social Sciences, English

timing: **Activity 1**

What is Art? | **60 minutes**

Activity 2

Art on the Street | **60 minutes**

Activity 3

Bias in the Media | **60 minutes**

Activity 4

The value of art | **60 minutes**

Activity 5

Art for your community | **180 minutes**

learning goal

- Students will develop a personal understanding of the different views on art.
- Students will examine how art is seen on the streets in different regions of the world and to see how this art influences the perceptions of the society around it.
- Students will gain an understanding of how our paradigms influence the media and analyze the depiction of a single event in different media for bias and slant.
- Students will understand the influence of art on informing, remembering or celebrating a community.
- Students will understand the relationship between the appearance of their external environment and the sense of place they experience while there.
- Students will be able to design a piece of art using the elements of art.
- Students will express to their community an idea using art.

success criteria

- Students will develop a personal definition of art
- Students will express in a class discussion how different images of art inform and alter their perception of place.
- Students will be able to explain the relationship between the media and geopolitics.
- Students will evaluate the impact of street art in their community.
- Students will analyze the depiction of a single event in different media for bias and slant.
- Students will create a piece of art that exemplifies an issue in their school community.



community choices

unit three

U3L2 | Media/influence of art on society

ask

Inquiry questions

- What is art?
- What is the value of art to society?
- What is the purpose of art?
- What is the purpose or value of art in public spaces?
- What is graffiti?
- Is graffiti art?
- What is the media?
- Who controls the information you receive from the media?
- How do the media alter our perceptions of reality?
- How does the inclusion of street art change the way people see their community?
- How can art be used to develop awareness in our community?

acquire

Activity 1

Handout and PowerPoint “What is Art?”

Activity 2

Handout and PowerPoint “Art in the Street”

Video: *Culture Spotlight*

Activity 3

Handout and PowerPoint “Bias in the Media”

Articles

Venezuelan Guarimbas: 11 Things the Media Didn't Tell You2

11 Feb 2015

www.telesurtv.net/english/analysis/Venezuelan-Guarimbas-11-Things-the-Media-Didnt-Tell-You-20150211-0025.html

What lies behind the protests in Venezuela?

Irene Caselli

27 March 2014, BBC News Online, www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-26335287

Venezuela: chaos and thuggery take the place of the pretty revolution

Rory Carroll

Sunday 23 February The Observer, Last modified on Tuesday 3 June 2014

www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/23/venezuela-protests-thuggery-pretty-revolution

The Venezuelan Outcry – FAQs

Rodrigo Linares

February 21, 2014, Caracas Chronicles, caracaschronicles.com/2014/02/21/the-venezuelan-outcry-faqs/



community choices

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U3L2 | Media/influence of art on society

Activity 4

The value of art handout

Ted Talk on The value of art by Haas and Hahn:

www.ted.com/talks/haas_hahn_how_painting_can_transform_communities

Activity 5

Art for your community handout and exit card

Art supplies for each group:

- Poster paper
- Paints
- Brushes
- Cloths
- Water
- Water pails
- Newspaper

explore

Activity 1 | What is art?

This lesson will help students to assess their own definition of art and compare it to that of the great philosophers. Students will formulate and rework their own definition of art.

1. Use the enclosed PowerPoint on “What is Art?” to guide the conversation.
2. Have students contemplate the definition of the word Art.
3. Students will then in small groups share and compare their definitions. They will also have to try to form consensus on one definition.
4. When the class regroups ask students: What is their definition? Why do they vary? Is there a concrete definition?
5. Students complete the handout as the PowerPoint progresses. The PowerPoint will:
 - a explain the elements of art,
 - b ask students to evaluate various images as art or not,
 - c visit the different philosophies of art (Plato, Aristotle, Bell, Wittgenstein, etc.).
6. Once the lesson has ended, have a final discussion on the following questions also posed in the PowerPoint:
 - i. Which of the philosophies on art do you feel best suits your perception? Why?
 - ii. Which philosophy of art do you feel is best reflected in today’s society? Explain your choice.
 - iii. How does our view on art influence our view of the world?
 - iv. Revisit your first definition of art? Has it changed? If so how and why?

Activity 2 | Art in the street

In this lesson students will contemplate different street art from Canada, Venezuela and Norway. Students will be asked to evaluate the differences between art and graffiti as well as what is the societal value of street art.

1. Use the enclosed video *Culture Spotlight* and the PowerPoint on “Art in the street” to guide the conversation.
2. Have students complete the handout as the PowerPoint progresses.



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U3L2 | Media/influence of art on society

Step 1: Discussion questions and image analysis

1. What is graffiti?
2. Is graffiti art?
3. How do you know?
4. Is this a piece of art or graffiti? Look at the images and give your reasoning and choice for each below.
5. Did you have a different point of view for each of the images shown? Explain.
6. Is there a difference between art and graffiti?
7. What is the purpose of graffiti?
8. How does graffiti influence society?

Step 2: Art on the street image analysis

Students will look at various examples of graffiti from Canada, Norway and Venezuela.

As they examine the images they should consider the following questions:

- a What are the images of?
- b How do I feel looking at these images?
- c What is the message of the image?
- d Is it art?
- e How is the graffiti different in each of the countries?
- f How do you view the country given the images you have seen.
- g Would seeing these images have any influence society? If so, explain.

Step 3: Final thoughts...

Ask the class to consider?

- What are the images you see on the street in your community?
- What do these images say to visitors about your community?
- How do these images influence the people who live in your community?
- Are there images or changes you would make to your community to include more or less street art?

Explain your response.

analyze

Activity 3 | Bias in the media

In this lesson students will examine the bias that is seen in the media. Students will compare articles about an incident in Venezuela from four different news sources. They will then attempt to interpret the true story as they consider the bias each news source may hold.

1. Go over terms as a class:
Paradigm, Facts, Opinions, Bias, Cognitive Dissonance, Ethnocentricity, Propaganda, and Doublespeak.
2. Use the PowerPoint provided to assess students' perceptions and the perceptions they see in the media.
3. Students will firstly examine their perception by looking at their own paradigms using images and self-analysis.
4. Next students will take a closer look at the media and what influences the stories told. This will be done via a set of headlines and talking points.



community choices unit three

U3L2 | Media/influence of art on society

5. The class will now be divided into four groups. Each group is going to receive a different article. On their own, have students read the article and summarize the information it presents. Then as a group they will develop a summary of the article that includes. This will be shared with the class.
 - What has happened?
 - Where did it happen?
 - Why is it happening?
 - Who is involved?
 - When did this happen?
 - How is it happening?
 - Did your group have an overall positive or negative impression of the government in Venezuela after reading the article? Explain your reasoning.
6. Once the class has shared their articles and interpretations, discuss the following:
 - How different were your impressions after reading the four articles?
 - Why do you think this incident was depicted in such differing ways?
 - How does geopolitics play a role in bias in the media?
 - What do you think is the real story of Venezuela?
7. Watch the clip below, what does this tell you about media and bias?
www.telesurtv.net/english/news/CNN-Admits-to-Erroneous-Report-on-Venezuela-20150807-0020.html

Activity 4 | The value of art

In this lesson students will watch a TED Talk that looks at how art can transform a community. Students will have the opportunity to then consider how such forms of art could change the place where you live.

1. As a class view the Ted Talk on *The value of art* by Haas and Hahn:
www.ted.com/talks/haas_hahn_how_painting_can_transform_communities
2. Have students consider the following as they watch:
 - a How can painting transform society?
 - b How are the favelas different in formation from our communities in the west?
 - c While the main offering was simply paint, what was the real change that Haas&Hahn offer to the favelas?
 - d Describe if first person how a resident of the favela would see and feel in their community before and then after the painting.
 - e How well did these ideas transfer when they were transported to Philadelphia?
 - f How does involving the community alter the outcomes of the project?
 - g What is the role of bureaucracy in planning communities? How can this become an obstacle to progress?
 - h How has the media and technology changed the ability for communities to work for change?
 - i Where else in the world are projects being planned?
 - j Where can you picture one? How would it alter that space?
 - k The key ideas for success according to Haas and Hahn are no master plan and community involvement. Is this different from how your community plans? Explain. Could this type of thinking improve or lessen the ability for your community to change?
 - l Art is seen as informing, celebrating, or remembering issues. Reflect on the importance of each using the experience of the favelas.
3. Exit card:
Before students leave the class, have them, on a sheet of paper, complete the following sentence:
If I was to change one area of my community by adding art, I would change...because this would...



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U3L2 | Media/influence of art on society

act

Activity 5 | Art for your community

Students will have the opportunity to create a piece of art to display in their community during a gallery walk.

1. As a class, or in small groups, brainstorm what issues and ideas are important or need promotion in the school community.
2. Divide the class into groups of three and have each group create a piece of art? Will this art be for informing, celebrating, or remembering the community? They should be able to justify this choice and explain how it can be seen in their work of art.
3. Once groups have created rough sketches and had them approved by you, have the groups create an image that they feel would change the culture of the school community for the better. Students will also complete a written statement reflecting on their choices.
4. Students will then have a gallery walk where they will display their art. During this walk half of the class will present their art, the rest will wander the class and ask questions or comments to the presenters. The class will then switch places. Feel free to have the gallery available to the school or to the community at large.
5. Students will then complete the exit card assessing what they learned about their community from the gallery walk and on the value of art for communities.

references

Carroll, R. (23 February, 2014). Venezuela: chaos and thuggery take the place of the pretty revolution. The Observer. Last modified on Tuesday 3 June 2014
www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/23/venezuela-protests-thuggery-pretty-revolution

Caselli, I. (27 March 2014). What lies behind the protests in Venezuela? BBC News Online, www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-26335287

Koolhaas, J and Dre Urhahn. (October 2014). How painting can transform communities. TEDtalk.
https://www.ted.com/talks/haas_hahn_how_painting_can_transform_communities

Linares, R. (February 21, 2014). The Venezuelan Outcry – FAQs. Caracas Chronicles, caracaschronicles.com/2014/02/21/the-venezuelan-outcry-faqs

Telesurtv. (11 Feb 2015). Venezuelan Guarimbas: 11 Things the Media Didn't Tell You. www.telesurtv.net/english/analysis/Venezuelan-Guarimbas-11-Things-the-Media-Didnt-Tell-You-20150211-0025.html



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U3L2A1 | What is art?

overview

This lesson will help students to assess their own definition of art and compare it to that of the great philosophers. Students will formulate and rework their own definition of art.

learning goal

- You will develop a personal understanding of the different views on art.

success criteria

- You will create your own definition of art.

Inquiry Questions

- What is art?
- What is the purpose of art?
- What is the value of art to society?

Instructions

Step 1: Individual reflections

How do you define art?

Why do you feel your definition encompasses all that art is?



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U3L2A1 | What is art?

What are the elements of art?

Why are they important?



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U3L2A1 | What is art?

Step 2: Philosophies of Art

Using the Chart below, summarize and comment upon each of the various philosophies of art.

Philosopher	Views on art	How would I respond to these ideas in a conversation?
Plato		
Aristotle		
Oscar Wilde		
Immanuel Kant		
Leo Tolstoy		



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U3L2A1 | What is art?

Philosopher	Views on Art	How would I respond to these ideas in a conversation?
R.G. Collingwood		
Clive Bell		
David Hume		
The Institutional Theory		
Ludwig Wittgenstein		



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U3L2A1 | What is art?

Discussion question:

Which of the philosophies on art do you feel best suits your perception? Why?

Which philosophy of art do you feel is best reflected in today's society? Explain your choice.




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U3L2A1 | What is art?

How does our view on art influence our view of the world?

Revisit your first definition of art? Has it changed? If so how and why?

a common threads resource 

the sustainable society

What is art?

An introduction to the concept of art



the sustainable society

On your own, contemplate the following questions


1. How do you define art?
2. Why do you feel your definition encompasses all that art is?

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the sustainable society

Now, in small groups share your definitions of art. Then as a group answer the following questions:

- How are your definitions of art different?
- As a group try to define art?

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What is art?

The definition of art is, and has been, hotly debated.


- How did your group define art?
- Is it possible to create one definition of art? Explain.

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the sustainable society

What are the elements of art?


- The elements of art are the building blocks of a piece of art.
- Just as atoms form together to make a molecule, these elements form together to make a work of art.

a common threads resource 

the sustainable society

What are the elements of art?


- The main elements are:
 - ❖ Line
 - ❖ Shape
 - ❖ Form
 - ❖ Space
 - ❖ Texture
 - ❖ Value
 - ❖ Colour
- Artists manipulate these elements, mix them in with principles of design and compose a piece of art.
- Not every work has all these elements, but will always have at least two present.

a common threads resource 

the sustainable society


Why are the elements of art important?

- A person can't create art without utilizing at least a few of them. No elements, no art, end of story.
- Knowing what the elements of art are enables us to:
 1. Describe what an artist has done,
 2. Analyze what is going on in a particular piece
 3. Communicate our thoughts and findings using a common language.

a common threads resource 


the sustainable society

Image #1



Mona Lisa, Leonardo Da Vinci

- Is this art? Why or why not? What elements does it have or not have?

a common threads resource 

the sustainable society

Image #2





Image credit: Taina Kanerva

- Is this art? Why or why not? What elements does it have or not have?

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Image #3





Image credit: Taina Kanerva

- Is this art? Why or why not? What elements does it have or not have?

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Image #4



Image credit: Taina Kanerva

- Is this art? Why or why not? What elements does it have or not have?

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Image #5



Image credit: Taina Kanerva

- Is this art? Why or why not? What elements does it have or not have?

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Image #6



- Is this art? Why or why not? What elements does it have or not have?

Image credit: Taina Kanerva

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Image #7



Image credit: Taina Kanerva

- Is this art? Why or why not? What elements does it have or not have?

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Image #8



- Is this art? Why or why not? What elements does it have or not have?

Image credit: Taina Kanerva

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Image #9



Image credit: Taina Kanerva

- Is this art? Why or why not? What elements does it have or not have?

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Philosophy of art

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Plato (428/427 or 424/423 – 348/347 BCE)



- Plato felt that since we don't use reason to create art, art has little value.
- Plato felt art was harmful because it intensified emotions, and actions, in socially harmful ways. (inside out thinking)
- He wanted to censor music and poetry.


What would Plato think about the impact of the art created by Tupac and Biggie? Was it good for society? Can you think of other examples that would support his position?

Image Credit: <http://allhiphop.com/2012/05/06/hip-hop-humors-biggie-unheard-tupac-dst/>

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Aristotle (384 – 322 BC)



- Aristotle felt art could provide insight into human existence.
- What people create tells us something about humanity.
- He felt we should keep and protect art as it will provide keys to other civilizations.
- Art is an imitation of life (outside in thinking).

What might this famous piece of art tell us about humanity?

Image credit: Taina Kanerva

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Moonlight Fjord, Image Credit: Taina Kanerva Moonlight Fjord, Image Credit: Taina Kanerva


"When we make new music we don't just record rain. We invent new sounds. Yet people have trouble accepting painting that does not look like nature.. Why is it okay with music but not painting?"

Pat, AGO tour guide, Dec 2013

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Oscar Wilde 16 October 1854–30 November 1900



- In contrast to Plato, Wilde believed that art has no specific influence or instructional purpose.
- Art should be created for art's sake.
- "A work of art is useless as a flower is useless. A flower blossoms for its own joy."


What would Plato think about this piece of art? Do you agree with Plato or Oscar Wilde?

Vigeland - The Wheel of Life (Iijshuleti)
Image Credit: Taina Kanerva

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Immanuel Kant 22 April 1724–12 February 1804



- Kant believed that good art must be aesthetically pleasing (called Aestheticism).
- He felt that we have three types of aesthetic judgements. The first two are based on personal connection.
- 1) The Agreeable—based on our senses eg/ the taste of food.

What would Kant say about this piece? It sold for \$120 million in 2012.

Edvard Munch- The Scream

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Image Credit: Taina Kanerva


Would everyone call this art? Is a bike lover more likely to enjoy this "art"? If we remove our personal connection to bikes would we describe this as art?

- 2) The Good—based on function eg/ this jacket keeps me warm.
- 3) The Beautiful—not based on personal purpose or pleasurable sensations it brings about. It is universal.
- Good art is beautiful and to appreciate it we must be disinterested in our personal connection. We must not judge it with our emotions.

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Leo Tolstoy 1828-1910



- Rejected Kant's idea that art must be aesthetically pleasing.
- He felt the sole purpose is to convey emotion.
- He felt that if everyday people cannot understand the emotion then it is not good art.

Image Credit:
<http://imgur.com/photos/celebrity-photos/comedian-chris-rock-turns-49/#1>

According to Tolstoy, would Chris Rock qualify as an artist?

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Idealist theory



- R.G. Collingwood felt that art must have no practical purpose otherwise it becomes craft. e.g./ a quilt keeps you warm thus it is not art.
- A work can be judged by the degree to which the artist's intended emotion is communicated.
- It is good if it makes the observer share the same emotion as the creator. It is about an honest authentic creation.

Image Credit: <http://www.williamhung.net/bio.html>

What would Collingwood think about William Hung? Would Tolstoy agree?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9RrLQUN8Ug>

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Which piece makes you feel the artist's intended emotion?




Image Credit: http://www.unicomby.net/Gallery/Images/9-2/winged_unicorn_rmbz_1.jpg

Image Credit: <http://imgsrc.maricopa.com/images-smart/tr-baby-theory/callot.jpg>

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Aesthetic emotion



Clive Bell's "significant form theory" evaluates two things:

1. How the elements within a work of art are combined (eg. Beauty) AND
2. How work produces an aesthetic emotional reaction in the spectator.

Thunder Cloud, 1912
 Tom Thomson
 Bequest of Dr. J. M. MacCallum, Toronto, 1944
 National Gallery of Canada, Ino. 4700
<http://www.gallery.ca/en/see/collections/artwork.php?mskey=2180>

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Aesthetics & appreciation



- David Hume – felt that some people have a greater aptitude for certain kinds of art and therefore their opinions give them more credibility.
- We must leave the assessment of good art versus bad art up to the experts. For example, American Idol, The Voice etc.


Image Credit: <http://www.simoncowellonline.com/p/notes/2015-2-14/37918924>

Should we listen to Simon Cowell's opinions about music because he is an expert?

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The Institutional Theory



- Art in one culture may not be in another.
- Experts within the culture have the authority to define a work of art.


Can a music critic from Prince Edward Island accurately review a Norwegian Dance?

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Which culture would understand each piece of art?

1. Langt nord, i fjello
www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tsNMvYTL2s&list=PLnOSH5j1sQh-fsU47kzcB3K6jXlwnu3Fv
2. como no voy a decir - luis silva (llanos venezolanos)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Ptjedvauw8&list=PL701C183084AC80FB

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 **Ludwig Wittgenstein**



- Felt it is not enough to say we like or dislike a piece of art.
- We must have some knowledge in order to appreciate it.
- This could involve understanding the context, the culture or the process.

This piece of art was created using an ancient Aboriginal Art form. It was created by biting birch bark with your teeth.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFJaa9ndAts>

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 **Wittgenstein** continued

- We have to know something about painting to appreciate a painting or about music to appreciate a song.
- Wittgenstein feels that we are mostly limited by language. How would you explain what rap sounds like to someone who has grown up in a rain forest?

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 **Verbos irregulares.**


Estos son unos verbos que, a paso de tortuga,
 Yo conjugo,
 Tú conjugas,
 Él conjuga ...

Como sin garantías todo el mundo se inhiere
 Yo no escribo,
 Tú no escribes
 Él no escribe

Pues de escribir las cosas que uno tiene en el seso
 Yo voy preso,
 Tú vas preso
 Él va preso

- We have to know something about painting to appreciate a painting or about music to appreciate a song.
- This is a poem of the late Venezuelan poet Aquiles Nazoa. It is considered a Venezuelan classic.

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 These are some verbs that, slow like a turtle


I conjugate
 You conjugate
 He conjugates

And since everyone is afraid with the lack of constitutional rights
 I don't write
 You don't write
 He doesn't write


For if one writes all the thoughts under the veil
 I go to jail
 You go to jail
 He goes to jail

- Is it easier to judge this poem now that it is in English?
- What is the connection to Wittgenstein?

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 **Discussion questions**

1. Which of the philosophies on art do you feel best suits your perception? Why?
2. Which philosophy of art do you feel is best reflected in today's society? Explain your choice.
3. How does our view on art influence our view of the world?
4. Revisit your first definition of art? Has it changed? If so how and why?

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community choices

unit three

U3L2A2 | Art in the street

overview

This lesson will help students to assess their own definition of art and compare it to that of the great philosophers. Students will formulate and rework their own definition of art.

learning goal

- You will develop a personal understanding of the different views on art.

success criteria

- You will create your own definition of art.

Inquiry questions

- What is the purpose or value of art in public spaces?
- What is graffiti?
- Is graffiti art?

Instructions

Step 1: Discussion questions

1. What is graffiti?
2. Is graffiti art?
3. How do you know?
4. Is this a piece of art or graffiti? Look at the images and give your reasoning and choice for each below.
5. Did you have a different point of view for each of the images shown? Explain.
6. Is there a difference between art and graffiti?
7. What is the purpose of graffiti?
8. How does graffiti influence society?

Step 2: Art on the street

- a Is there a common thread to the images?
- b How do I feel looking at these images? Note any reactions or feelings that they evoke.
- c How is the graffiti different in each of the countries?
- d How do you view the country given the images you have seen?
- e Would seeing these images have any influence on people living within the given society? If so, explain.
- f Does this form of art have value?

Step 3: Final thoughts...

As a class discuss the following questions:

- What are the images you see on the street in your community?
- What do these images say to visitors about your community?
- How do these images influence the people who live in your community?
- Are there images or changes you would make to your community to include more or less street art?

Explain your response.

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Art in the street

What is art?
Graffiti...art or vandalism?



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Discussion questions

What is graffiti?
Is graffiti art?
How do you know?

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Is this a piece of art or graffiti?



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Is this a piece of art or graffiti?



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Graffiti or art?




Like a moon & a star we came together and changed each other

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Is this a piece of art or graffiti?


- Did you differently about the images shown? Explain.
- Is there a difference between art and graffiti?
- What is the purpose of graffiti?
- How does graffiti influence society?

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Art on the street


- You are now going to look at various examples of street art from Canada, Norway and Venezuela.
- Examine the following images. As you look at them ask yourself:
 - ❖ Is there a common thread to the images?
 - ❖ How do I feel looking at these images? Note any reactions or feelings that they evoke.
 - ❖ How is the street art different in each of the countries?

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Art on the street


- ❖ How do you view the country given the images you have seen.
- ❖ Would seeing these images have any influence on people living within the given society? If so, explain.
- ❖ Does this form of art have value?

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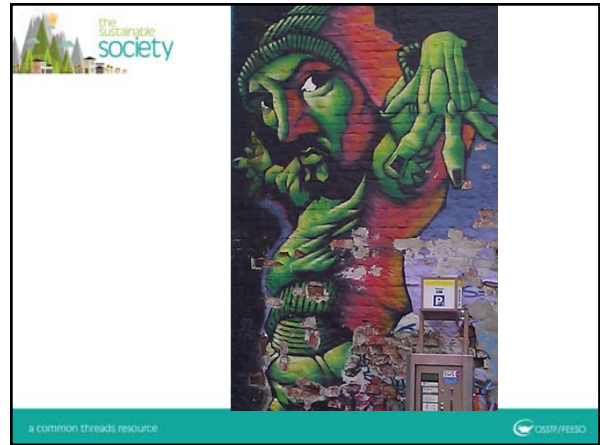
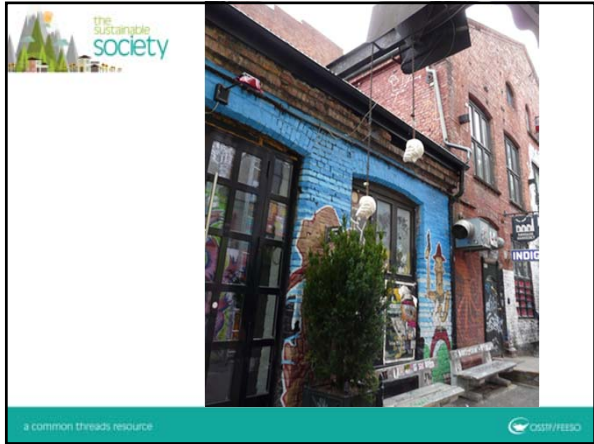
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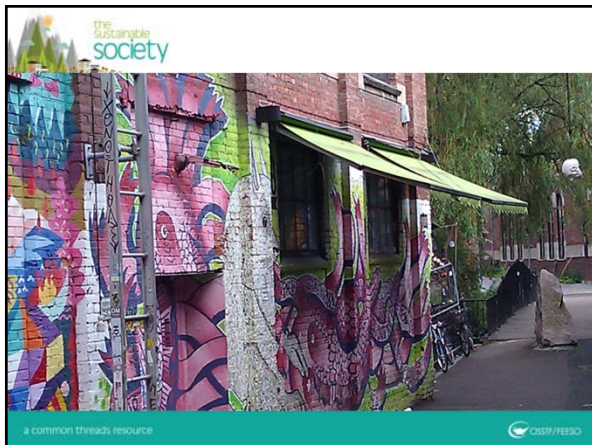
Norway

Images by Taina Kanerva

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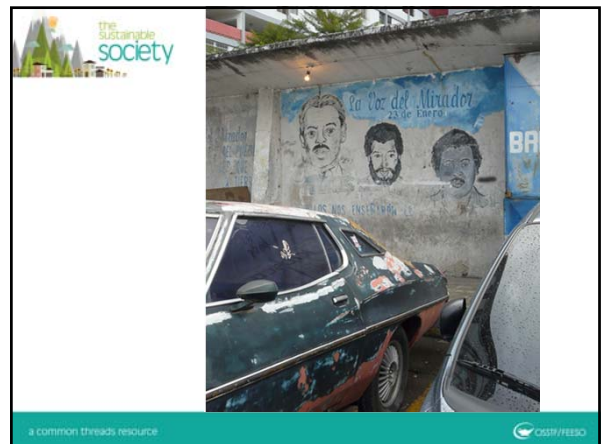
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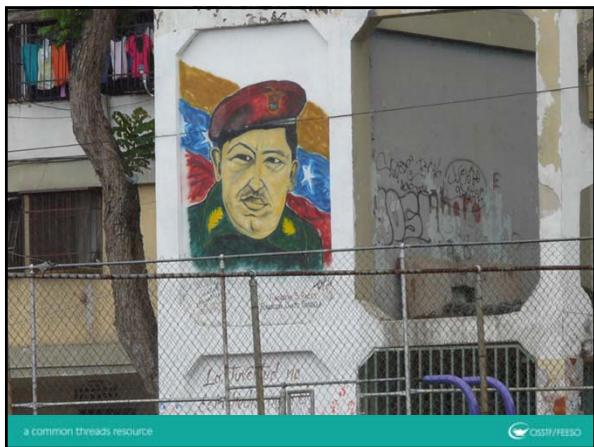
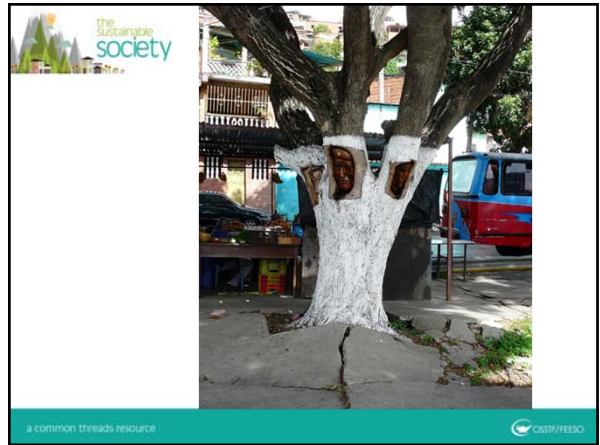
Venezuela

Images by Taina Kanerva
and Michelle Chambers

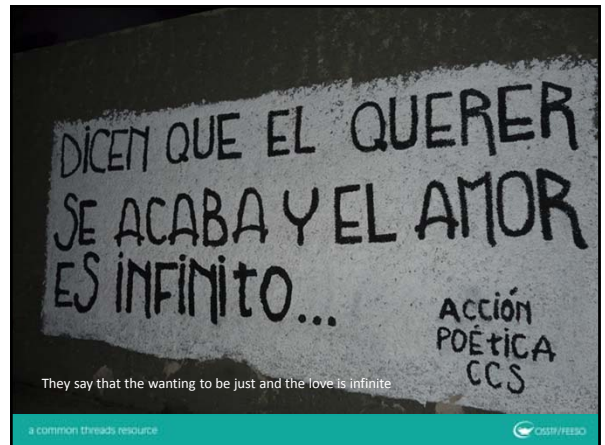
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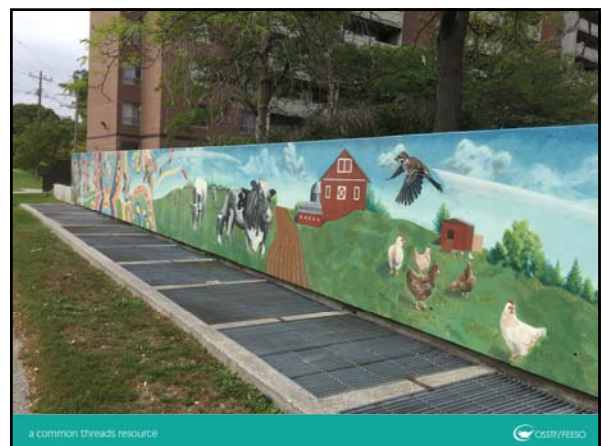
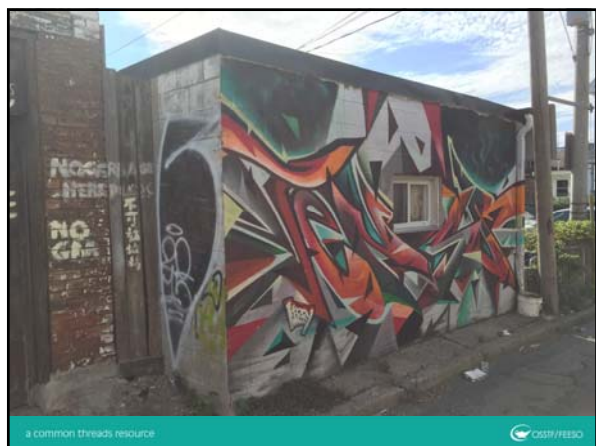
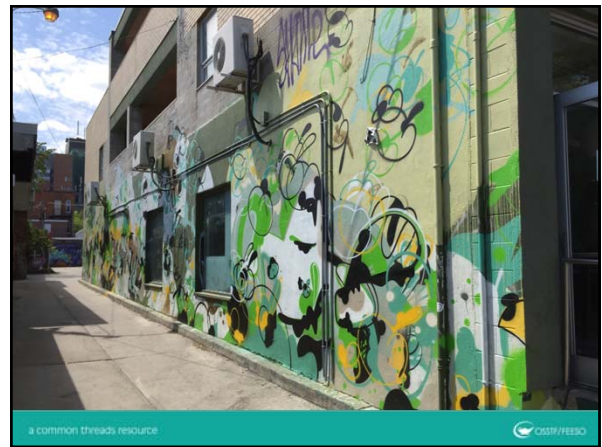
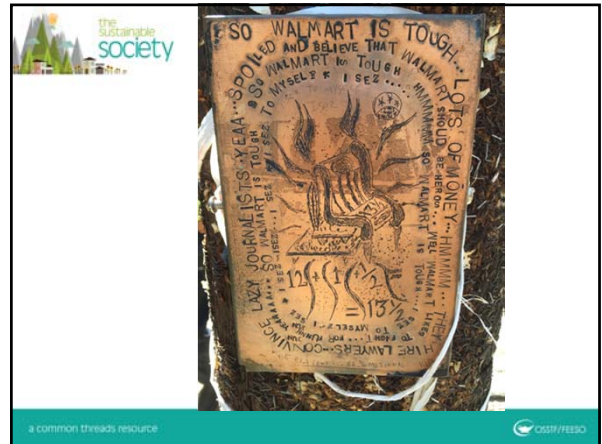
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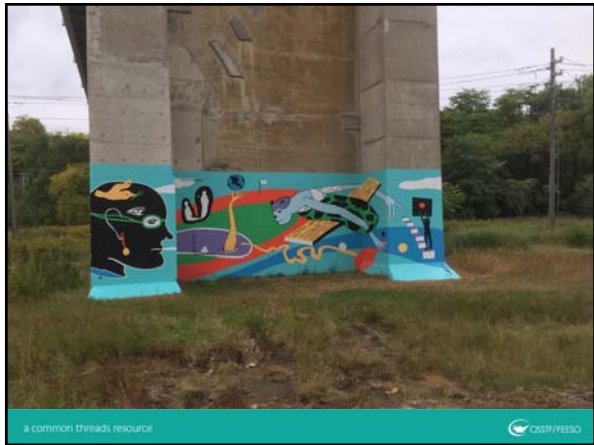


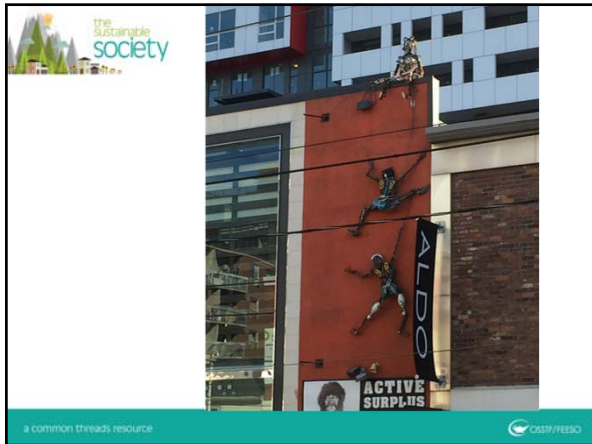
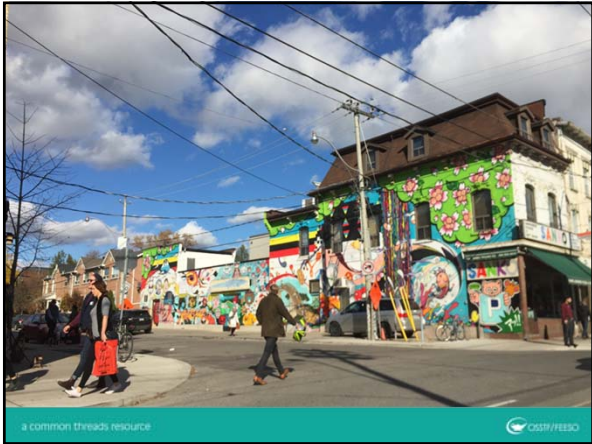


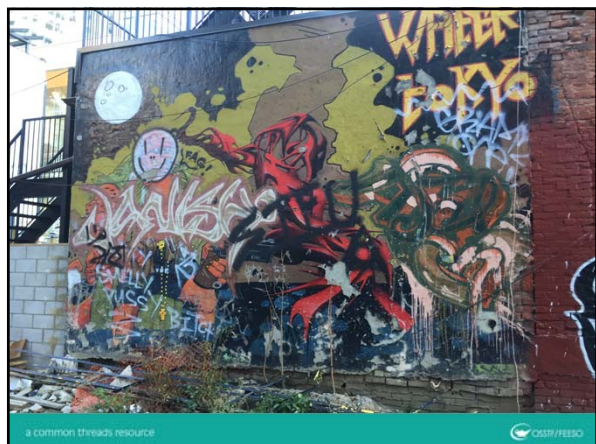




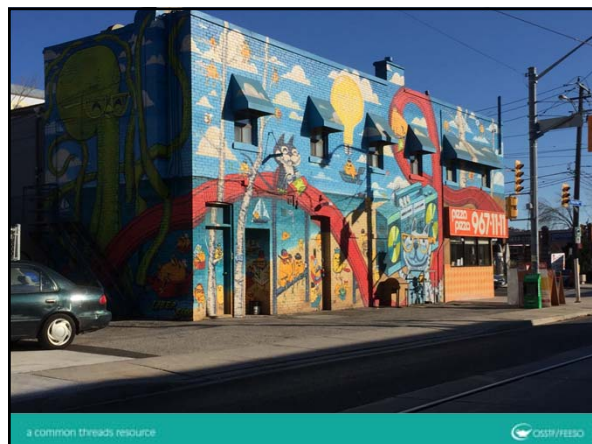








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Now that you have examined the images, let's discuss the questions:

- Is there a common thread to the images?
- How do I feel looking at these images? Note any reactions or feelings that they evoke.
- How is the graffiti different in each of the countries?
- How do you view the country given the images you have seen?
- Would seeing these images have any influence on people living within the given society? If so, explain.
- Does this form of art have value?

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Final thoughts...

- What are the images you see on the street in your community?
- What do these images say to visitors about your community?
- How do these images influence the people who live in your community?
- Are there images or changes you would make to your community to include more or less street art? Explain your response.

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community choices

unit three

U3L2A3 | Bias in the media

overview

In this lesson you will examine the bias that is seen in the media. You will compare articles about an incident in Venezuela from four different news sources. You will then attempt to interpret the true story as while considering the bias each news source may hold.

learning goal

- You will gain an understanding of how our paradigms influence the media and analyze the depiction of a single event in different media for bias and slant.

success criteria

- You will be able to explain the relationship between the media and geopolitics.

Inquiry questions

- What is the media?
- Who controls the information you receive from the media?
- How do the media alter our perceptions of reality?

Terms to review as a class:

Paradigm
Facts
Opinions
Bias
Cognitive dissonance

New terms we need to know:

Ethnocentricity is believing that one race or cultural group is better than others.

Propaganda communication that has the purpose of influencing the opinions and attitudes of a group of people toward or against a cause by giving only one side of the story.

Doublespeak is the use of language that distorts the true meaning on purpose.

Perception

1. What influences how we see the world around us?
2. How do these influences differ depending on...
 - a Where you live?
 - b Your biology?
 - c Your income levels?
 - d Other issues?
3. List the top 10 things that you think influence your perception of the world around you.
4. This list will show you what is influencing your paradigm.



community choices

unit three

U3L2A3 | Bias in the media

Bias in the media

- People are never entirely neutral. Everyone has a paradigm.
- Since media is created by people, it is also never entirely neutral.
- People who create the news choose what they tell, who they interview and what quotes to publish. All of this is influenced by their paradigm.
- For this reason the media story you receive is not necessarily “the truth,” but instead it is one person’s perception of the truth.
- Our news is brought to us by a surprisingly small number of organizations.
- Three major TV news services use microwave and satellite to relay their camera footage to TV networks all over the world.
 1. Viznews (British)
 2. UPIIN (British-US)
 3. CBS Newsfilm (owned by VIACOM)
- This means most of our international news is reported from an American or European viewpoint.
- Here is the emphasis on “international” news that we see in Canada:

US	34%
Europe	28%
Asia/Australia	17%
Latin America	11%
Middle East	6%
Africa	4%

Bias in the media—Headlines

The next slide will show you three headlines from three different, but similar incidents.

- In each of these examples, why do you think the feeling of the headline and following excerpt is different?
- How do politics play a role in the coverage?
- Would you expect to see similar slants in the Canadian media?
- Why or why not?

The global media

- The media is plays a major role in developing global economic, political, social, cultural and environmental opinions.
- Access to media is also not equal. There is a disparity in access between rich vs. poor, groups in power versus those that are marginalized.
- If people are unaware of situations and the underlying causes, how can they work for change?
- It is often felt that in a democratic society, information should also be democratic and access should be protected.
 - Do you think that this is always the case?
 - What are scenarios that you can imagine that may allow information in a democratic society to be slanted or biased?
 - How much propaganda do you feel you are exposed to?

Examining bias in the media

1. The class will now be divided into four groups. Each group is going to receive a different article.
2. On your own, read the article and summarize the information it presents.



community choices unit three

U3L2A3 | Bias in the media

3. As a group develop a summary of the article.
 - What has happened?
 - Where did it happen?
 - Why is it happening?
 - Who is involved?
 - When did this happen?
 - How is it happening?
 - Did your group have an overall positive or negative impression of the government in Venezuela after reading the article? Explain your reasoning.
4. Prepare to share your article and analysis with the class.
5. Once the class has shared their articles and interpretations, discuss the following:
 - How different were your impressions after reading the four articles?
 - Why do you think this incident was depicted in such differing ways?
 - How does geopolitics play a role in bias in the media?
 - What do you think is the real story of Venezuela?

Venezuelan Guarimbas: 11 Things the Media Didn't Tell You2

11 Feb 2015

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/analysis/Venezuelan-Guarimbas-11-Things-the-Media-Didnt-Tell-You-20150211-0025.html>

One year ago, three people were killed in unrest in Caracas, sparking international interest in a wave of violence that had gripped Venezuela. Across the country on February 12, 2014, anti-government groups took to the streets to roll out a carefully prepared campaign for “la salida” – “the exit” from the elected government of President Nicolas Maduro. While the international media relied heavily on opposition-aligned private Venezuelan media outlets and anti-government groups for information on the rapidly changing situation, we - Ryan and Tamara - were on the ground everyday watching the unrest evolve, speaking to ordinary Venezuelans and getting the real story from the streets. While the international media described a spontaneous, peaceful protest movement that was quashed by repressive security forces, we saw something completely different. We drew conclusions based on what we could see on the ground, and burned the midnight oil researching our way through the fog of war to get to the tangible truth. Looking back on the unrest a year later, this is what “la salida” really was, what the media doesn't want you to know.

1. Despite constant harassment and attacks, the national guard were peaceful

(Ryan) As the unrest heated up in February, international human rights groups decried what they claimed was mass repression against peaceful protesters. On social media, photographs were proffered as evidence of widespread abuses. Most of the photos later turned out to be lifted from protests elsewhere in the world, such as Egypt, Ukraine and Yemen. While the government has acknowledged numerous cases of misconduct by police and the national guard (GNB) and arrested those allegedly responsible, the majority of security forces that did their jobs well were largely ignored. The hundreds of GNB personnel that spent weeks guarding social missions and media outlets while enduring verbal abuse and physical attacks from guarimberos, or violent barricaders, went largely ignored. This wasn't an accident, as activist Luigino Bracci explained in February 2014. In an article published online he said he regularly saw guarimberos in Caracas using a time tested tactic of goading GNB troops for hours on end, filming their targets in a “coordinated effort.”

“If the guard makes a mistake and represses someone who is insulting him, in just minutes the video is doing the rounds of Youtube, it will be seen by millions of people and will form part of multimedia material that arrives at international chains such as CNN, NTN24 Caracol and others,” he explained.

U3L2A3 | Bias in the media | Article 1

Yet these brief snippets aren't representative of the general conduct of the GNB. For example, in the second week of March 2014, El Nacional newspaper and opposition politicians spread a story of how the GNB supposedly repressed a peaceful protest in Lara state's National Poly-technical Experimental University. Luckily for the GNB involved, a local independent journalist filmed the entire confrontation. The [video](#) shows the GNB negotiating with guarimberos, before giving them a short workshop on human rights and releasing them.

2. There was amazing, unusual police restraint

(Ryan) The video above is representative of the conduct of the majority of Venezuela's security forces during the protests, and a far cry from the narrative espoused by the private media. The guarimberos complaints of repression in reality boiled down to the government's intolerance of armed groups roaming the streets attacking pedestrians, throwing stones at cars and stringing wire across the road to decapitate motorcyclists. Cities were brought to a standstill by opposition violence, and essentially the public was held hostage by groups demanding the resignation of Maduro. Amid the chaos, I tried to imagine what would happen in my home country of Australia if someone tried to do something similar. How generously would they be treated by authorities? Today, I don't need to imagine it. In December 2014, Man Haron Monis held members of the Australian public hostage in a Sydney cafe, and tried to use them as leverage to make demands of the government. Like the guarimberos, he wasn't afraid to execute some of those he held hostage. I'm yet to hear any human rights groups decry the Australian government for refusing to surrender at Monis' feet.

3. Beautiful cities were turned into rubbish dumps, and the Chavistas cleaned it up

(Tamara) Merida is giant green mountains standing right over the streets, old pastel colored houses, vibrant and often organized communities, and quiet plazas full of artisans, dogs, pigeons, old people mulling the shade, couples, skaters, and tall beard trees. During the guarimbas, the violent opposition blocked off communities and main roads, shutting down the city center, and turning Merida city into a harsh empty zone of scattered and burnt rubbish, ripped up and destroyed street fences, billboards, and burnt buses. The entrance to our dear barrio – a tiny bridge over a shallow river – was blocked with rubbish, stopping gas delivery trucks and food from getting to us:



Santa Anita - Photo: Tamara Pearson

U3L2A3 | Bias in the media | Article 1

The private media didn't tell the world about that, nor did they describe how many nights, while the barricaders slept, communities would go out and try to clean up the mess. Gisella Rubilar was shot and killed by men in balaclavas on a motorbike, while helping to clean up. The (at the time) Chavista city council and grassroots organizations also organized a number of mass clean-ups, with the national guard tanks clearing the big obstacles, and the council providing trucks for removal of debris. Hundreds of communal council members, PSUV and PCV activists and more would join in these 5am clean-ups, sometimes singing to Ali Primera as they did, while opposition supporters watched on and booed and yelled at them.

4. While the media claimed government crack down on free speech, the violent opposition attacked journalists

(Tamara) On Feb. 11, the day before the violence broke out in Caracas, I walked home from work, passing one of the main blockades, on Avenue Las Americas. Opposition barricaders, with no placards, no chanting, no demands, were burning things in the intersection, pulling buses over at gunpoint and ordering people to get off and the buses turn around, and throwing rocks or pointing weapons at any motorcyclists who dared to try to get through. I stopped to take photos:

Then three of them came over and put their guns to my face and demanded my camera. "Give us your camera, or we'll kill you," they said, over and over, pushing me onto the ground, shoving me, ripping my bag. That was just one case of many. Already, a VTV office had been attacked, a Radio Mundial journalist in Merida was attacked and a photographer was shot in the leg. Later, they attacked journalists from the Merida TV collective, Tatuy, and threw their one video camera on the ground. A VTV office in San Cristobal was attacked with molotovs and shot at, a community TV in Tachira was set on fire, as was a community radio station in Arapuey, Merida state. Journalists – public, community, and private- were attacked repeatedly in Plaza Altamira, Caracas, and the VTV head offices in Caracas were basically under siege throughout February, March, and April.

5. The psychological effects of constant fear and destruction

(Tamara) Chavistas, non-political people, and even the peaceful opposition suffered the psychological effects of the constant violence, insecurity, and fear, but the media were more interested in the far-right, whiter, upper-class sectors, and didn't cover this. It didn't suit their message. I remember walking in the street, being scared, when people on motorbikes holding long things drove past, or there were groups of young men talking in the street – because they resembled barricaders. We were scared to take photos, to meet or march too, since snipers had killed people at a march in Bolivar – of course, we did anyway. A doctor friend would walk three hours through barricades to

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get to the hospital, and be scared every time she crossed one, because they would yell out sexual abuse, beat up people, or demand large bribes to be able to cross. Once we tried to leave our barrio late at night to work, and because we weren't participating in the caceroles – weren't banging pots, neighbors we didn't know yelled at us, "Go to hell, Chavistas, die!". Chavista effigies were hung off bridges. Another friend had a heart attack because his son had been stuck at home for weeks due to death threats. It became an act of courage to wear a red t-shirt in the street. A lot of public institutions were attacked, burnt, had windows smashed. An explosive was thrown at a Mercal food store in San Cristobal, the governors' residencies in San Cristobal and Merida were attacked, Chavista ULA students were attacked, ambulances trying to take people injured at the barricades were attacked, a man was half striped and tied to a tree and humiliated, a gas truck was burnt, as were many buses and private vehicles including food delivery trucks, various of Merida's new free tram stops were destroyed, some of the Bolivarian universities were ransacked, burnt, or wrecked, the housing ministry in Caracas was burnt, Merida's water was poisoned, a national park was set on fire, 5,000 trees were chopped down for the barricades, metro bus stations were wrecked. In Lara, they tried to burn Cuban doctors alive, and all up, there were 162 attacks registered on Cuban doctors.

In early April, before the guarimbas were over, Maduro calculated total damages at US\$15 billion. But how do you calculate the long term damage on human beings caused by constant fear and loss?



Hung Chavista effigies - Photo: teleSUR

6. Who was responsible for the death toll

(Ryan) Yet the opposition's violence rarely seeps into international media coverage, despite the death toll from the 2014 unrest undermining claims the guarimberos were peaceful.

In an op-ed for the New York Times in March 2014, opposition figure Leopoldo Lopez claimed, "More than 1,500 protesters have been detained, more than 30 have been killed." To its credit, the NYT

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issued a correction admitting the figure of 30 deaths “includes security forces and civilians, not only protesters,” but didn’t go into details. So what does the actual death toll look like?

Throughout the disturbances of early 2014, independent news collective Venezuelanalysis.com (VA) kept a detailed, running tally of who died, where and how. Of the 40 deaths listed by VA, deaths of those against and for the government are almost equal, though the news organization conceded a number of killings took place in unclear circumstances. Around 20 deaths were deemed to have been directly caused by opposition violence or barricades. As Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting put it, “The presence of the protest barricades appears to be the most common cause of deaths: individuals shot while attempting to clear the opposition street blockades, automobile accidents caused by the presence of the barricades, and several incidents attributed to the opposition stringing razor wire across streets near the barricades.”

7. What the origins of the violence were

(Ryan and Tamara) The 2014 BBC article, ‘What lies behind the protests in Venezuela?’, nicely summed up the Western media’s understanding of what sparked the unrest when it stated, “The protests began in early February in the western states of Tachira and Merida when students demanded increased security after a female student alleged she had been the victim of an attempted rape.”

This isn’t true. The “protests” began in the first week of January 2014, when a few dozen masked individuals began barricading the main road outside the University of the Andes (ULA), and burning tires. For the first week, the masked individuals drew no police attention, and were left to block the street and harass passerbys. Buses carrying residents of the working class barrios uphill from the ULA were forced back. Without the buses, it became difficult to reach the city center from the barrios, and it was a common sight to see poor retirees slowly walking up the hill past the ULA, carrying their shopping in the tropical heat – while the “peaceful protesters” looked on. The protesters carried small arms, and weren’t afraid to draw them on anyone who complained. When the police began trying to clear the barricades, the guarimbas would hide in the university and throw rocks. Once the officers left, they would quickly rebuild. This was the prototype of the kind of urban fighting that would be employed across Venezuela a month later.

The media failed to explain this, and did not explain any of the context behind the guarimbas: upper-class and business discontent with a revolution and national government that favored (and favors) the poor, the failed opposition coup in 2002 and many opposition electoral loses, including one just months before - seeing them desperately seeking other means to gain power.

8. How dodgy the private media's sources were

(Ryan) A major part of the reason why the international perception of Venezuela's opposition is so skewed is because of the voices presented in the Western media. While ordinary, working class Venezuelan voices rarely appear in the international media, right-wing fanatics are often presented as experts. Take Caracas Chronicles co-founder Francisco Toro, whose work was described by Associated Press in 2014 as "a must-read for foreign journalists, academics and political junkies." One of Toro's last regular articles for the blog he founded was penned on January 20, when he broke news of a "tropical pogrom" where protesters in middle class neighborhoods were supposedly massacred by pro-government "paramilitaries" the night earlier. The article went viral on social media, despite the fact that still today there is no evidence of any mass killings on February 19. The "tropical pogrom" never happened, but Caracas Chronicles continues to be taken as a credible source of information by the mainstream media. For example, in a January 2015 edition of Al Jazeera's TheStream, Caracas Chronicles blogger Emiliانا Duarte Otero joined a panel of academics and a student activist to discuss Venezuela's economy. She used the opportunity to warn that Venezuelans could start going hungry within months, labeled one of the other guests (George Ciccariello-Maher, an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Drexel University) an "agent of communism" and claimed "every single supermarket" in Venezuela has military personnel monitoring "ration" distribution – of course, completely false.

9. Human rights were denied

(Tamara) The opposition barricades meant that for months, people couldn't get to schools or hospitals. One friend couldn't get medicine to her sick, elderly mother. Other people couldn't get to the social security center for vital medicine, such as insulin shots. Schools – primary, high schools, and universities – near the main guarimbas were closed for months, denying children their human right to education. A few schools held classes in alternative venues, when they could, including a meeting room in the workers' hall. The media ignored all this.

10. Scarcity was exacerbated

(Ryan) One of the main complaints from Venezuela's opposition was regarding scarcity of consumer products, yet their main "protest" strategy was to block roads. By blocking roads, the opposition inevitably impeded the transportation of consumer products. Unsurprisingly, the height of opposition unrest was accompanied by a spike in scarcity. For me personally, the logic of this was rammed home one March morning, when I passed a shuttered supermarket with a torched out semi-trailer out front. The

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burned truck was graffitied with anti-government slogans and had an opposition electoral poster slapped on the side. A few minutes further down the road, there was more anti-government graffiti complaining of scarcity. Again, the media ignored this.

11. People still organized, despite it all, and continue to do so.

(Tamara) Most importantly, what the media doesn't want anyone to know is that the guarimbas failed. There were weekly marches around the country demanding an end to the violence, and the Chavista's main form of resistance to it was to keep on working on their media, education, health, and community projects – projects they are still working on one year later. The alternative school I taught at still held classes, though I couldn't go because the two main entrances to the barrio were blocked by armed barricaders. Despite no public transport and all the fear, hundreds of us met in the main cultural hall to discuss a collective response to the violence.

While the media demonized the “collectives,” portraying government supporters and grassroots organizations as violent, and the opposition as peaceful, the pro-government youth organized regular cultural events in the main plaza to counter the violence. The collective patience in the face of abuse was, and continues to be extraordinary.

Elias Sanchez, PSUV youth activist told teleSUR, “We're in a permanent struggle, advancing more every day.”



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What lies behind the protests in Venezuela?

Irene Caselli

27 March 2014, BBC News Online, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-26335287>

A wave of anti-government demonstrations - the largest in a decade - has been sweeping through Venezuela since early February. The BBC's Irene Caselli in Caracas takes a closer look at the recent unrest.

What triggered the protests?

The protests began in early February in the western states of Tachira and Merida when students demanded increased security after a female student alleged she had been the victim of an attempted rape. Venezuela has the fifth highest murder rate in the world, and crime is rife in many urban centres.

The students also complained about record inflation (official figures suggest yearly inflation in December 2013 stood at 56.2%) and shortages of basic food items.

The protests in Tachira turned violent, triggering the arrest of several students, which in turn led to demonstrations in Caracas calling for their release.

The protests in Caracas started on 12 February and turned deadly when three people were shot by gunmen following a largely peaceful march that same day. There have been many demonstrations since then, varying in size from small gatherings to large rallies.

Who is protesting?

Students were the first to protest, but they were soon joined by hardliners from within the umbrella opposition group Table for Democratic Unity (MUD). Leopoldo Lopez, a former mayor and political maverick, and Maria Corina Machado, an MP, are the main political figures in the movement.

After the detention of hundreds of protesters and accusations that the security forces used excessive force, a more moderate wing of the opposition also took to the streets.

According to many observers and opposition leader Henrique Capriles, the protests are made up of a middle-class majority, with middle-class concerns.

What do the protesters want?

At first, their main demand was for increased security. But they have since broadened their demands to include the release of all those detained in previous protests, and economic changes to curb high inflation and alleviate shortages of some staples.

Many demonstrators say the government is beyond change and demand President Nicolas Maduro's resignation.



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What does the government say?

The government accuses the opposition of trying to stage a coup with backing from the United States and has arrested a number of opposition leaders on charges of inciting violence.

It has drawn parallels between the protests and a brief coup that took place against Hugo Chavez in 2002. President Maduro has called the protesters “fascists”.

Who is behind the violence?

Both protesters and members of the security forces have died in the violence which has marred some of the protests.

The opposition has accused pro-government motorcycle gangs, as well as the security forces, of shooting live rounds into opposition crowds.

The government says “fascists” are behind the violence, instigating riots and encouraging people to erect barricades. A number of motorcyclists have been decapitated by barbed wire strung across residential streets to hinder the security forces.

Will the protests create change?

These are not only the largest protests since Mr. Maduro took office, they are also Venezuela’s biggest protests in over a decade, spreading to other cities beyond Caracas.

However, so far they seem confined mainly, though not exclusively, to the middle class. The government’s popularity remains high amid its working-class voters, who gave it a further boost in local elections in December.

Mr. Capriles has said that as long as the protests do not spread to a wider sector of society, it is unlikely there will be any change.



Venezuela: chaos and thuggery take the place of the pretty revolution

Rory Carroll

Sunday 23 February The Observer, Last modified on Tuesday 3 June 2014

Hugo Chávez's dream world has become a nightmare of shot-down protesters, jailed oppositionists, economic meltdown and a brutal war waged against a defiant middle class

Hugo Chávez used to call it *la revolución bonita* (the pretty revolution), but the world looked at Venezuela last week and saw only ugliness. Protesters gunned down in the streets, barricades in flames, chaos. One of the dead was a 22-year-old beauty queen shot in the head.

With the government censoring and cowering TV reports, many of the images came from smartphones, grainy and jerky snippets filled with smoke and shouts. One fact loomed through them all: Chavismo, a hybrid system of democracy and autocracy built on populism, petro-dollars and quasi-socialism, was reaping the consequences of misrule.

Demonstrations in Caracas, Valencia, Mérida and other cities turned lethal, with student-led rallies provoking a fierce backlash from National Guard units and paramilitaries. They roared on motorcycles into «enemy» neighbourhoods, guns blazing. Families piled mattresses against windows to shield against bullets.

Human Rights Watch accused security forces of excessive and unlawful force by beating detainees and shooting at unarmed crowds. Worse may come. Jailings, beatings and killings have galvanised rather than deterred the mostly middle-class protesters. They vowed to continue until *la salida*, the exit of a government that has held power under Chávez, and now President Nicolás Maduro, for 15 years. “Change depends on every one of us. Don’t give up!” Lilian Tintori, the wife of a jailed opposition leader, Leopoldo López, said via Twitter. Banners fluttered from buildings and barricades. “I declare myself in civil disobedience,” read one.

In a televised speech to red-shirted supporters, Maduro accused the US of fomenting a coup and threatened Táchira, a particularly rebellious eastern state, with martial law. A local mayor would soon join López behind bars, he vowed. “It’s a matter of time until we have him in the same cold cell.” An official policy of “communicational hegemony” harnessed state media for propaganda, intimidated privately owned broadcasters, yanked one TV channel off the air and revoked work permits for four CNN journalists.



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It may have resembled a regime's desperate battle for survival, affecting not just Venezuela but also its ally Cuba, which depends on Caracas for subsidised oil and supporters in the west who consider it a leftist beacon. In reality, though protests continue, the outcome is not in doubt. The government controls the police, army and courts and retains support among the poor. It remains an entrenched, formidable system of power untroubled by external threats. Despite the expulsion of three US diplomats – a staple of chavista political theatre – there is no evidence of a Washington plot.

The convulsions were partly confected. López, an ambitious, Harvard-educated politician, steered student protests against crime and economic problems into a wider challenge to authority. A radical minority attacked state property with stones and petrol bombs, prompting the ferocious response by security forces and militias known as *colectivos*, leaving at least six dead, scores wounded and cities echoing to the sound of enraged pot-banging, a traditional form of dissent.

"I recommend they buy some stainless steel pots to last for a good 10, 20, 30 or 40 years," Maduro mocked. "Because the revolution is here for a long time!" History suggests that the president will prevail. Street protests briefly ousted his mentor in 2002 with the aid of a military-led coup tacitly backed by Washington. Chávez bounced back. Protesters tried and failed again in 2003 by shutting down the oil industry, Venezuela's lifeblood. This time the generals and drillers appear firmly under government control. By rallying his fractious ruling coalition, Maduro could emerge even stronger.

That will not mean the revolution has won. On the contrary. In a broader, historical sense, it has already lost. This tropical would-be alternative to capitalism is a husk. It faces an existential threat not from youths chanting in plazas but from the fact that Venezuela is a shambolic, crumbling, dysfunctional ruin.

Start with the economy. The official inflation rate, 56%, is among the world's highest. There are shortages of bread, flour, meat, toilet paper and other basics. The bolívar currency has collapsed in value and is virtually unconvertible. Agriculture and industry are gasping. Newspapers are running out of paper. Airlines are threatening to cut services because the government owes them \$3.3bn. Food companies are owed \$2.4bn. Bond prices have plunged to levels associated with default. Recession hovers. An infrastructure once the envy of South America has suffered from lack of investment and maintenance. Power cuts leave cities in darkness. Potholes make highways look like they have been mortared. Cobwebs shroud abandoned cable cars. Even the facade of the presidential palace, Miraflores, peels and rots.

Crime is out of control. The government has stopped publishing regular statistics, but NGOs estimate the murder rate at 25,000 annually, one of the world's highest per capita rates, deadlier than Iraq. Kidnappings



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– people are snatched for ransom from bus stops, universities, shopping malls, airports – compound public anxiety. Corrupt police and politicised, overwhelmed courts breed impunity. An estimated 97% of murders go unpunished. The list goes on. A catalogue of neglect and decay. This does not signify collapse. Venezuela is the original El Dorado, a land that seduced conquistadores with a false promise of gold only to find itself atop the world's biggest oil reserves. Billions of petro-dollars gush into the treasury every month, a replenishing source of patronage. Yet the nation's stitches are coming loose. Venezuela is unravelling.

Even if the protests abate, Maduro faces a desolate vista that mocks chavismo's grandiose rhetoric. An anti-imperialist beacon? A new path for humanity? Not while fistfights break out in supermarkets over scarce chickens. Or a diaspora of the best and brightest scatters around the world.

Middle-class anger the government can canalise and convert into polarisation, a venerable, successful strategy. But danger lies in discontent in the barrios and pueblos, the hillside slums and dusty villages that comprise core support. It almost sank the revolution a month after Chávez's death from cancer last March when Maduro, despite lopsided advantages in money, media and institutional control, managed just a narrow, contested election victory over opposition leader Henrique Capriles. That was a sign that government patronage and handouts – jobs, subsidies, houses, electrical goods – were no longer sufficient compensation for the shortages, inflation and crime.

Chávez, first elected in 1998, created the system. A gifted politician and communicator, he expanded social programmes that sharply reduced poverty, cementing his image as champion of the underdog. But he proved to be a disastrous manager. Expropriations, subsidies and currency and price controls trapped the economy in a populist labyrinth. A historic oil boom and manic spending sustained the illusion of a new Jerusalem. You could fill an SUV tank for 60p. Chávez dreamily spoke of the population doubling, even quadrupling. He changed the clocks, the flag, the country's name, vowed to build new cities, artificial islands, a transcontinental pipeline.

There was a whiff of Ozymandias to it all, but foreign supporters applauded the fantasy. Oliver Stone, visiting Caracas to make a documentary, looked blank when I asked about the distortions and corruption haemorrhaging the economy. Shrewder observers – writers and academics – would visit and confide over rum that, yes, it all seemed a bit chaotic, then return home and publicly laud the revolution's progress.

The squandering reached such proportions that even amid record oil revenues Chávez had to borrow billions from China to confect artificial booms before elections. Maduro inherited this model – and made it

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worse. Where Chávez had the confidence to bow to economic sanity and make painful adjustments, his successor, weaker and unloved by many on his own side, has plumped for even more reckless populism, ordering supermarkets to slash prices, jailing business owners as “speculators”, sending troops to stores to liberate washing machines “for the people”.

“We are in a critical situation of shortages and that’s only the tip of the iceberg,” said Luis Vicente León, a Caracas pollster. He predicted the difficulties would soon worsen. Workers at state-owned factories in Ciudad Guayana are in near open revolt. Teachers, doctors and nurses take turns striking. Chávez’s gift for showmanship enabled him to create distractions and defuse frustration, but Maduro, stiff and wooden in comparison, relies more on thuggery. Hence the coordinated and symbolic assaults by “motorizados” on middle class neighbourhoods.

There is no more pretence that the revolution is pretty. It is in the business of keeping power, no more, no less. It offers no solution to the fiasco, the tragedy, that is Venezuela.

Rory Carroll was based in Caracas as the Guardian and Observer Latin America correspondent from 2006-12. He is the author of Comandante: Hugo Chávez’s Venezuela.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/23/venezuela-protests-thuggery-pretty-revolution>

The Venezuelan Outcry – FAQs

Rodrigo Linares

February 21, 2014, Caracas Chronicles, aracachronicles.com/2014/02/21/the-venezuelan-outcry-faqs/

When did these protests start?

On February 5th, students from *Universidad de los Andes* in San Cristobal went out into the streets. Due to the heavy-handed response by the authorities, the protests quickly gained support from students elsewhere and now have spread to many other parts of civil society especially – but not only – in the middle class. Many large and several smaller cities are now seeing protests every day.

Why did college students start protesting?

Venezuela has one of the world's highest levels of crime. After over a year of asking the state government for improved security measures to curb rampant crime on campus, a freshman at ULA's Táchira campus was sexually assaulted.

This attempted rape caused a wave of local protests, with students and civil society groups taking to the streets to demand justice. The government's response was heavy handed from the start: five students were detained following a protest and sent to a jail hundreds of miles away in Coro, stoking anger even further. Students in other universities joined the protests in solidarity, demanding the original five be released, only to be repressed in their turn.

As the protest movement gained steam, the protests have become as much about civil rights and the Right to Protest itself – rejecting the government's criminalization of all dissent – as about the original goals. Later still, they took on the tone of a general anti-government rebellion, with streets being blocked and running battles with security forces taking place night after night.

Is all this a coup?

There is no indication that any component of the armed forces is attempting or planning a coup. Many allegations have been made but none have been backed with evidence.

What are the colectivos?

The colectivos are a kind of tropical Basij. They are gangs of armed civilians broadly aligned with the government, who coordinate with the Security Forces to put down the protests. They have their roots



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in neighborhood organizations and self-help committees, and were often originally set up to keep poor neighborhoods safe from crime in the absence of an effective police, but they've increasingly come to be used as paramilitary organizations willing to do the government's dirty work. The extent to which they are really controlled by the government is a subject of much controversy – it's clear that they are sympathetic to the government, but they're not part of a unified line of command, don't follow any kind of formal rules of engagement, and have been filmed firing live rounds into protestors. What's sure is that they infuse the crisis with a dangerous new element.

Why isn't the Venezuelan media covering this?

Coverage in Venezuelan radio and TV has been very sparse, and largely pro-government. The government systematically intimidates outlets that cover stories in ways that make it look bad. While there's no explicit prior censorship, stations that "cross the line" are quickly taken off the air. Even foreign stations, like Colombia's NTN24 and CNN en Español, have been pulled from Venezuelan Cable Grids in retaliation for giving too much coverage to the protests.

As a result, Venezuelans find it easier to get information about what's going on on Twitter or on foreign media than by watching their own newscasts. This media blackout has led to waves of rumors and disinformation, adding another volatile element to the crisis.

What's #LaSalida about?

As the student movement gained altitude, opposition politicians joined the fray. Political leaders Leopoldo Lopez and Maria Corina Machado started to hold citizen assemblies to discuss what they called #LaSalida (#TheExit). The discussions were oriented to have a grassroots level debate on how to transition to a different government. The government sees #LaSalida as a clear call to a coup.

Who is Leopoldo Lopez?

Leopoldo Lopez is a charismatic young Venezuelan economist and politician trained at the Harvard-Kennedy School of Government. He is the former mayor from the Caracas municipality of Chacao. He was banned from participating in elections in 2008 due to allegations of corruption although he has never been tried for this or any other crime.

In 2011, the OAS issued an order to the Venezuelan government to drop the ban since Lopez had not been proven guilty. He founded the opposition party *Voluntad Popular* (Popular Will). He has been a major supporter of the protest movement. Maduro, on live TV said that Lopez was guilty of murder and terrorism

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and that he must be arrested. Lopez in return turned himself in. He's perceived as part of the more radical section of the opposition, which see street protests as a key pressure point to set off a transition to democracy.

Who is Maria Corina Machado?

Maria Corina Machado is an industrial engineer graduated and longtime Civil Society activist turned politician. In 2010 she ran as an independent as was elected deputy (Congresswoman) to the Venezuelan National Assembly for a 5-year term.

She was one of the key promoters of #LaSalida. She has been under attack from chavismo on threats of removing her Parliamentary immunity. A charismatic speaker, she's also the second most prominent leader of the more radical wing of the opposition.

Why was Leopoldo Lopez arrested?

On February 12th, Lopez and Machado summoned a protest to the *Fiscalia General* (Prosecutor General's office) to demand that the jailed student be set free. The protest turned violent when pro-government groups as well as the SEBIN started attacking the students. Three people were killed: One paramilitary (*colectivo*) leader and two students.

Ample footage and evidence shows that the student where killed by the authorities. In spite of that, Maduro accused Lopez for all this. Lopez was arrested on charges of manslaughter, terrorism and destruction of public property. The first two charges seem to have been dismissed.

Are the protests peaceful or violent?

Both. The bulk of the protests have been peaceful. Some of the protesters have resisted the National Guard and the riot police with rocks and in occasions, with molotov cocktails. Barricades have been erected all over the country, often using burning tires.

Is the government's response proportionate?

The government has shown increased levels of repression every day. So far, we have heard reports that they have deployed the Army (with no riot control training) in San Cristóbal and Barquisimeto. This is a dangerous new escalation.

In San Cristóbal, fighter jets have been overflying the city, presumably to intimidate the students. Overall, the government's response has been grossly disproportionate, and inflamed the situation far beyond where it needed to be.

Is Maduro a democrat?

Venezuela has seen 19 elections of different kinds since 1999, and chavismo has won all but one of them. The government certainly has many supporters. Yet democracy it's not only about having elections, especially if they're neither free nor fair.

For years, elections have been held on a grotesquely uneven playing field in terms of money, media coverage, and use of state power. Opposition candidates increasingly compete amid an almost total media blackout. Serious allegations of electoral fraud from his election last April were never investigated, with the losing candidate even being fined for "offending the state" by challenging the results in court.

Maduro has copied Chavez's extremist rhetoric against his opponents and keeps calling the leaders of the MUD coalition fascists, and describes dissidents as a disease that needs to be eliminated from the body politic. On early December 2013 after local elections were held for mayors, Mr Maduro invited newly elected or reelected mayors from the opposition at Miraflores Palace to discuss proposals for addressing the country's woes.

Henrique Capriles, the most prominent moderate leader of the opposition, was summoned after a prominent young actress was murdered on early January 2014 to discuss how to tackle increasing rampant crime in the country. Some people consider these moves by Maduro a ploy to appease part of the opposition, given a worsening economic environment that could lead to social upheaval.

Yet for all the dialogue-pledges, Maduro (and chavismo as a whole) have responded in a draconian and grossly disproportionate way against protesters throughout the country. Students have been detained, tortured, wounded or even murdered by the State's security apparatus or the so-called "colectivos".

Was Maduro fairly elected?

No. Maduro's party, PSUV, relies heavily on state resources to fund and execute their campaigns. From using petrodollars to state vehicles to state media.

Additionally, many irregularities were reported prior, during and after the election: coercion, threats and manipulation of the voting machines. The CNE, responsible for holding the elections, refused to hold a full audit of the system, particularly, to check for double-voters via fingerprints.

Who are the “Tupamaros”?

The “Tupamaros” are the original “*colectivo*”. Founded in 1992, with paramilitary underpinnings and pro-chavismo links. They refuse to renounce the use of violence or arms in order to protect communities they fathom “too dangerous even for the police force” according to wikipedia. Some opposition protesters have claimed that the “Tupamaros” have been undertaking the repression against them.

Is the opposition divided?

The opposition is a very diverse coalition from left leaning to conservatives which has only one common attribute: ridding Venezuela of chavismo. Views on how to achieve that diverge. In most major elections the opposition has presented a unique candidate for the contesting districts.

Given the current political crisis in Venezuela, the opposition appears divided. Some members of the opposition wish to defy the government under the criteria based on the Constitution for a regime-change (resignation of the president, recall referendum or presidential elections at the end of the 6-year term); while others refuse to wait until 2019 in order to change the government. New actors, in particular the Student Movement leaders, do not always coordinate effectively with the established political parties.

Is the US behind all of this?

Following a very old Cuban media-management technique, the Venezuelan regime continues to blame the US and the CIA for all problems occurring in Venezuela. Preposterous conspiracy theories abound. No evidence has ever been provided of such allegations.

The US remains Venezuela’s biggest trade partner.

caracaschronicles.com/2014/02/21/the-venezuelan-outcry-faqs/

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Bias in the media




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Credibility of resources

Terms to review as a class:

- Paradigm
- Facts
- Opinions
- Bias
- Cognitive Dissonance

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Credibility of resources

New terms we need to know:

Ethnocentricity is believing that one race or cultural group is better than others.

Propaganda communication that has the purpose of influencing the opinions and attitudes of a group of people toward or against a cause by giving only one side of the story.

Doublespeak is the use of language that distorts the true meaning on purpose.

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A matter of perspective




- What do YOU see?

Image taken from:
Vercillo, K. (Oct. 30, 2012). Two Faces or a Vase? Old or Young Lady? 10 Simple but Wonderful Optical Illusions. Hub Pages.
Taken on Oct. 30/15 from hubpages.com/art/Two-Faces-or-a-Vase-10-Simple-but-Wonderful-Optical-Illusions.

a common threads resource 


the sustainable society

A matter of perspective



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the sustainable society

A matter of perspective



- What do YOU see?

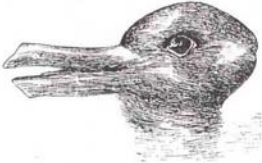
Image taken from:
Officially Bored. Optical Illusions Page 2. Taken on Oct. 30/15 from www.officiallybored.net/page74.htm

a common threads resource 

the sustainable society


A matter of perspective

The Duck-Rabbit Illusion



- What do YOU see?

Image obtained from Optics 418A, provided by Aaron Lee Cecilia, University of Rochester, USA. Please visit www.418a.rochester.edu

a common threads resource 

the sustainable society

Perception

- What influences how we see the world around us?
- How do these influences differ depending on...
 - ❖ Where you live?
 - ❖ Your biology?
 - ❖ Your income levels?
 - ❖ Other issues?
- List the top 10 things that you think influence your perception of the world around you.
- This list will show you what is influencing your paradigm.

a common threads resource 

the sustainable society

Bias in the media

- People are never entirely neutral. Everyone has a paradigm.
- Since media is created by people, it is also never entirely neutral.
- People who create the news choose what they tell, who they interview and what quotes to publish. All of this is influenced by their paradigm.
- For this reason the media story you receive is not necessarily "the truth," but instead it is one person's perception of the truth.


a common threads resource 

the sustainable society

Bias in the media

- Our news is brought to us by a surprisingly small number of organizations.
- 3 major TV news services use microwave and satellite to relay their camera footage to TV networks all over the world.
 - ❖ Viznews (British)
 - ❖ UPIN (British-US)
 - ❖ CBS Newscast (owned by VIACOM)


a common threads resource 



Bias in the media

- This means most of our international news is reported from an American or European viewpoint.
- Here is the emphasis on "international" news that we see in Canada:

❖ US	34%
❖ Europe	28%
❖ Asia /Australia	17%
❖ Latin America	11%
❖ Middle East	6%
❖ Africa	4%

a common threads resource 



Bias in the media—Headlines

- September 1, 1983: A Soviet interceptor plane blows up a Korean passenger jet. The New York Times Editorial, "Murder in the Air":
- "There is no conceivable excuse for any nation shooting down a harmless airliner... no circumstance whatever justifies attacking an innocent plane."
- July 3, 1988: US forces blow up an Iranian passenger jet. The New York Times Editorial.

a common threads resource 



Bias in the media—Headlines

- "While horrifying, it was nonetheless an accident... the onus for avoiding such accidents in the future rests on civilian aircraft: avoid combat zones, fly high, acknowledge warnings."
- July 21, 2014: An outrage compounded by mystery. The New York Times Editorial.
- "Innocent victims are sadly common in conflicts, but whoever unleashed a lethal missile not knowing how to distinguish between a military and a civilian plane is not only irresponsible and stupid, but a war criminal."


a common threads resource 



The global media


- The media plays a major role in developing global economic, political, social, cultural and environmental opinions.
- Access to media is also not equal. There is a disparity in access between rich vs. poor, groups in power versus those that are marginalized.
- If people are unaware of situations and the underlying causes, how can they work for change?


a common threads resource 



The global media


- It is often felt that in a democratic society, information should also be democratic and access should be protected.
- Do you think that this is always the case?
- What are scenarios that you can imagine that may allow information in a democratic society to be slanted or biased?
- How much propaganda do you feel you are exposed to?

a common threads resource 



Examining bias in the media

- The class will now be divided into four groups. Each group is going to receive a different article.
- On your own, read the article and summarize the information it presents.
- As a group develop a summary of the article.
 - ❖ What has happened?
 - ❖ Where did it happen?
 - ❖ Why is it happening?
 - ❖ Who is involved?
 - ❖ When did this happen?
 - ❖ How is it happening?
 - ❖ Did your group have an overall positive or negative impression of the government in Venezuela after reading the article? Explain your reasoning.
- Prepare to share your article and analysis with the class.

a common threads resource 



Examining bias in the media

Once the class has shared their articles and interpretations, discuss the following:

- How different were your impressions after reading the four articles?
- Why do you think this incident was depicted in such differing ways?
- How does geopolitics play a role in bias in the media?
- What do you think is the real story of Venezuela?



community choices

unit three

U3L2A4 | The value of art

overview

In this lesson you will watch a TED Talk that looks at how art can transform a community. You will have the opportunity to then consider how such forms of art could change the place where you live.

learning goal

- You will understand the relationship between the appearance of their external environment and the sense of place they experience while there.

success criteria

- You will be able to explain where in their community they could see change and value added through art.

Inquiry Question

- How does the inclusion of street art change the way people see their community?

As a class view the Ted Talk on The value of art by Haas and Hahn:

www.ted.com/talks/haas_hahn_how_painting_can_transform_communities

1. Consider the following as you watch. Be prepared to share your responses in a class discussion.
 - a How can painting transform society?
 - b How are the favelas different in formation from our communities in the west?
 - c While the main offering was simply paint, what was the real change that Haas and Hahn offer to the favelas?
 - d Describe in first person how a resident of the favela would see and feel in their community before and then after the painting.
 - e How well did these ideas transfer when they were transported to Philadelphia?
 - f How does involving the community alter the outcomes of the project?
 - g What is the role of bureaucracy in planning communities? How can this become an obstacle to progress?
 - h How has the media and technology changed the ability for communities to work for change?
 - i Where else in the world are projects being planned?
 - j Where can you picture one? How would it alter that space?
 - k The key ideas for success according to Haas and Hahn are no master plan and community involvement. Is this different from how your community plans? Explain. Could this type of thinking improve or lessen the ability for your community to change?
 - l Art is seen as informing, celebrating, or remembering issues. Reflect on the importance of each using the experience of the favelas.
2. Exit card:

Before you leave the class, on a sheet of paper complete the following sentence:
If I was to change one area of my community by adding art, I would change...because this would...



community choices

unit three

U3L2A5 | Art for your community

overview

You will have the opportunity to create a piece of art to display in their community during a gallery walk.

learning goal

- You will understand the influence of art on informing, remembering or celebrating a community.
- You will understand the relationship between the appearance of your external environment and the sense of place you experience while there.
- You will be able to design a piece of art using the elements of art.

success criteria

- You will create art for a specific community and display it in a gallery walk.
- You will complete an Exit Card reflecting on the gallery walk and the work of your peers.

Inquiry question

- How can art be used to develop awareness in our community?

Students will be working in small groups of three to create a piece of art for a chosen community. This piece of art should do one of the following for the community:

Inform—Teach the community about an issue

Celebrate—Celebrate an aspect or event that is important to the community.

Remember—The piece of art reflects and remembers an act or event from the past.

Steps to create your art

1. Find a small group of three.
2. As a group, decide on the community you wish to create art for. It may be for the school or for another within the local area.
3. Now brainstorm what issues and ideas are important or need promotion in either the school community or another community of the group's choosing.
4. Now consider what are you going to do in their piece of art? Will this art be for informing, celebrating, or remembering the community? You should be able to justify this choice and explain how it can be seen in your work of art.
5. Make some rough sketches to an image that you feel would change the culture of the school community for the better.
6. Show your teacher your rough work and gain approval to start your final piece.
7. Create the art.

Written statement

Students will produce a written statement that will be no less than two full, word processed, double-spaced pages and no more than three. The written statement will be in paragraph format and will address the following:

- Describe the community they chose and what their connection to the community is and what role the community plays in their lives.
- Explain the issue you chose to represent through art and describe the importance of this issue to you and future generations.
- Describe your artwork and explain how you communicated the central themes of informing, celebrating, or remembering the community.



community choices unit three

U3L2A5 | Art for your community

Gallery walk

Once all of the art is complete, students will have a gallery walk where they will display their art. During this walk half of the class will present their art, the rest will wander the class and ask questions or comments to the presenters. The class will then switch places.

Art for your community exit card

After the walk, consider the following questions and expand upon how these questions relate to your Art? Complete the exit card assessing what they learned about their community from the gallery walk and on the value of art for communities.

- 1.** What is art?
- 2.** What is the purpose of art?
- 3.** What did you learn about your community from the art your peers created?
- 4.** What is the value of art to society?
- 5.** What is the purpose or value of art in public spaces?

Hand in this Exit Card before you leave the class!



community choices unit three

U3L2A5 | Art for your community | Rubric

Art for your community evaluation

	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Rough Work	Student has not engaged in the creative process in a meaningful and productive way. Rough work does not lead to finished product.	Some items have been submitted, but do not show clear progression and development of the idea. A smaller variety of process work is evident.	Student has submitted a number of items that constitute adequate creative process from start to finish.	Student has submitted a wide variety of materials as rough work that demonstrates the progression of their idea.
Artwork: Elements and Principles	Student has demonstrated little knowledge and understanding of elements and principles in their artwork.	Student has demonstrated some knowledge and understanding of elements and principles in their artwork.	Student has demonstrated adequate knowledge and understanding of elements and principles in their artwork.	Student has demonstrated exceptional knowledge and understanding of elements and principles in their artwork.
Artwork: Community Considerations	Student has made little link to the community and as a result have created a weak piece.	Student has made some connection to the community.	Student has made adequate connection to the community to produce a well-executed piece.	Student has made excellent connection to the issues in the community and has created an excellent piece.
Statement	Student has completed a statement that does not significantly address the assignment requirements. Frequent spelling and grammar mistakes.	Student has completed a statement that addresses the assignment requirements, but more content is needed. Some spelling and grammar mistakes.	Student has completed a well written statement that addresses the assignment requirements effectively. Some minor spelling and grammar issues.	Student has completed a well written, grammatically correct statement that addresses the assignment requirements in a thoughtful and insightful way.

Comments:



community choices unit three

ask

What does a democracy look like?

acquire

- PowerPoint presentation—Grassroots movements
- articles
- handouts
- class set of laptops or access to a computer lab

explore

- PowerPoint presentation
- Article analysis

analyze

- article analysis
- Venn diagram comparison

act

- political poster
- grant proposal



community choices

unit three

U3L3 | Collective democratic participation

The purpose of this lesson is to help students understand how the Canadian government works and compare it to the Norwegian and Venezuelan models. Students will explore what a grassroots movement is and examine case studies of movements that have created change. From this, students will be able to look at their local community and assess how a grassroots action could affect positive change. They will then create a grant proposal that outlines the action they proposed.

subjects: Geography, History, Civics, English, Politics

timing: **Activity 1**

Our Government: A Look at how the Canadian democracy functions and compare this with the Norwegian and/or Venezuelan governments | **75 minutes**

Note: follow up with Activity 3

Activity 2

Grassroots movements | **60 minutes**

Note: follow up with Activity 5

Activity 3

Compare and contrast democracies | **20 minutes**

Note: follow up with Activity 4

Activity 4

Poster | **45 minutes**

Activity 5

Grant proposal | **75 minutes**

learning goal

- To understand how democracy operates in Canada and compare that to the current Venezuelan system of government and/or Norway.
- To understand what a grassroots movement is, why it exists, and how it might be effective in creating change.
- To be able to identify some examples of grassroots movements.
- To investigate a local issue and propose how a grassroots movement could address this issue.
- To contemplate and then create a poster that would encourage citizens to become involved in the political process.

success criteria

- Students will complete the democracy handout.
- Students will complete the VENN Diagram through participating in the Jigsaw activity.
- To complete the handout grassroots movements.
- To complete the political poster.
- To complete a grant proposal to address a local issue they have identified.



community choices

unit three

U3L3 | Collective democratic participation

ask

- What does democracy look like in Canada? Norway? Venezuela?
- What is a grassroots movement and how have they worked to create positive change?

acquire

PowerPoints

- Grassroots movements

Articles

- Canada Article 1: FAIR VOTE CANADA
www.fairvote.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/FVC-Tabloid.pdf
- Canada Article 2: Chapter 1: How Canadians Govern Themselves
www.parl.gc.ca/about/parliament/senatoreugeneforsej/book/chapter_1-e.html#1_2
- Canada Article 3: Canada's Democracy in Action
www.parl.gc.ca/about/parliament/education/ourcountryourparliament/TeacherGuide/pdfs/booklet-Section3-e.pdf
- Canada Article 4: The Canadian System of Government
www.parl.gc.ca/marleaumontpetit/DocumentViewer.aspx?Sec=Ch01&Seq=2&Language=E
- Venezuela Article 1: Facts about Venezuela's Presidential Elections and the Voting Process
venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/7315
- Venezuela Article 2: Venezuela's Secret Grassroots Democracy
venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/2090
- Venezuela Article 3: Comparing Democratic Institutions in Canada and Venezuela
venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/52
- Norway Article 1: Government Structure in Norway
eeagrants.fin.ee/sites/default/files/Bjoern_LocalGovernmentNorway.pdf
- Norway Article 2: Politics of Norway
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Norway
- Norway Article 3: The Nordic Model
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nordic_model

Handouts

- Activity 1: Democracy
- Activity 2: Grassroots movements handout
- Grant proposal handout

Materials

- Class set of laptops or access to a computer lab



community choices

unit three

U3L3 | Collective democratic participation

explore

Activity 1 | Democracy

In this activity students will review and share what they know about the how the democracy in Canada works, and then students will do an article review and compare other democracies to the Canadian form.

Students will define 'democracy' through discussion and individually on democracy handout.

Students will 'Think, Pair, and Share' their answers to the questions about the Canadian government on the democracy handout.

Activity 2 | Grassroots movements

Students will watch the powerpoint presentation and complete the grassroots handout.

analyze

Activity 3 | Compare and contrast democracies

Through the jigsaw method, students will review one of four articles provided for Canada and as an 'expert' present the main idea in the article to their small group.

Students will read two of three articles about the Venezuelan Government and/or the Norwegian system of government and complete a venn diagram comparing these countries to Canada.

act

Activity 4 | Poster

Students will demonstrate their understanding of democracy by creating a poster that will persuade a citizen to get involved in their political system. The poster must be eye-catching with graphics and bold writing (imagine this poster will be posted on facebook so it needs succinct text).

You will create a poster on 8 x 10 white paper that will convince a citizen (in a country of your choice) to become engaged in the democratic process.

The poster will contain the following elements:

- Three–five key actions that a citizen could take to get engaged
- Explain how the action works to create change in the democratic system.
- An image that relates/supports the message(s)

Activity 5 | Grant proposal

Students will go through the planning process of identifying a local issue and preparing a plan of action to create positive change. See handout.



community choices

unit three

U3L3 | Collective democratic participation

U3L3A3 | Compare and contrast democracies | TEACHER ANSWER KEY

overview

You will read the attached articles and complete the jigsaw activity to learn more about the governments in Venezuela and Norway. You will compare and contrast what democracy looks like in Canada compared to Venezuela/ Norway in a Venn Diagram.

learning goal

- To understand how the democracies function in Norway and Venezuela
- To compare the Canadian Democracy to those in Norway and/or Venezuela

success criteria

- Completion of handout.

compare and contrast

In point form, identify at least 10 differences and three similarities in the democratic governments in Canada and Venezuela or Norway.

Canada	Similar	Venezuela
Constitutional Monarchy	Former European colonies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada independent from Britain in 1867 • Venezuela independent from Spain in 1811 	Federal Presidential Republic
Always used same constitution	Have legislatures that are responsible for formation of law	Constitution re-written many times. Newest constitution became law in 1999
10 provinces and three territories	Executive Branch of government where there is no limit on times a leader can be re-elected	23 states and nine administrative regions
Legislature is broken into: house of commons (elected) and senate (appointed)	Judicial Branch of Government	Legislature is one body called the national assembly (elected)
Senate members which are appointed can serve until they are 75 years old		Elected members can serve six years
Three branches of government: executive, judicial, and legislature		Five branches of government: executive, judicial, legislature, electoral and people's



community choices unit three

U3L3A1 | Democracy

overview

You will review and share what you know about the how the democracy in Canada works.

learning goal

- To understand how the Canadian Democracy operates.

success criteria

- Completion of handout.

Inquiry question

- What does democracy look like in Canada?

Democracy

Democracy, as defined by the Oxford Dictionary “is a form of government in which the power resides in the people and is exercised by them either directly or by means of elected representatives.”

A complementary definition: “Democracy is a universal value, based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives.”

(Source: Democracy and the United Nations Backgrounder, www.un.org/en/events/democracyday/index.shtml)

Your definition of democracy:



community choices unit three

U3L3A1 | Democracy

Answer the following questions about Canada's system of government to the best of your ability:

1. Based on the definitions of democracy at the top of this handout, how does Canada's political system function using the below checklist of criteria?

- The public has the opportunity to decide which political issues should be discussed in the government.
- Citizens have ample and equal opportunity to discover and affirm new policies and their consequences, with full disclosure of all details before a final decision is made.
- Each citizen has an equal opportunity to vote, with the assurance that his or her vote will be given equal weight.
- All citizens have a say in decision-making.
- People have the freedom to make choices and express opinions.
- There are equal rights and responsibilities for everyone.
- There is a justice system that applies to everyone.
- The government is accountable, or responsible, for its actions and to the people.

2. How are government representatives selected and how often is this done?

3. Who can become a government representative? Who can participate in selecting government representatives?



community choices
unit three

U3L3A1 | Democracy

4. What levels of government exist and what are some of their responsibilities?

5. What rights and responsibilities are given to citizens?



community choices unit three

U3L3A2 | Grassroots movements

overview

You will complete the first page of the Grassroots movements handout below and then watch the powerpoint presentation and brainstorm how a grassroots movement could be effective in your own community to create positive change.

learning goal

- To understand what a grassroots movement is.
- To review some case studies of successful grassroots movements.
- To brainstorm local issues that could be addressed by a grassroots movement.

success criteria

- Completion of handout.

Inquiry question

- What is a grassroots movement and how have these movements been effective in the past and how might a movement address a current issue in your community?

How might these words apply to people who think things should be changed?

Write a definition of grassroots movement

What are people fighting for today?
(list 3–5 things)

How does the use of social media help grassroots movements?



community choices
unit three

U3L3A2 | Grassroots movements

What is a grassroots movement?

How does music play a part in grassroots movements?

Write down 2–3 ideas for ways to get the message out about an issue that is important to you.

How might these words apply to people who think things should be changed?

Draw what these words mean to you:

“grass”

“roots”

“movement”

Give 2–3 examples of grassroots movements



community choices

unit three

U3L3A3 | Compare and contrast democracies

overview

You will read the attached articles and complete the jigsaw activity to learn more about the governments in Venezuela and Norway. You will compare and contrast what democracy looks like in Canada compared to Venezuela/Norway in a Venn diagram.

learning goal

- To understand how the democracies function in Norway and Venezuela.
- To compare the Canadian Democracy to those in Norway and/or Venezuela.

success criteria

- Completion of handout.

Inquiry question

- What are the similarities and differences between the democratic governments in Canada, Norway and Venezuela?

jigsaw activity

1. You will be assigned a 'home group.'
2. Each student will be given a different article that they will become an expert on.
3. Students will move to their 'expert group' (all students assigned the same article).
4. Students will take time to read the article individually.
5. Students will then discuss the article as a group and complete the below table.

Article title: _____

As you read and discuss with your group, write down important facts about your topic. After you have become an expert on your own topic, you will share your findings with a group of classmates, and learn about their topics as well.

Important ideas
1.
2.
3.
Summary



community choices
unit three

U3L3A3 | Compare and contrast democracies

Article title	Rotation 1	Rotation 2	Rotation 3
1. Important idea			
2. Important idea			
3. Important idea			

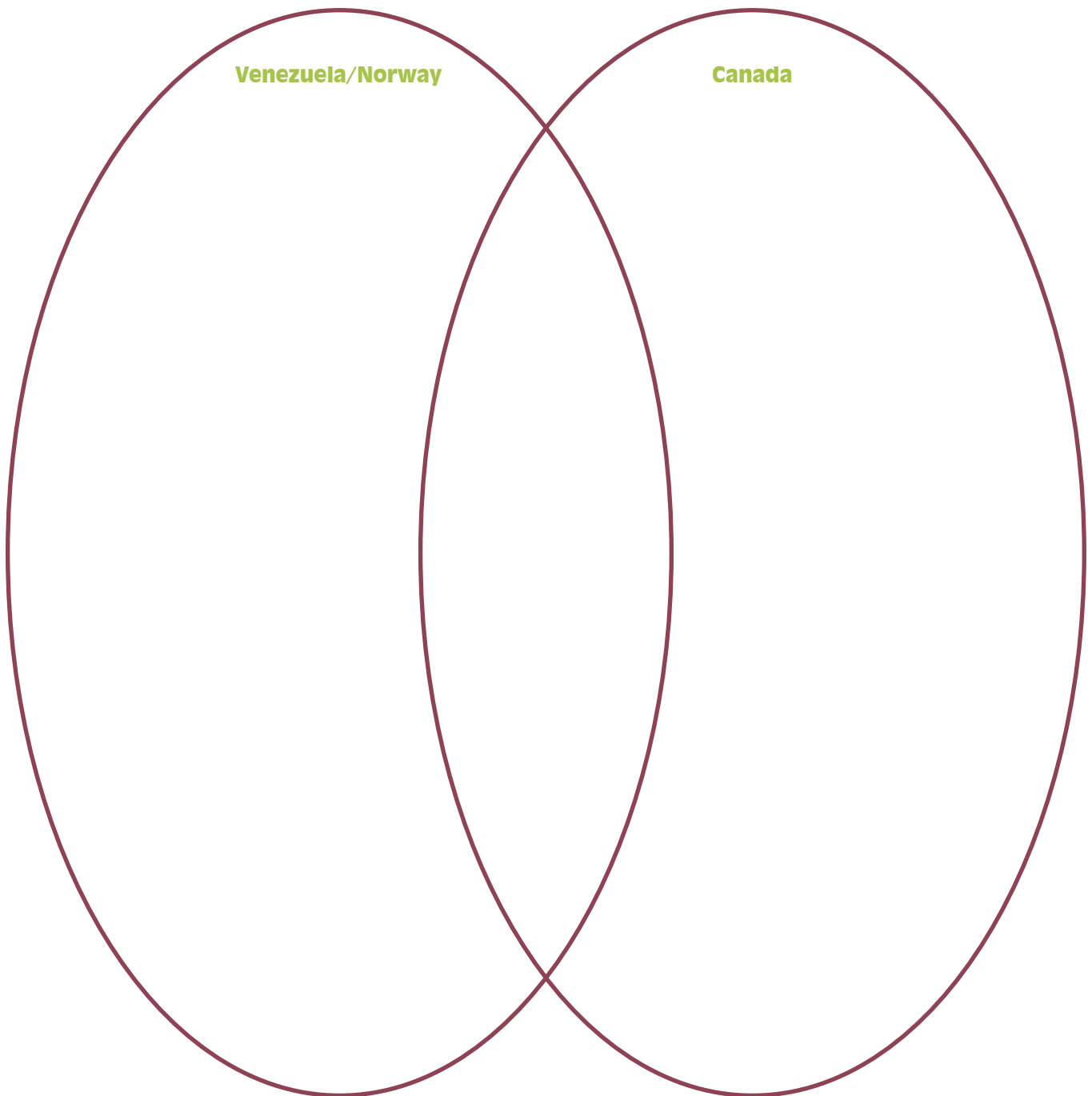


community choices
unit three

U3L3A3 | Compare and contrast democracies

compare and contrast

In point form, identify at least 10 differences and three similarities in the democratic governments in Canada and Venezuela or Norway.







Fair Representation
Vote équitable
Canada au Canada

MAKE EVERY VOTE COUNT!

THIS IS DEMOCRACY?

Why Canadians need a fair and proportional voting system

The voting system is the heart of representative democracy. It's the tool citizens use to create democratic government.

When every citizen's vote has equal value, parliaments can reflect the political will of the people.

If the voting system ignores or distorts what voters say, governments cannot be properly accountable and democracy is compromised. This is the core problem with the Canadian political system. Our 21st century democracy is hobbled by a dysfunctional 12th century voting system that was scrapped long ago by most major democracies.

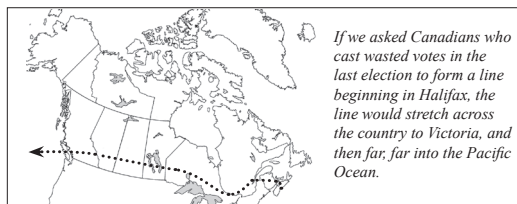


Fair Vote Canada is a national network of concerned citizens who are pressing for fair voting systems at all levels of government and throughout civil society



First-past-the-post voting originated in the 12th century...

...when people believed the earth was flat. Over the centuries, we learned the earth was round. Most countries also learned there were better ways to vote.



If we asked Canadians who cast wasted votes in the last election to form a line beginning in Halifax, the line would stretch across the country to Victoria, and then far, far into the Pacific Ocean.

The heart of the problem: the winner-take-all principle

Canada's current voting system is based on the winner-take-all principle. It's just what it says. In each riding, one group of voters wins – their votes send an MP to Parliament.

Every other voter in that riding loses – their votes elect no one to represent them in Parliament. They cast ineffective, wasted votes. The only voters sending MPs to Ottawa are those who support the most popular party in their riding. **In other words, your political beliefs and place of residence determine whether your vote counts.** If you hold the "wrong" political views or live in the "wrong" place, your vote does nothing. **In a typical federal election, more than seven million Canadians, or just over half of voters, cast wasted votes.**

The United States and the United Kingdom are the only other major Western democracies using Canada's version of winner-take-all (first-past-the-post). When the new democracies in Eastern Europe chose their voting systems, not one adopted this system.

What is proportional representation?

Proportional representation is any voting system designed to produce a representative body (like a parliament, legislature, or council) where voters elect MPs in proportion to our votes.



Where would you rather vote?

In 2011, both Canada and New Zealand had national elections. Using a proportional voting system, **97% of New Zealand voters were able to elect an MP.** Using first-past-the-post, **just 51% of Canadian voters were able to elect an MP.**

The core principle is to treat all voters equally – **to make every vote count.** When voters are treated equally, election results will be proportional. If voters for a party cast 40% of the votes, they will elect about 40% of the MPs (not 50% or 60%). If voters for another party cast 20% of the vote, they will elect about 20% of the MPs (not 10% or 0%).

In other words, a party's share of MPs will actually reflect how people voted: 81 countries have voting systems with an element of proportional representation.

Isn't that what we have now?

The very strange math of Canadian elections

39.6 % elect a Conservative "majority" government
- 2011 federal election

38.5% elect a Liberal "majority" government
- 1997 federal election

37.6% elect an NDP "majority" government
- 1990 Ontario election

Canada's Parliament and provincial legislatures all use a winner-take-all voting system, where each riding has only one winner, and the candidate with the most votes wins.

What's wrong with the candidate with the most votes winning?

With just one winner in each riding, half of Canadian voters don't actually elect anyone, and our Parliaments and legislatures don't actually look anything like Canada's political diversity.

DEMOCRACY FAIL

Voter turnout is plummeting. Cynicism about politics, politicians, and elections is growing. Even our political leaders admit to a very troubling democratic deficit.

That's not surprising when the voting system:

- **fails** to give voters equal votes
- **fails** to give us the representation we want
- **fails** to create legitimate majority government
- **fails** to make politicians accountable to voters
- **fails** to create Parliaments that reflect the diversity of Canada
- **fails** to give most Canadians, particularly young people, a reason to vote

The problem isn't just a few bad politicians or party leaders. It's the rules of the game.

What is Fair Vote Canada?

Fair Vote Canada is a multi-partisan citizens' campaign for voting system reform. We promote the use of fair and proportional voting systems for elections of all levels of government and throughout civil society.

Fair Vote Canada brings together people from all parts of the country, all walks of life, and all points on the political spectrum. Today, FVC has members in every province and territory and about 20 local and regional chapters.

PHONY MAJORITIES, PHONY MANDATES

Since World War I, Canada has had 16 "majority" governments. In each case, one party held a majority of seats and exercised 100 percent of the power.

But just four of these actually won a majority of the popular vote!

And it's getting worse, not better. Since the mid-1960s, Canada has had eight "majority" governments, with only one supported by a majority of voters, and that one just by a hair.

In 1997, the Liberals formed a majority government with just 38 percent of the popular vote, and in 2011, the Conservatives did too, with 39.6%.

Majority governments since World War I...

Legitimate majorities	Phony majorities
1940	1930
1949	1935
1958	1945
1984	1953
	1968
	1974
	1980
	1988
	1993
	1997
	2000
	2011

Wrong-winner elections "N.B. PICKS SHAWN!"

...or so said the front page of the September 19, 2006 edition of the Moncton Times & Transcript after the provincial election. A huge photo showed Shawn Graham, leader of the New Brunswick Liberals, celebrating his stunning victory.

Just one problem here.

New Brunswick voters didn't pick Shawn Graham's Liberals. More people voted for Bernard Lord's

Progressive Conservatives. But the winner-take-all system gave the Liberals a majority of seats.

This is just one of the "wrong-winner" provincial elections in recent times. Parties coming second in the popular vote also formed "majority" governments in British Columbia (1996) and Quebec (1994).

In four provincial elections since 1996, the party that came second in the popular vote actually formed a "majority" government!



How bad can it be?

In 2011, the votes of seven million Canadian voters elected no one. Conservatives in Quebec, New Democrats in Saskatchewan, Liberals in Alberta, and Greens everywhere (not just the few of them in one riding) all deserve to be represented by someone they voted for. Canada's regions are actually much more diverse than our voting system reflects.

* "The present [voting] system...creates a wholly false image of the country, based on illusory majorities and exaggerated regionalism, as harmful to the legitimacy of government as it is to national unity."
Andrew Coyne
August 31, 2001, National Post column

**All Votes
Are Not Equal**

**Exaggerated
Regional Differences**

Canada's voting system rewards regional parties, or national parties that focus on a specific region of the country.

A million votes concentrated in one region of the country will gain a party far more seats than the support of a million voters earned from coast to coast.

So naturally, we end up with parties that unfairly dominate certain regions of the country, with little or no representation for their voters outside their strongholds.

Government and opposition caucuses seldom have strong representation from all parts of the country.

Canada's 2011 electoral map made it appear as though 69% of Ontario voters voted Conservative, when just 43% did. It suggested that a huge majority of Quebec voters were NDP supporters, when 57% of them actually voted for other parties.

The map also made it seem that 78% of Western Canadian voters chose the Conservatives, when, in reality, almost half of them voted for other parties.

Our voting system wildly exaggerates differences between regions and all but ignores the diversity within them. It makes it look like there's no such thing as Alberta Liberal voters, Saskatchewan NDP voters, or Montreal Conservative voters.

In fact, in 2011, there were 209,000 Montreal Conservative voters. They just didn't elect anyone. By contrast, only 190,000 Conservative voters in Mississauga and Brampton, Ontario elected all eight of their MPs with only 43.7% of the vote.

Representing differences is at the core of democracy. Surely, exaggerating them is not.

"This is perverse, for a party's breadth of appeal is surely a favourable factor [in choosing a voting system] from the point of view of national cohesion, and its discouragement a count against an electoral system which heavily under-rewards it."

Lord Jenkins, "The Report of the Independent Commission on the Voting System" (United Kingdom) 1998

Given the huge number of votes that elect no one, it's not surprising our elections produce wacky outcomes. If Canada's voting system treated all voters equally, each of our 308 MPs would be elected by, and represent, about 48,000 voters (based on current voter turnout). How did the 2011 election compare to that indicator of democratic equality? Not well...

- A Conservative vote was worth more than two Liberal votes
- An NDP vote was worth 13 Green votes
- Supporters of big parties suffered: 50% of Canada's wasted votes were cast for Conservatives and Liberals
- 1.9 million NDP votes in Ontario and the Prairies elected just 25 MPs, while just 1.6 million NDP votes in Quebec alone elected a whopping 59 MPs.
- 627,962 Conservative voters in Quebec elected just five MPs, while just 256,167 of their fellow Conservatives in Saskatchewan elected 13.
- It took 125,183 Western Liberal voters to elect an MP, but just 32,016 Conservative voters to do the same.
- 428,325 Green voters east of BC didn't elect a single MP, while 333,172 Liberal voters in Atlantic Canada alone elected 12.

**It's an election.
Doesn't someone
have to lose?**

Candidates and parties can lose, but voters never should. In their 2011 election, 97% of New Zealand voters cast a vote that elected someone to represent them. In Canada, just 51% of us did.

Do enough people really think there's a problem?

Many polls from 2001 to 2010 showed a strong majority of Canadians (around 70%) believed that the portion of seats a party wins in the House of Commons should reflect the portion of the votes they receive.

A February 2010 Environics Research poll showed that this is still true. It found that 68 percent of Canadians support "moving towards a system of proportional representation (PR) in Canadian elections".

**IN THE 2011 ELECTION
it took...**

- 35,152 votes to elect one Conservative MP
- 43,810 votes to elect one NDP MP
- 81,855 votes to elect one Liberal MP
- 222,857 votes to elect one Bloc MP
- 572,095 votes to elect one Green MP

**Fair Vote Canada believes Canadians
should be able to...**

- cast an **equal effective vote** and be represented fairly,
- be governed by a **fairly elected Parliament** that closely reflects the popular vote, **and**
- live under legitimate laws approved by a majority of elected Parliamentarians representing a majority of voters.

DO YOU AGREE?

DONATE!

www.fairvote.ca

**You call this voter equality?
Consider the 2011 federal election...**

Look at the plight of Conservatives in Quebec, where 627,962 voters elected only five MPs, while just 256,167 of their fellow Conservatives in Saskatchewan elected 13 MPs.

And look at the plight of Liberal voters in the West, where it took 125,183 Liberal voters to elect an MP, and just 32,016 Conservative voters to do the same.

Look at the 428,325 Green voters east of BC who didn't elect a single MP, while 333,172 Liberal voters in Atlantic Canada alone were able to elect 12 MPs.

Wasted Votes and Declining Turnout

Voter Turnout in Canada's Elections

1984	75.3%
1988	75.3%
1993	70.9%
1997	67.0%
2000	64.1%
2004	60.9%
2006	64.7%
2008	58.8%
2011	61.1%

What happens when a voting system wastes votes, provides no representation for nearly half the voters, distorts election outcomes, and routinely creates phony majority governments?

Some people feel pressured to vote against a party they fear rather than for a party they actually support.

But many more just stay home. The October 2008 federal election set another record for the lowest turnout in Canadian history.

Given the way the system treats voters, it's no surprise that 40% of registered voters don't come out — it's surprising that 60% still do.

Canada ranked 131st in the world in voter turnout in 2011, just ahead of Uganda, and slightly behind Estonia.

Based on international experience, if Canada switched to some form of proportional representation, we could expect at least another 1.5 million citizens to participate.

CANADA

#1 in the world in hockey!!!
#131 in voter turnout

What about representation of women and minorities?

Less than a quarter of Canada's parliamentarians are women. That's barely enough to rank 39th in the world, well behind Angola, Belarus, Iraq, Sudan, and Afghanistan. Some countries set aside a certain number of seats for women. But those that elect the most women without such quotas use proportional representation.

In Canada, visible minorities also hold relatively few seats, despite being a growing segment of society. Very few Aboriginal people serve in Parliament.

When parties can only put forward one candidate per riding, they will naturally nominate the candidate that they think is strongest. "As long as there are even subconscious biases in our society about who makes the best MP, white men will be overrepresented."* But when voters can elect several MPs, parties will put forward a more representative range of candidates to earn the votes of a diverse population, and voters will indeed take them up on it.

*Dr. Alan Renwick, University of Reading, 2011



Artist: Barbara Paterson

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

Consider the percentage of women parliamentarians in the four major Western countries still using winner-take-all:

Canada	24.7%
Australia	24.7%
UK	22.3%
US	16.8%

Compared to major Western democracies using various forms of proportional representation:

Sweden	44.7%
Iceland	42.5%
Finland	42.5%
Norway	39.6%
Denmark	39.1%
Netherlands	38.7%
Belgium	38.0%
Spain	36.0%
Germany	32.9%
New Zealand	32.2%

Data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (December 2012)

"The current electoral system no longer responds to 21st century Canadian democratic values."

Law Commission of Canada, Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada (2004)

Fair Voting: The Alternative to Winner-Take-All



"The right of decision belongs to the majority, but the right of representation belongs to all."
Ernest Naville, 1865

Voting systems: We have choices

Fortunately, we're not stuck with the system we have. Most established democracies use other voting systems that better represent what voters are saying.

What are the benefits of fair voting?

All voters have a reason to vote, regardless of their political beliefs or place of residence. Liberals in Conservative regions, Conservatives in Liberal regions, and supporters of smaller parties everywhere will be able to cast effective votes.

Because voters are treated equally, Parliaments are truly representative of the people. Currently, some parties in Parliament have far more seats and power than their popular vote warrants, while others have too few seats or none at all.

Majority governments represent a genuine majority. Canadians are usually ruled by "majority" governments that the majority voted against. Countries with fair voting systems typically have stable and responsive coalition governments — stable because the parties know they will never have complete control of government and have to work constructively with partners.

Fair voting systems tend to produce parliaments with more women and visible minorities. Because parties have to nominate lists of candidates to compete in each region, they quickly learn that candidate lists reflecting the diversity of the population usually attract more votes.

All geographic regions usually have representation both in the government and opposition benches. Because every voter is equal, regions generally elect candidates from all parties, unlike our current system where one party often dominates each region



community choices unit three

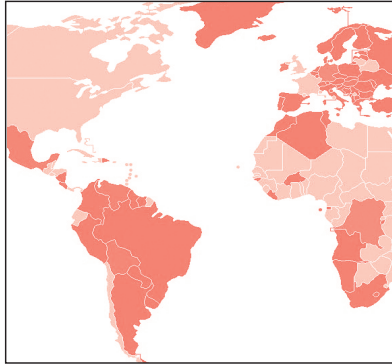
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COUNTRIES USING PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION: WHAT WE KNOW

Professor Arend Lijphart's *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries* (1999, Yale University Press), is an excellent source of comparative international data. Lijphart's study examined a large number of countries over extended periods of time and identified these characteristics of "consensus democracies" using proportional voting systems:

- Wasted votes and distorted election results are reduced.
- Phony majority governments are rare.
- Voter turnout tends to be higher.
- Parliaments are more representative of the range of political views.
- Parliaments better reflect the composition of the electorate (gender, ethnicity, region).
- Parliaments tend to pass legislation more in line with the views of the majority of the public.
- Countries maintain strong economic performance.
- Citizens tend to be more satisfied with the way democracy works.

A ten-page summary of key findings (*Can Fair Voting Systems Really Make a Difference?*) is available at www.fairvote.ca



Countries with proportional voting systems

Countries with 'Winner-Take-All' voting systems

Partial listing of countries using proportional voting systems

These include **most long-term democracies, most European countries** and most of the major nations of the Americas.

Argentina	Estonia	Luxembourg	Portugal	Sweden
Austria	Finland	Netherlands	Romania	Switzerland
Belgium	Germany	New Zealand	Scotland	Turkey
Brazil	Guyana	Nicaragua	Serbia	Uruguay
Bulgaria	Hungary	Norway	Slovakia	Wales
Colombia	Iceland	Paraguay	Slovenia	
Czech Republic	Ireland	Peru	South Africa	
Denmark	Latvia	Poland	Spain	

Developing a Made-in-Canada Fair Voting System

Canadians deserve a voting system that ensures fair representation and accountable government.

The good news is, we don't need to change the constitution or expand the House of Commons to get it. We should use a citizen-driven process to discuss the alternatives and find a Made-in-Canada solution.

Here are just two of many approaches that might be considered

Does Fair Vote Canada advocate for a particular system?

We advocate for voting systems that are designed to produce a representative body (like a parliament, legislature, or council) where seats are more or less in proportion to votes cast. While 81 countries use a type of proportional representation, local circumstances have created unique variations.

Canadians deserve to learn from these experiences to create a uniquely Canadian proportional voting system that minimizes wasted votes and reflects who we are and what we actually vote for.

EXAMPLE 1: MIXED SYSTEMS OFFER MORE OPPORTUNITIES

How would it work?

In *Mixed-Member Proportional (MMP)* systems like they have in Scotland, Wales, Germany, and New Zealand, voters vote for their individual local representatives the way we do, but also cast a separate second vote to elect several "top-up" regional MPs.

In the "open list" version recommended by the Law Commission of Canada, the top regional vote-getters from an underrepresented party fill top-up seats until their party's share of seats reflects its share of the popular vote.

Law Commission of Canada recommends mixed system

The Law Commission of Canada, an independent federal agency, carried out a two-year study and public consultation on federal voting system reform.

Their final report, tabled in the House of Commons in March 2004, called for replacement of the antiquated winner-take-all system, but not a radical overhaul.

Rather than adopt the traditional form of proportional representation used in most Western countries, the Commission proposed a uniquely Canadian mixed-member proportional system (MMP) designed to add an element of proportionality, while continuing some elements of the current system.

They recommended that two-thirds of the seats would be filled through riding elections and the remaining one-third from regional candidates.

Under this system, voters would gain additional representation because they have two types of competing MPs:

- 1) a local riding MP (who may or may not be someone they voted for) and
- 2) diverse regional MPs, including those elected from the party they support.

Voters have the choice of either voting for their party's regional list, or of voting for a candidate within the list. So MMP systems can ensure that all elected MPs have "faced the voters" and been personally elected.

A similar mixed regional system was recommended in December 2007 by the Chief Electoral Officer of Quebec.

You can find the Law Commission of Canada's report, *Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada*, at www.fairvote.ca.

Importantly, the Commission's approach to designing an MMP system differs from the MMP models presented to voters in the Ontario and PEI referendums, which had closed province-wide lists.

"Best runner-up" MMP is used in the German province of Baden-Wurttemberg. They have no party lists. The additional "top-up" regional MPs are simply the party's local candidates in the region who did best in their local ridings without winning the local seat.



community choices unit three

U3L3A3 | Compare and contrast democracies | Article 1

Wouldn't we be giving all our power away to political parties?

Some people didn't like the "closed list" MMP system put forward in the 2007 Ontario referendum because voters' second votes would have been for parties, not individual candidates, with top-up seats filled from province-wide lists chosen by party members.

It's worth remembering that in today's elections, party candidates are chosen by party members alone. By the time they face the voters in their riding, each candidate

is effectively a closed party list, one candidate long. So even "closed list" MMP offers every Canadian a much better chance of being represented than our current system. After an election, you could take an issue to your local MP or one of your diverse regional MPs. Today, many MPs occupy safe seats. But they might start listening if they knew you could actually take your business elsewhere. In Germany, they call this

"personalized proportional representation."

If you're still worried about giving parties too much power, consider "open list" MMP (as recommended by the Law Commission of Canada), "best runner-up" MMP, or the Single Transferable Vote (STV).

EXAMPLE 2: SINGLE TRANSFERABLE VOTE (STV) IN MULTI-MEMBER RIDINGS

How would it work?

In the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system used in Ireland, Northern Ireland, and two state houses and the national senate in Australia, voters in combined local districts get to elect four, five, six or seven representatives instead of just one, ranking individual local politicians from all parties by order of preference. STV does everything it can to make sure your vote isn't wasted. If your favourite candidate doesn't have enough

votes to get elected, your vote is transferred to your next-favourite candidate, and so on.

In that case, voting for a shoo-in candidate might seem like a waste if it meant your other choices didn't get in (Remember, you've got only one vote to use to elect five or six people). But the truly great thing about STV (and one thing that sets it apart from the Alternative Vote, which is not proportional) is that if your favourite candidate has more votes than he or she needs, your

vote is similarly transferred to your next-favourite candidate, and so on, until the full weight of your vote ends up where it's most needed to get you the group of representatives you want.

Every voter gets an equal impact on the outcome, and can vote their conscience without wasting their vote. Every politician is elected with equally broad support, and none can benefit from vote-splitting. Importantly, results are proportional.

Single Transferable Vote (STV) – ideal for civil society and non-party elections

STV can be used for traditional party-based national and provincial elections, as it is in Ireland, Malta, and for the Australian Senate.

Because STV is not dependent on party proportionality, it is well suited for use in civil society elections – for example, electing the boards of community groups, unions, co-ops, NGOs and businesses. It is also suitable for municipal elections where candidates have no party affiliation. It was used in many western Canadian municipalities in the early 20th century. STV is already widely used in British civil society, with many organizations, universities, and businesses using it for board elections. It is also used for municipal elections in Scotland and New Zealand.

The city is divided into multi-member districts. Unlike block voting, where you elect many councillors at-large by voting for all of them, which often results in one group winning all the seats, you have only one vote, resulting in proportional results. With STV, you rank as many candidates on the ballot as you wish in order of preference, 1, 2, 3, etc. If candidates are affiliated with parties, you can vote across party lines, or in any manner you wish. You can vote by party, by gender, by ethnic group, by geographic location or whatever criteria you wish.

Candidates are elected by reaching a quota of votes (based on the number of seats in the district and number of votes cast). If a candidate receives

twice as many votes as needed to get elected, the other half of each vote will be transferred to the next preference on the ballots. If a candidate is eliminated, then that candidate's votes will also be transferred to the next preference on each ballot.

STV was recommended by the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform (www.citizensassembly.bc.ca). In a 2005 referendum, 58% of British Columbia voters voted "Yes" to STV for provincial elections. Unfortunately, the BC government decided that 60% was required for legitimacy. In the previous election, that same government had won 97% of the seats and 100% of the power with 57% of the vote.

PHONY REFORM

Many politicians who want to derail public demand for fair voting find it more strategic to embrace "reform" while portraying fair voting systems as "too radical" for Canadians. They accept that it's time to scrap first-past-the-post, but propose adopting a different type of winner-take-all voting. They tell us the solution is simple. Just use a ranked ballot and continue to elect just one MP from every riding.

Why don't we just rank candidates in our one riding?

The system of ranking candidates in single-winner ridings is called the Alternative Vote, or Instant Runoff Voting. The Alternative Vote is NOT a proportional system.

As long as there is only one winner in a riding, many (even most) voters in that riding simply do not elect the candidate that best represents them, and nationwide

results are not proportional. Ranking candidates wouldn't change this. As nice as it might be to rank them first on your ballot sheet, candidates of currently underrepresented parties would simply get eliminated in the second or third round of counting, in favour of larger parties. Studies show that 95-98% of the time, we would get the same winners as we do now. If you like ranking candidates, go proportional with multi-member ridings. Try Single Transferable Vote (STV).

THE ALTERNATIVE VOTE (AV): IT'S NO ALTERNATIVE

Just like Canada, Australia's lower house of Parliament has one member per riding. The only difference is that they use ranked ballots. If no candidate wins a majority of first-choice votes, then the least popular candidate is dropped, and those ballots are reassigned according to their second choices, and so on, until one candidate has a majority of the ballots.

This might sound like an improvement, but unfortunately, it simply recreates most of the problems of Canada's system (which is probably why only one major democracy uses this system).

Adding second- and third-choice votes in order to create a winner does not magically create "majority" support that didn't exist before, so we still get phony majority governments. Lower choices are usually the result of voters trying to vote strategically for the "lesser of evils". Most Canadians are already "represented" by their second or third choice — that's the problem, not the solution. If used in Canada, this voting system would do nothing for women and minorities, and could create even more distorted election results than the current system. AV was rejected in referendums in the UK and New Zealand in 2011, supported by only 32% in the UK and only 8% in New Zealand.

(There is one appropriate use of the Alternative Vote – when electing a position that can only be filled by one person, such as a mayor, president, party leader or committee chair. In these elections, the objective is to choose one person rather than create a representative body, such as a parliament, and that requires a winner-take-all voting system.)

For a more detailed discussion, see the Fair Vote Canada paper *The Alternative Vote (or Instant Runoff Voting): It's No Solution for the Democratic Deficit*, available on Resources page at www.fairvote.ca. Or check out sites like www.no2av.ca.



Arguments Against Fair Voting and Proportional Representation

Opponents of fair, proportional voting systems generally warn that if you demand “too much” democracy, you lose the ability to form effective governments. But a look at the list of nations already using fair voting systems shows that these arguments are not supported by the facts.

They are scare tactics, and here are a few of the most common ones to watch out for:

Doesn't all this mean many more politicians?

Proportional systems don't require more politicians. They simply allow you, the voter, to have a say over the occupant of more than one seat. You and your neighbour may vote differently, but we think you both deserve to elect someone. Don't you?

Wouldn't proportional representation let extremists get elected?

In our current system, vote splitting has allowed MPs to be elected with as little as 29% of the vote in their riding. In Germany's MMP system, parties need to have five per cent of the popular vote before they're allowed a seat. In STV, every single candidate has to earn a certain minimum number of votes to be elected. Most candidates win by earning votes transferred from other candidates from across the political spectrum, ensuring diverse voices with broad support.

Won't parties multiply like rabbits?

Critics sometimes claim that fair voting would produce a proliferation of small parties. It's true that some new parties may form and old parties may restructure, because when all Canadians are free to cast positive and effective votes, parties will truly have to reflect the range of viewpoints in this country.

Conservatives of different stripes, libertarians, and others would not be forced into a broad-tent party in order to have their vote count.

But history shows that the introduction of fair voting will likely only marginally increase the number of parties that can win seats and affect legislation. Why? It's only common sense. Most voters want to support parties that can have impact or growth potential. Some countries also set thresholds (e.g., 4% or 5% of the popular vote) before parties can win seats in parliament. Regional models like Scotland's have similar natural thresholds built-in.

Won't this cause instability, constant elections, and endless minority governments?

Since Italy reformed its voting system in the 1990s, Canada is now the most unstable of the major democracies, with twenty-one elections since World War II. We keep flip-flopping between false majority governments (a majority of seats without a majority of the vote) and unstable minorities at the expense of our country's long-term priorities, and our voting system is largely to blame.

In Ontario's 2011 election, just 2% separated the two leading parties, but one got 49% of the seats while the other got just 35%. In Prince Edward Island, 40% of the vote gets you just 19% of the seats. But bump that up to 50%, and your party sweeps to a dominant 81% majority. When relatively small changes in poll numbers spell the difference between oblivion and absolute power, it's no wonder our politicians seem to be in perpetual, confrontational campaign mode.

In proportional representation, a 2% change in the polls would mean just a 2% change in seats. Politicians would have much more incentive to get down to work on our country's long-term priorities, rather than playing “gotcha” to tweak the poll numbers and spark yet another election. Minority governments could mean cooperation and compromise, not confrontation and instability.

Wouldn't this mean constant coalition governments?

Governments formed under any voting system are coalitions of different groups who negotiate and make deals. That's the way democracy works.

Each of Canada's “big tent” parties is already a coalition of internal factions which are generally hidden from public view except during leadership races. They compete with one another and then negotiate and compromise on the party platform and policies.

When elections are more proportional, such coalitions generally involve more than one party. While Canadians have been taught to fear this, it actually has a few enormous advantages. Negotiations among parties are generally much more visible to the public than those that currently take place within parties, and the compromises are publicly known. When elections are more proportional, the resulting coalition or governing group represents a true majority of voters.

For example, the Law Commission of Canada recommended keeping the same numbers of MPs from each province, making every three ridings into two larger ones, and adding regional MPs elected by voters unrepresented by the local results.

“For those who argue that anything but our existing system will fail to produce [single-party] majority governments — seen by many as a more effective governing vehicle — it is surely fair to respond that “majority” governments reflective of only a minority of the eligible voters in a democracy is a more serious problem. Stable government composed of more than one party is now the effective norm in continental Europe.”

*Ed Broadbent and Hugh Segal
October 1, 2002, Globe and Mail*

Wouldn't small parties have all the power? Wouldn't the “tail wag the dog”?

Any major party “blackmailed” into adopting an agenda out-of-step with its own support base will be severely punished at the next election. On the other hand, when two or more like-minded parties, who together represent a majority of voters, agree to form a coalition focusing on areas of policy agreement, that often indicates majority public support for those policies. That's more like the dog choosing the tail that fits. Research has indeed shown that coalition governments tend to be better than single-party governments at producing legislation more in line with public thinking.

Won't this spell chaos, just like Italy and Israel?

While 81 countries use proportional representation, critics can find only these two extreme examples, conveniently ignoring stable examples like Germany, Switzerland, and Sweden. Israel has a pure-list PR system that would never work in Canada, and has never been seriously considered here. These critics should also remember that since Italy reformed its voting system in 1994, Canada is likely the most unstable of the major democracies, with twenty-one elections since World War II compared with 17 in Italy.

FVC Statement of Purpose

The following Statement of Purpose was ratified by FVC members on August 20, 2009.

Fair Vote Canada seeks broad multi-partisan support to embody in new legislation the basic principle of democratic representative government and ultimate safeguard of a free society: the right of each citizen to equal treatment under election laws and equal representation in legislatures.

We campaign for equal effective votes and fair representation at every level of government and throughout civil society by various means including lobbying legislators for electoral law reform, litigation, public education, citizens' assemblies, and referenda.

To create an equal voice for every citizen and give democratic legitimacy to our laws, we must reform our electoral institutions, political parties, public political funding mechanisms and governing processes to achieve these interdependent goals:

Proportional representation - The supporters of all candidates and political parties must be fairly represented in our legislatures in proportion to votes cast. Political parties should have seats in close proportion to their popular support.

Positive voter choice - We need fair and unrestricted competition among political parties presenting democratically-nominated candidates. A democratic voting system must encourage citizens to exercise positive choice by voting for the candidate or party they prefer. They should not find it necessary to embrace negative or strategic voting - to vote for a less-preferred candidate to block the election of one even less preferred. Never should citizens be denied representation simply because their preferred candidate cannot win a single-member riding.

Fair representation - To reflect in the legislatures the diversity of society we must change the voting system and related laws to remove barriers to the nomination and election of candidates from groups now underrepresented including women, cultural minorities and Aboriginals.

Geographic representation - We must change the voting system and related laws to give rural and urban voters in every province, territory and regional community effective votes and fair representation in both government and opposition.

Government accountability to voters - Legislators representing a majority of voters must determine the laws and guide their administration.



Fair Vote Canada: a Call to Action!

How can the system actually be changed? What is Fair Vote Canada doing about it?

Canada's voting system can be changed through a simple majority vote in Parliament... no constitutional amendment required!

But it won't happen without pressure from all of us.

As a multi-partisan citizens' campaign with chapters across the country, we lobby MPs and educate the media and the public to bring Canada's democracy into the 21st century.

Take action today at www.fairvote.ca!

Become a donor

Fair Vote believes Canadians should be able to...

- Cast an equal and effective vote and be represented fairly,
- Be governed by a fairly elected Parliament where the share of seats held by each political party closely reflects the popular vote,
and
- Live under legitimate laws approved by a majority of elected Parliamentarians representing a majority of voters.

Join Us

FVC is a national network of concerned citizens who are pressing for fair voting systems at all levels of government and throughout civil society. Supporters are encouraged to become FVC members (see back page for member/donor form) and to visit www.fairvote.ca to learn how to take action. FVC members are eligible to vote and run for national and local positions. The 15-member National Council provides overall direction for the organization and campaigns. Five three-year positions on the National Council are elected each year.

Take Action

Taking visible action in communities across Canada is at the heart of what we do. Together we educate the public about the problems with our current voting system and the principle of proportional representation. Many cities have Fair Vote Canada chapters, while others have more informal Local Action Teams. Fair Vote Canada regularly sends out "calls to action", inviting all supporters across Canada to participate in a collective action. In places where Chapters or Local Action Teams exist, supporters can organize and act together. They can also be proactive by having tables at fairs, events, and presentations in their communities. Want to share your time and talent in a different way? Fair Vote Canada supporters collaborate online on projects that are crucial to our movement. These have included high school lesson plans, videos, parallel election sites, and more.

Get involved today at www.fairvote.ca!

Declaration of Voters Rights

On Oct. 16, 2009, FVC launched the Declaration of Voters' Rights at a press conference on Parliament Hill. Since that date, many thousands more have added their names.

We the undersigned Canadian citizens demand the following basic democratic rights:

- to cast an equal and effective vote and to be represented fairly in Parliament, regardless of political belief or place of residence.
- to be governed by a fairly elected Parliament where the share of seats held by each political party closely reflects the popular vote.
- to live under legitimate laws approved by a majority of elected Parliamentarians representing a majority of voters.

The current winner-take-all voting system is absolutely inconsistent with these fundamental democratic rights. As a result, Canada is faced with a spiraling democratic deficit. The need for reform is urgent. We need a Parliament that represents the political and social diversity of Canada.

We demand that the House of Commons immediately undertake a public consultation to amend the Canada Elections Act to incorporate these vital democratic rights. The House, after this consultation, should quickly implement a suitable form of proportional representation.

Sign the Declaration at www.fairvote.ca

Yes, I want to join Fair Vote Canada and "Make Every Vote Count"!

Please fill in the information below and return this form and payment, or credit card information, to:

Fair Vote Canada, 283 Danforth Avenue #408, Toronto ON M4K 1N2.

If you have any questions, please call 416-410-4034 or email office@FairVote.Ca.

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Eugene A. Forsey

How Canadians Govern Themselves



8th Edition



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Preface

How Canadians Govern Themselves, first published in 1980, explores Canada's parliamentary system, from the decisions made by the Fathers of Confederation to the daily work of parliamentarians in the Senate and House of Commons. Useful information on Canada's Constitution, the judicial system, and provincial and municipal powers is gathered together in this one reference book. The author adapted some material taken from an earlier edition prepared by Joseph Schull and published under the same title in 1971.

The book was initially commissioned by the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada, which also published the second edition. The House of Commons published the third edition. The fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and this eighth edition were published by the Library of Parliament in consultation with the author's family and with the approval of the Department of Canadian Heritage. A deliberate effort has been made in each edition to keep revisions to a minimum and to preserve the integrity of Senator Forsey's historical judgements and writing style.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this document belong to the author or his authorized successors, and do not necessarily reflect those of Parliament.

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Note on the Author

Photo: Jean-Marc Carisse



The Honourable Eugene A. Forsey, 1904–91

The Honourable Eugene A. Forsey was widely regarded as one of Canada's foremost experts on the country's Constitution.

Born in Grand Bank, Newfoundland, he attended McGill University in Montreal and studied at Britain's Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar. In addition to his PhD, he also received numerous honorary degrees.

From 1929 to 1941, Mr. Forsey served as a lecturer in economics and political science at McGill.

In 1942, he became director of research for the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL), a post he held for 14 years. From 1956 to 1966, he served as director of research for the CCL's successor, the Canadian Labour Congress, and from 1966 to 1969, as director of a special project marking Canada's centennial, a history of Canadian unions from 1812 to 1902.

During most of his union career, he taught Canadian government at Carleton University in Ottawa and, later, Canadian government and Canadian labour history at the University of Waterloo. From 1973 to 1977, he served as chancellor of Trent University.

Mr. Forsey ran for public office four times for the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). In the 1930s, he helped draft the Regina Manifesto, the CCF's founding declaration of policy.

Mr. Forsey was appointed to the Senate in 1970. He retired in 1979 at the mandatory retirement age of 75, and in 1985 was named to the Privy Council. In 1988, he was named a Companion of the Order of Canada, the highest level of membership. The Honourable Eugene A. Forsey died on February 20, 1991, leaving Canadians a rich legacy of knowledge of how we are governed.



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Introduction

Governments in democracies are elected by the passengers to steer the ship of the nation. They are expected to hold it on course, to arrange for a prosperous voyage, and to be prepared to be thrown overboard if they fail in either duty.

This, in fact, reflects the original sense of the word “government,” as its roots in both Greek and Latin mean “to steer.”

Canada is a democracy, a constitutional monarchy. Our head of state is the Queen of Canada, who is also Queen of Britain, Australia and New Zealand, and a host of other countries scattered around the world from the Bahamas and Grenada to Papua New Guinea and Tuvalu. Every act of government is done in the name of the Queen, but the authority for every act flows from the Canadian people.

When the men who framed the basis of our present written Constitution, the Fathers of Confederation, were drafting it in 1864–67, they freely, deliberately and unanimously chose to vest the formal executive authority in the Queen, “to be administered according to the well understood principles of the British Constitution by the Sovereign personally or by the Representative of the Queen.” That meant responsible government, with a cabinet responsible to the House of Commons, and the House of Commons answerable to the people. All of the powers of the Queen are now exercised by her representative, the Governor General, except when the Queen is in Canada.

The Governor General, who is now always a Canadian, is appointed by the Queen on the advice of the Canadian prime minister and, except in very extraordinary circumstances, exercises all powers of the office on the advice of the cabinet (a council of ministers), which has the support of a majority of the members of the popularly elected House of Commons.

Canada is not only an independent sovereign democracy, but is also a federal state, with 10 largely self-governing provinces and three territories with a lesser degree of self-government.

What does it all mean? How does it work?

The answer is important to every citizen. We cannot work or eat or drink; we cannot buy or sell or own anything; we cannot go to a ball game or a hockey game or watch TV without feeling the effects of government. We cannot marry or educate our children, cannot be sick, born or buried without the hand of government somewhere intervening. Government gives us railways, roads and airlines; sets the conditions that affect farms and industries; manages or mismanages the life and growth of the cities. Government is held responsible for social problems, and for pollution and sick environments.

Government is our creature. We make it, we are ultimately responsible for it, and, taking the broad view, in Canada we have considerable



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reason to be proud of it. Pride, however, like patriotism, can never be a static thing; there are always new problems posing new challenges. The closer we are to government, and the more we know about it, the more we can do to help meet these challenges.

This publication takes a look at our system of government and how it operates.



Parliamentary Government

Its Origins

Nova Scotia (which, till 1784, included what is now New Brunswick) was the first part of Canada to secure representative government. In 1758, it was given an assembly, elected by the people. Prince Edward Island followed in 1773; New Brunswick at its creation in 1784; Upper and Lower Canada (the predecessors of the present Ontario and Quebec) in 1791; and Newfoundland in 1832.

Nova Scotia was also the first part of Canada to win *responsible* government: government by a cabinet answerable to, and removable by, a majority of the assembly. New Brunswick followed a month later, in February 1848; the Province of Canada (a merger of Upper and Lower Canada formed in 1840) in March 1848; Prince Edward Island in 1851; and Newfoundland in 1855.

By the time of Confederation in 1867, this system had been operating in most of what is now Central and Eastern Canada for almost 20 years. The Fathers of Confederation simply continued the system they knew, the system that was already working, and working well.

For the nation, there was a Parliament, with a Governor General representing the Queen; an appointed upper house, the Senate; and an elected lower house, the House of Commons.

For every province there was a legislature, with a lieutenant-governor representing the Queen; for every province except Ontario, an appointed upper house, the legislative council, and an elected lower house, the legislative assembly. The new Province of Manitoba, created by the national Parliament in 1870, was given an upper house. British Columbia, which entered Canada in 1871, and Saskatchewan and Alberta, created by Parliament in 1905, never had upper houses. Newfoundland, which entered Canada in 1949, came in without one. Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Quebec have all abolished their upper houses.

How It Operates

The Governor General (and each provincial lieutenant-governor) governs through a cabinet, headed by a prime minister or premier (the two terms mean the same thing: first minister). If a national or provincial general election gives a party opposed to the cabinet in office a clear majority (that is, more than half the seats) in the House of Commons or the legislature, the cabinet resigns and the Governor General or lieutenant-governor calls on the leader of the victorious party to become prime minister and form a new cabinet. The prime minister chooses the other ministers, who are then formally appointed by the Governor General or, in the provinces, by the lieutenant-governor. If



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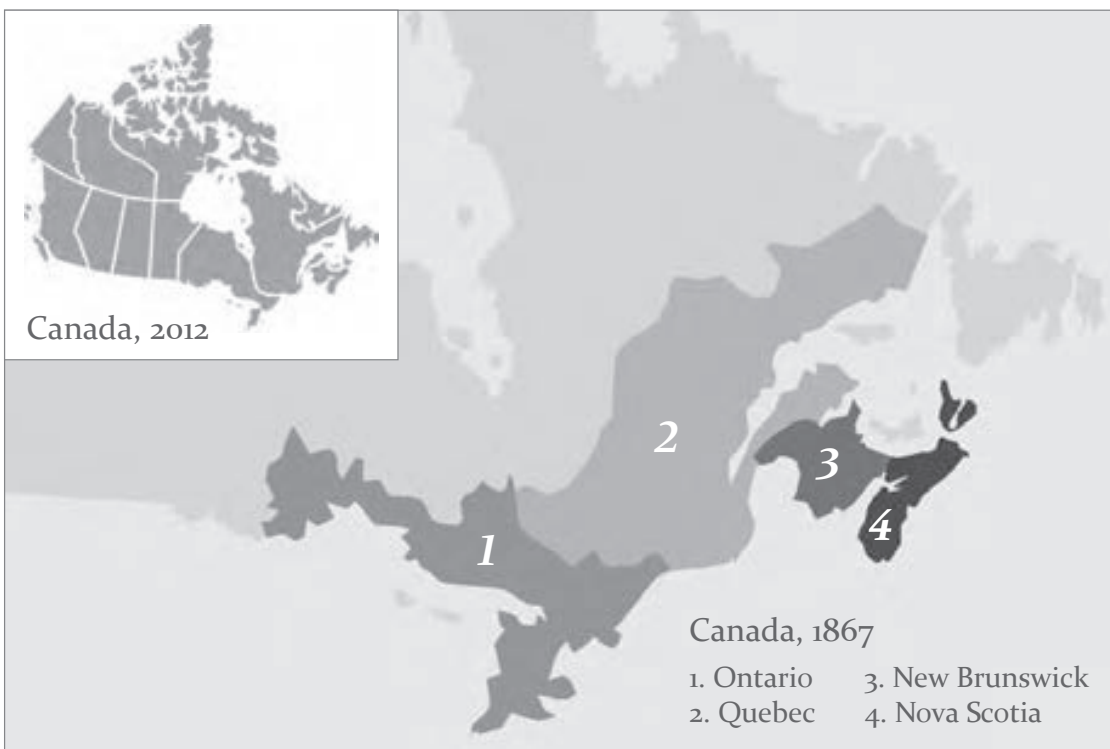


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no party gets a clear majority, the cabinet that was in office before and during the election has two choices. It can resign, in which case the Governor General or lieutenant-governor will call on the leader of the largest opposition party to form a cabinet. Or the cabinet already in office can choose to stay in office and meet the newly elected House — which, however, it must do promptly. In either case, it is the people’s representatives in the newly elected House who will decide whether the “minority” government (one whose own party has fewer than half the seats) shall stay in office or be thrown out.

If a cabinet is defeated in the House of Commons on a motion of censure or want of confidence, the cabinet must either resign (the Governor General will then ask the leader of the Opposition to form a new cabinet) or ask for a dissolution of Parliament and a fresh election.

In very exceptional circumstances, the Governor General could refuse a request for a fresh election. For instance, if an election gave no party a clear majority and the prime minister asked for a fresh election without even allowing the new Parliament to meet, the Governor General would have to say no. This is because, if “parliamentary government” is to mean anything, a newly elected House of Commons must at least be allowed to meet and see whether it can transact public business. Also, if a minority government is defeated on a motion of want of confidence very early in the first session of a new Parliament, and there is a reasonable possibility that a government of another party can be formed and get the support of the House of Commons, then the Governor General could refuse the request for a fresh election. The same is true for the lieutenant-governors of the provinces.





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No elected person in Canada above the rank of mayor really has a fixed term of office. Recent legislation in several provinces and territories, as well as a May 2007 Act of Parliament, provide for general elections to be held on a fixed date every four years under most circumstances. In practice this means that the expected term of office for a member of Parliament (or of a legislature with a fixed date law) would normally be four years. However, the Governor General's power to dissolve Parliament is not affected by the fixed date legislation. The prime minister can still ask for a fresh election at any time, although, as already stated, there may be circumstances in which he or she would not get it. There can be, and have been, Parliaments and legislatures that have lasted for less than a year. With extremely rare exceptions, no Parliament or legislature may last more than five years.

The cabinet has no "term." Every cabinet lasts from the moment the prime minister is sworn in till he or she resigns, dies or is dismissed. For example, Sir John A. Macdonald was Prime Minister from 1878 until he died in 1891, right through the elections of 1882, 1887 and 1891, all of which he won. Sir Wilfrid Laurier was Prime Minister from 1896 to 1911, right through the elections of 1900, 1904 and 1908, all of which he won. He resigned after being defeated in the election of 1911. The same thing has happened in several provinces. An American president or state governor, re-elected, has to be sworn in all over again. A Canadian prime minister or premier does not.

If a prime minister dies or resigns, the cabinet comes to an end. If this prime minister's party still has a majority in the Commons or the legislature, then the Governor General or lieutenant-governor must find a new prime

minister at once. A prime minister who resigns has no right to advise the governor as to a successor unless asked; even then, the advice need not be followed. If he or she resigns because of defeat, the governor must call on the leader of the Opposition to form a government. If the prime minister dies, or resigns for personal reasons, then the governor consults leading members of the majority party as to who will most likely be able to form a government that can command a majority in the House. The governor then calls on the person he or she has decided has the best chance. This new prime minister will, of course, hold office only until the majority party has chosen a new leader in a national or provincial convention. This leader will then be called on to form a government.

The cabinet consists of a varying number of ministers. The national cabinet has ranged from 13 to more than 40 members, and provincial cabinets from about 10 to over 30. Most of the ministers have "portfolios" (that is, they are in charge of particular departments — Finance, National Defence, Environment, Health, etc.), and are responsible, answerable and accountable to the House of Commons or the legislature for their particular departments. On occasion there can be ministers without portfolio. There may also be "ministers of state," who may assist cabinet ministers with particular responsibilities or sections of their departments, or may be responsible for policy-oriented bodies known as "ministries of state." (These assisting ministers, sometimes called "secretaries of state," should not be confused with historically important departmental ministers once known as the Secretary of State for Canada and the Secretary of State for External Affairs.) Ministers of state and secretaries of state are not always members of the cabinet.



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The ministers collectively are answerable to the House of Commons or the legislature for the policy and conduct of the cabinet as a whole. If a minister does not agree with a particular policy or action of the government, he or she must either accept the policy or action and, if necessary, defend it, or resign from the cabinet. This is known as “the collective responsibility of the cabinet,” and is a fundamental principle of our form of government.

The cabinet is responsible for most legislation. It has the sole power to prepare and introduce bills providing for the expenditure of public money or imposing taxes. These bills must be introduced first in the House of Commons; however, the House cannot *initiate* them, or *increase* either the tax or the expenditure without a royal recommendation in the form of a message from the Governor General. The Senate cannot increase either a tax or an expenditure. However, any member of either house can move a motion to *decrease* a tax or an expenditure, and the house concerned can pass it, though this hardly ever happens.



A Federal State

A federal state is one that brings together a number of different political communities with a common government for common purposes, and separate “state” or “provincial” or “cantonal” governments for the particular purposes of each community. The United States of America, Canada, Australia and Switzerland are all federal states. Federalism combines unity with diversity. It provides, as Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada’s first Prime Minister, said, “A general government and legislature for general purposes with local governments and legislatures for local purposes.”

The word “confederation” is sometimes used to mean a league of independent states, like the United States from 1776 to 1789. But for our Fathers of Confederation, the term

emphatically did not mean that. French-speaking and English-speaking alike, they said plainly and repeatedly that they were founding “a new nation”, “a new political nationality”, “a powerful nation, to take its place among the nations of the world”, “a single great power”.

They were very insistent on maintaining the identity, the special culture and the special institutions of each of the federating provinces or colonies. Predominantly French-speaking and Roman Catholic, Canada East (Quebec) wanted to be free of the horrendous threat that an English-speaking and mainly Protestant majority would erode or destroy its rights to its language, its French-type civil law, and its distinctively religious system of education. Overwhelmingly English-speaking and mainly

Photo: Library of Parliament



The Fathers of Confederation, Quebec Conference, 1864.



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Protestant, Canada West (Ontario) was still smarting from the fact that Canada East members in the legislature of the united Province of Canada had thrust upon it a system of Roman Catholic separate schools which most of the Canada West members had voted against. Canada West wanted to be free of what some of its leaders called “French domination.” For their part, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick had no intention of being annexed or absorbed by the Province of Canada, of which they knew almost nothing and whose political instability and incessant “French-English” strife they distrusted.

On the other hand, all felt the necessity of union for protection against the threat of American invasion or American economic strangulation (for six months of the year, the Province of Canada was completely cut off from Britain, its main source of manufactured goods, except through American ports) and for economic growth and development. So the Fathers of Confederation were equally insistent on a real federation, a real “Union,” as they repeatedly called it, not a league of states or of sovereign or semi-independent provinces.

The Fathers of Confederation were faced with the task of bringing together small, sparsely populated communities scattered over immense distances. Not only were these communities separated by natural barriers that might well have seemed insurmountable, but they were also divided by deep divergences of economic interest, language, religion, law and education. Communications were poor and mainly with the world outside British North America.

To all these problems, they could find only one answer: federalism.

The provinces dared not remain separate, nor could they merge. They could (and did) form a federation, with a strong central government and Parliament, but also with an ample measure of autonomy and self-government for each of the federating communities.

Our Constitution

The *British North America Act, 1867*, was the instrument that brought the federation, the new nation, into existence. It was an Act of the British Parliament. But, except for two small points, it was simply the statutory form of resolutions drawn up by delegates from what is now Canada. Not a single representative of the British government was present at the conferences that drew up those resolutions, or took the remotest part in them.

The two small points on which our Constitution is not entirely homemade are, first, the legal title of our country, “Dominion,” and, second, the provisions for breaking a deadlock between the Senate and the House of Commons.

The Fathers of Confederation wanted to call the country “the Kingdom of Canada.” The British government was afraid of offending the Americans so it insisted on the Fathers finding another title. They did, from Psalm 72: “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.” It seemed to fit the new nation like the paper on the wall. They explained to Queen Victoria that it was “intended to give dignity” to the Union, and “as a tribute to the monarchical principle, which they earnestly desire to uphold.”

To meet a deadlock between the Senate and the House of Commons, the Fathers had made no provision. The British government insisted that

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Photo: Department of Canadian Heritage



The Constitution Act, 1982, came into force on April 17, 1982.

they produce something. So they did: sections 26 to 28 of the Act, which have been used only once, in 1990.

That the federation resolutions were brought into effect by an Act of the British Parliament was the Fathers' deliberate choice. They could have chosen to follow the American example, and done so without violent revolution.

Sir John A. Macdonald, in the Confederation debates, made that perfectly clear. He said: "...If the people of British North America after full deliberation had stated that...it was for their interest, for the advantage of British North America to sever the tie [with

Britain],...I am sure that Her Majesty and the Imperial Parliament would have sanctioned that severance." But: "Not a single suggestion was made, that it could...be for the interest of the colonies...that there should be a severance of our connection....There was a unanimous feeling of willingness to run all the hazards of war [with the United States]...rather than lose the connection...."

Hence, the only way to bring the federation into being was through a British Act.

That Act, the *British North America Act, 1867* (now renamed the *Constitution Act, 1867*), contained no provisions for its own



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amendment, except a limited power for the provinces to amend their own constitutions. All other amendments had to be made by a fresh Act of the British Parliament.

At the end of the First World War, Canada signed the peace treaties as a distinct power, and became a founding member of the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization. In 1926, the Imperial Conference recognized Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the Irish Free State and Newfoundland as “autonomous communities, in no way subordinate to the United Kingdom in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs.” Canada had come of age.

This gave rise to a feeling that we should be able to amend our Constitution ourselves, without even the most formal intervention by the British Parliament. True, that Parliament usually passed any amendment we asked for. But more and more Canadians felt this was not good enough. The whole process should take place here. The Constitution should be “patriated” — brought home.

Attempts to bring this about began in 1927. Until 1981, they failed, not because of any British reluctance to make the change, but because the federal and provincial governments could not agree on a generally acceptable method of amendment. Finally, after more than half a century of federal-provincial conferences and negotiations, the Senate and the House of Commons, with the approval of nine provincial governments, passed the necessary Joint Address asking for the final British Act. This placed the whole process of amendment in Canada, and removed the last vestige of the British Parliament’s power over our country.

The *Constitution Act, 1867*, remains the basic element of our written Constitution. But the written Constitution, the strict law of the Constitution, even with the latest addition, the *Constitution Act, 1982*, is only part of our whole working Constitution, the set of arrangements by which we govern ourselves. It is the skeleton; it is not the whole body.

Responsible government, the national cabinet, the bureaucracy, political parties: all these are basic features of our system of government. But the written Constitution does not contain one word about any of them (except for that phrase in the preamble to the Act of 1867 about “a Constitution similar in principle to that of the United Kingdom”). The flesh, the muscles, the sinews, the nerves of our Constitution have been added by legislation (for example, federal and provincial elections acts, the *Parliament of Canada Act*, the legislative assembly acts, the public service acts); by custom (the prime minister, the cabinet, responsible government, political parties, federal-provincial conferences); by judgements of the courts (interpreting what the Act of 1867 and its amendments mean); and by agreements between the national and provincial governments.

If the written Constitution is silent on all these things, which are the living reality of our Constitution, what does it say? If it leaves out so much, what does it put in?

Before we answer that question, we must understand that our written Constitution, unlike the American, is not a single document. It is a collection of 25 primary documents outlined in the *Constitution Act, 1982*.



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The core of the collection is still the Act of 1867. This, with the amendments added to it down to the end of 1981, did 12 things.

- First, it created the federation, the provinces, the territories, the national Parliament, the provincial legislatures and some provincial cabinets.
- Second, it gave the national Parliament power to create new provinces out of the territories, and also the power to change provincial boundaries with the consent of the provinces concerned.
- Third, it set out the power of Parliament and of the provincial legislatures.
- Fourth, it vested the formal executive power in the Queen, and created the Queen's Privy Council for Canada (the legal basis for the federal cabinet).
- Fifth, it gave Parliament power to set up a Supreme Court of Canada (which it did, in 1875).
- Sixth, it guaranteed certain limited rights equally to the English and French languages in the federal Parliament and courts and in the legislatures and courts of Quebec and Manitoba.
- Seventh, it guaranteed separate schools for the Protestant and Roman Catholic minorities in Quebec and Ontario. It also guaranteed separate schools in any other province where they existed by law in 1867, or were set up by any provincial law after 1867. There were special provisions for Manitoba (created in 1870), which proved ineffective; more limited guarantees for Alberta and Saskatchewan (created in 1905); and for Newfoundland (which came into Confederation in 1949), a guarantee of separate schools for a variety of Christian denominations. (Constitutional amendments have since changed the school systems in Quebec and in Newfoundland and Labrador, as the Province of Newfoundland is now officially known.)
- Eighth, it guaranteed Quebec's distinctive civil law.
- Ninth, it gave Parliament power to assume the jurisdiction over property and civil rights, or any part of such jurisdiction, in other provinces, provided the provincial legislatures consented. This power has never been used.
- Tenth, it prohibited provincial tariffs.
- Eleventh, it gave the provincial legislatures the power to amend the provincial constitutions, except as regards the office of lieutenant-governor.
- Twelfth, it gave the national government (the Governor-in-Council: that is, the federal cabinet) certain controls over the provinces: appointment, instruction and dismissal of lieutenant-governors (two have been dismissed); disallowance of provincial acts within one year after their passing (112 have been disallowed — the last in 1943 — from every province except Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador); power of lieutenant-governors to send provincial bills to Ottawa unassented to (in which case they do not go into effect unless the central executive assents within one year; of 70 such



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bills, the last in 1961, from every province but Newfoundland and Labrador, only 14 have gone into effect).

These are the main things the written Constitution did as it stood at the end of 1981. They provided the legal framework within which we could, and did, adapt, adjust, manoeuvre, innovate, compromise, and arrange, by what Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden called “the exercise of the commonplace quality of common sense.”

The final British Act of 1982, the *Canada Act*, provided for the termination of the British Parliament’s power over Canada and for the “patriation” of our Constitution. Under the terms of the *Canada Act*, the *Constitution Act, 1982*, was proclaimed in Canada and “patriation” was achieved.

Under the *Constitution Act, 1982*, the *British North America Act, 1867*, and its various amendments (1871, 1886, 1907, 1915, 1930, 1940, 1946, 1949, 1951, 1952, 1960, 1964, 1965, 1974, 1975) became the *Constitution Acts, 1867 to 1975*.

There is a widespread impression that the *Constitution Act, 1982*, gave us a “new” Constitution. It did not. In fact, that Act itself says that “the Constitution of Canada includes” 14 acts of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, seven acts of the Parliament of Canada, and four United Kingdom orders-in-council (giving Canada the original Northwest Territories and the Arctic Islands, and admitting British Columbia and Prince Edward Island to Confederation). Several of the acts got new names; two, the old *British North America Act, 1867* (now the *Constitution*

Act, 1867), and the *Manitoba Act, 1870*, suffered a few minor deletions. The part of the United Kingdom *Statute of Westminster, 1931*, that is included had minor amendments.

The rest, apart from changes of name, are untouched. What we have now is not a new Constitution but the old one with a very few small deletions and four immensely important additions; in an old English slang phrase, the old Constitution with knobs on.

What are the big changes that the *Constitution Act, 1982*, made in our Constitution?

First, it established four legal formulas or processes for amending the Constitution. Until 1982, there had never been any legal amending formula (except for a narrowly limited power given to the national Parliament in 1949, a power now superseded).

The first formula covers amendments dealing with the office of the Queen, the Governor General, the lieutenant-governors, the right of a province to at least as many seats in the House of Commons as it had in the Senate in 1982, the use of the English and French languages (except amendments applying only to a single province), the composition of the Supreme Court of Canada and amendments to the amending formulas themselves.

Amendments of these kinds must be passed by the Senate and the House of Commons (or by the Commons alone, if the Senate has not approved the proposal within 180 days after the Commons has done so), and by the legislature of every province. This gives every single province a veto.



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The second formula is the general amending formula. It includes amendments concerning the withdrawal of any rights, powers or privileges of provincial governments or legislatures; the proportionate representation of the provinces in the House of Commons; the powers of the Senate and the method of selecting senators; the number of senators for each province, and their residence qualifications; the constitutional position of the Supreme Court of Canada (except its composition, which comes under the first formula); the extension of existing provinces into the territories; the creation of new provinces; and, generally, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (which is dealt with later).

Such amendments must be passed by the Senate and the House of Commons (or, again, the Commons alone if the Senate delays more than 180 days), and by the legislatures of two-thirds of the provinces with at least half the total population of all the provinces (that is, the total population of Canada excluding the territories). This means that any four provinces taken together (for example, the four Atlantic provinces, or the four Western) could veto any such amendments. So could Ontario and Quebec taken together. The seven provinces needed to pass any amendment would have to include at least one of the two largest provinces of Quebec or Ontario.

Any province can, by resolution of its legislature, opt out of any amendment passed under this formula that takes away any of its powers, rights or privileges; and if the amendment it opts out of transfers power over education or other cultural matters to the national Parliament, Parliament must pay the province “reasonable compensation.”

The third formula covers amendments dealing with matters that apply only to one province, or to several but not all provinces. Such amendments must be passed by the Senate and the House of Commons (or the Commons alone, if the Senate delays more than 180 days), and by the legislature or legislatures of the particular province or provinces to which it applies. Such amendments include any changes in provincial boundaries, or changes relating to the use of the English or French language in a particular province, or provinces.

The fourth formula covers changes in the executive government of Canada or in the Senate and House of Commons (other than

Photo: ©NCC/CCN



In this bronze sculpture on Parliament Hill, Emily Murphy, one of the “Famous Five” who fought for women’s legal status as persons, invites us to celebrate women’s equality, now enshrined in the Charter.

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Photo: Department of Canadian Heritage



The Charter guarantees four fundamental freedoms and six basic rights.

those covered by the first two formulas). These amendments can be made by an ordinary Act of the Parliament of Canada.

The second big change made by the *Constitution Act, 1982*, is that the first three amending formulas “entrench” certain parts of the written Constitution: that is, place them beyond the power of Parliament or any provincial legislature to touch.

For example, the monarchy cannot now be touched except with the unanimous consent of the provinces. Nor can the governor generalship, nor the lieutenant-governorships,

nor the composition of the Supreme Court of Canada, nor the right of a province to at least as many members of the Commons as it had senators in 1982, nor the amending formulas themselves. On all of these, any single province can impose a veto. Matters coming under the second formula can be changed only with the consent of seven provinces with at least half the population of the 10.

The guarantees for the English and French languages in New Brunswick, Quebec and Manitoba cannot be changed except with the consent both of the provincial legislatures concerned and the Senate and House of



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Commons (or the Commons alone, under the 180-day provision). The guarantees for denominational schools in Newfoundland and Labrador could not have been changed except with the consent of the legislature of Newfoundland and Labrador; nor can the Labrador boundary.

The amending process under the first three formulas can be initiated by the Senate, or the House of Commons, or a provincial legislature. The ordinary Act of Parliament required by the fourth formula can, of course, be initiated by either house.

Third, the *Constitution Act, 1982*, sets out the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* that neither Parliament nor any provincial legislature acting alone can change. Any such changes come under the second formula (or, where they apply only to one or more, but not all, provinces, the third formula).

The rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Charter are:

1. Democratic rights (for example, the right of every citizen to vote for the House of Commons and the provincial legislative assembly, and the right to elections at least every five years, though in time of real or apprehended war, invasion or insurrection, the life of a federal or provincial legislature may be prolonged by a two-thirds vote of the Commons or legislative assembly).
2. Fundamental freedoms (conscience, religion, thought, expression, peaceful assembly, association).
3. Mobility rights (to enter, remain in, or leave Canada, and to move into, and earn a living

in, any province subject to certain limitations, notably to provide for “affirmative action” programs for the socially or economically disadvantaged).

4. Legal rights (a long list, including such things as the right to a fair, reasonably prompt, public trial by an impartial court).
5. Equality rights (no discrimination on grounds of race, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability; again, with provision for “affirmative action” programs).
6. Official language rights.
7. Minority-language education rights in certain circumstances.

The equality rights came into force on April 17, 1985, three years after the time of patriation of our Constitution. (This gave time for revision of the multitude of federal, provincial and territorial laws that may have required amendment or repeal.)

The official language rights make English and French the official languages of Canada for all the institutions of the government and Parliament of Canada and of the New Brunswick government and legislature. Everyone has the right to use either language in Parliament and the New Brunswick legislature. The acts of Parliament and the New Brunswick legislature, and the records and journals of both bodies, must be in both languages. Either language may be used in any pleading or process in the federal and New Brunswick courts. Any member of the public has the right to communicate with the government and Parliament of Canada, and the



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government and legislature of New Brunswick, and to receive available services, in either language where there is “a sufficient demand” for the use of English or French or where the nature of the office makes it reasonable.

The minority-language education rights are twofold.

1. In every province, citizens of Canada with any child who has received or is receiving primary or secondary schooling in English or French have the right to have all their children receive their schooling in the same language, in minority-language educational facilities provided out of public funds, where the number of children “so warrants.” Also, citizens who have received their own primary schooling in Canada in English or French, and reside in a province where that language is the language of the English or French linguistic minority, have the right to have their children get their primary and secondary schooling in the language concerned, where numbers warrant.
2. In every province except Quebec, citizens whose mother tongue is that of the English or French linguistic minority have the right to have their children get their primary and secondary schooling in the language concerned, where numbers so warrant. This right will be extended to Quebec only if the legislature or government of Quebec consents.

Anyone whose rights and freedoms under the Charter have been infringed or denied can apply to a court of competent jurisdiction “to obtain such remedy as the court considers appropriate and just.” If the court decides that any evidence was obtained in a manner that infringed or

denied rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Charter, it must exclude such evidence “if it is established that...the admission of it... would bring the administration of justice into disrepute.”

The Charter (except for the language provisions for New Brunswick, which can be amended by joint action of Parliament and the provincial legislature) can be amended only with the consent of seven provinces with at least half the total population of the 10.

The Charter is careful to say that the guarantees it gives to certain rights and freedoms are not to “be construed as denying the existence of any other rights or freedoms that exist in Canada.” It declares also that nothing in it “abrogates or derogates from any rights or privileges guaranteed by or under the Constitution of Canada in respect of denominational, separate or dissentient schools.” These are, and remain, entrenched.

Before the Charter was added, our written Constitution entrenched certain rights of the English and French languages, the Quebec civil law, certain rights to denominational schools and free trade among the provinces. Apart from these, Parliament and the provincial legislatures could pass any laws they saw fit, provided they did not jump the fence into each other’s gardens. As long as Parliament did not try to legislate on subjects that belonged to provincial legislatures, and provincial legislatures did not try to legislate on subjects that belonged to Parliament, Parliament and the legislatures were “sovereign” within their respective fields. There were no legal limits on what they could do (though of course provincial laws could be disallowed by the federal cabinet within one



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Delivery of health services is the responsibility of provincial and territorial governments, except in the case of those groups that fall under federal jurisdiction, such as aboriginal peoples, the Canadian forces and veterans.

year). The only ground on which the courts could declare either a federal or a provincial law unconstitutional (that is, null and void) was that it intruded into the jurisdictional territory of the other order of government (or, of course, had violated one of the four entrenched rights).

The Charter has radically changed the situation. Parliament and the legislatures are, of course, still not allowed to jump the fence into each other's gardens. But both federal and provincial laws can now be challenged, and thrown out by the courts, on the grounds that they violate

the Charter. This is something with which the Americans, with their Bill of Rights entrenched in their Constitution, have been familiar for over 200 years. For us, it was almost completely new.

Plainly, this enormously widens the jurisdiction of the courts. Before the Charter, Parliament and the provincial legislatures, "within the limits of subject and area" prescribed by the *Constitution Act, 1867*, enjoyed "authority as plenary and as ample as the Imperial Parliament in the plenitude of its power possessed and could bestow." In other words, within those limits, they could do anything. They were sovereign. The Charter ends that. It imposes new limits.

Section 1 of the Charter itself provides some leeway for Parliament and the legislatures. It says that the rights the Charter guarantees are "subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society." The courts decide the meaning of "reasonable," "limits," "demonstrably justified" and "a free and democratic society." Their decisions have restricted how Parliament and the legislatures may use the powers they had before the Charter came into effect, and the jurisprudence is still evolving.

The fundamental, legal and equality rights in the Charter are also subject to a "notwithstanding" clause. This allows Parliament or a provincial legislature to pass a law violating any of these rights (except the equality right that prohibits discrimination based on sex) simply by inserting in such law a declaration that it shall operate notwithstanding the fact that it is contrary to this or that provision of the Charter. Any such law can last only five years, but it can



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be re-enacted for further periods of five years. Any such legislation must apply equally to men and women. The notwithstanding clause allows a partial restoration of the sovereignty of Parliament and the provincial legislatures, but has seldom been used because of the political consequences.

The fourth big change made by the *Constitution Act, 1982*, gives the provinces wide powers over their natural resources. Each province is now able to control the export, to any other part of Canada, of the primary production from its mines, oil wells, gas wells, forests and electric power plants, provided it does not discriminate against other parts of Canada in prices or supplies. But the national Parliament is still able to legislate on these matters, and if provincial and federal laws conflict, the federal will prevail. The provinces are also able to levy indirect taxes on their mines, oil wells, gas wells, forests and electric power plants and primary production from these sources. But such taxes must be the same for products exported to other parts of Canada and products not so exported.

These four big changes, especially the amending formulas and the Charter, are immensely important. But they leave the main structure of government, and almost the whole of the division of powers between the national Parliament and the provincial legislatures, just what they were before.

Incidentally, they leave the provincial legislatures their power to confiscate the property of any individual or corporation and give it to someone else, with not a penny of compensation to the original owner. In two cases, Ontario and Nova Scotia did just that,

and the Ontario Court of Appeal ruled: “The prohibition ‘Thou shalt not steal’ has no legal force upon the sovereign body. And there would be no necessity for compensation to be given.” The Charter does not change this. The only security against it is the federal power of disallowance (exercised in the Nova Scotia case) and the fact that today very few legislatures would dare to try it, save in most extraordinary circumstances: the members who voted for it would be too much afraid of being defeated in the next election.

The *Constitution Act, 1982*, makes other changes and one of these looks very significant. The *British North America Act, 1867*, gave the national Parliament exclusive authority over “Indians, and lands reserved for the Indians,” and the courts have ruled that “Indians” includes the Inuit. Until 1982, that was all the Constitution said about the native peoples. The Constitution now has three provisions on the subject.

First, it says that the Charter’s guarantee of certain rights and freedoms “shall not be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from any aboriginal, treaty or other rights or freedoms that pertain to the aboriginal peoples of Canada,” including rights or freedoms recognized by the Royal Proclamation of 1763, and any rights or freedoms acquired by way of land claims settlement.

Second, “The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed,” and the aboriginal peoples are defined as including the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples.



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Third, in 1983, the amending formula was used for the first time to add to the aboriginal and treaty rights of Canada's native peoples, rights or freedoms that already existed by way of land claims agreements or that might be so acquired, and to guarantee all the rights equally to men and women. The amendment also provided that there would be no amendments to the constitutional provisions relating to Indians and Indian reserves, or the aboriginal rights and freedoms guaranteed by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, without discussions at a conference of first ministers with representatives of the native peoples. The amendment came into force on June 21, 1984.

The *Constitution Act, 1982*, also contains a section on equalization and regional disparities. This proclaims: (1) that the national government and Parliament and the provincial governments and legislatures “are committed to promoting equal opportunities for the well-being of Canadians, furthering economic development to reduce disparities in opportunities, and providing essential public services of reasonable quality to all Canadians”; and (2) that the government and Parliament of Canada “are committed to the principle of making equalization payments to ensure that provincial governments have sufficient revenues to provide reasonably comparable levels of public services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation.”

The 1982 Act also provides that the guarantees for the English and French languages do not abrogate or derogate from any legal or customary right or privilege enjoyed by any other language, and that the Charter shall be interpreted “in a manner consistent with

the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canada.”

Finally, the Act provides for English and French versions of the whole written Constitution, from the Act of 1867 to the Act of 1982, which would make both versions equally authoritative.



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Powers of the National and Provincial Governments

The national Parliament has power “to make laws for the peace, order and good government of Canada,” except for “subjects assigned exclusively to the legislatures of the provinces.” The provincial legislatures have power over direct taxation in the province for provincial purposes, natural resources, prisons (except penitentiaries), charitable institutions, hospitals (except marine hospitals), municipal

institutions, licences for provincial and municipal revenue purposes, local works and undertakings (with certain exceptions), incorporation of provincial companies, solemnization of marriage, property and civil rights in the province, the creation of courts and the administration of justice, fines and penalties for breaking provincial laws, matters of a merely local or private nature in



The provincial legislatures have the constitutional right of direct taxation for areas under provincial jurisdiction, such as education.



the province, and education (subject to certain rights of the Protestant and Roman Catholic minorities in some provinces).

Subject to the limitations imposed by the *Constitution Act, 1982*, the provinces can amend their own constitutions by an ordinary Act of the legislature. They cannot touch the office of lieutenant-governor; they cannot restrict the franchise or qualifications for members of the legislatures or prolong the lives of their legislatures except as provided for in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Of course the power to amend provincial constitutions is restricted to changes in the internal machinery of the provincial government. Provincial legislatures are limited to the powers explicitly given to them by the written Constitution. So no provincial legislature can take over powers belonging to the Parliament of Canada. Nor could any provincial legislature pass an Act taking the province out of Canada. No such power is to be found in the written Constitution, so no such power exists.

Similarly, of course, Parliament cannot take over any power of a provincial legislature.

Parliament and the provincial legislatures both have power over agriculture and immigration, and over certain aspects of natural resources; but if their laws conflict, the national law prevails.

Parliament and the provincial legislatures also have power over old age, disability and survivors' pensions; but if their laws conflict, the provincial power prevails.

By virtue of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, everything not mentioned as belonging to the provincial legislatures comes under the national Parliament.

This looks like an immensely wide power. It is not, in fact, as wide as it looks, because the courts have interpreted the provincial powers, especially "property and civil rights," as covering a very wide field. As a result, all labour legislation (maximum hours, minimum wages, safety, workers' compensation, industrial relations) comes under provincial law, except for certain industries such as banking, broadcasting, air navigation, atomic energy, shipping, interprovincial and international railways, telephones, telegraphs, pipelines, grain elevators, enterprises owned by the national government, and works declared by Parliament to be for the general advantage of Canada or of two or more of the provinces.

Social security (except for Employment Insurance, which is purely national, and the shared power over pensions) comes under the provinces. However, the national Parliament, in effect, established nation-wide systems of hospital insurance and medical care by making grants to the provinces (or, for Quebec, yielding some of its field of taxes) on condition that their plans reach certain standards. The courts' interpretation of provincial and national powers has put broadcasting and air navigation under Parliament's general power to make laws for the "peace, order and good government of Canada," but otherwise has reduced it to not much more than an emergency power for wartime or grave national crises like nation-wide famine, epidemics, or massive inflation (though some recent cases go beyond this).



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However, the Fathers of Confederation, not content with giving Parliament what they thought an ample general power, added, “for greater certainty,” a long list of examples of exclusive national powers: taxation, direct and indirect; regulation of trade and commerce (the courts have interpreted this to mean interprovincial and international trade and commerce); “the public debt and property” (this enables Parliament to make grants to individuals — such as Family Allowances — or to provinces: hospital insurance and medicare, higher education, public assistance to the needy, and equalization grants to bring the standards of health, education and general welfare in the poorer provinces up to an average national standard); the Post Office; the census and statistics; defence; beacons, buoys, lighthouses and Sable Island;* navigation and shipping; quarantine; marine hospitals; the fisheries; interprovincial and international ferries, shipping, railways, telegraphs, and other such international or interprovincial “works and undertakings” — which the courts have interpreted to cover pipelines and telephones; money and banking; interest; bills of exchange and promissory notes; bankruptcy; weights and measures; patents; copyrights; Indians and Indian lands (the courts have interpreted this to cover Inuit as well); naturalization and aliens; the criminal law and procedure in criminal cases; the general law of marriage and divorce; and local works declared by Parliament to be “for the general advantage

of Canada or of two or more of the provinces” (this has been used many times, notably to bring atomic energy and the grain trade under exclusive national jurisdiction). A 1940 constitutional amendment gave Parliament exclusive power over Unemployment Insurance and a specific section of the Act of 1867 gives it power to establish courts “for the better administration of the laws of Canada.” This has enabled Parliament to set up the Supreme Court of Canada, the Federal Court of Appeal, the Federal Court and the Tax Court of Canada.

As already noted, the national Parliament can amend the Constitution in relation to the executive government of Canada and the Senate and the House of Commons, except that it cannot touch the office of the Queen or the Governor General, nor those aspects of the Senate and the Supreme Court of Canada entrenched by the amending formulas. Though Parliament cannot transfer any of its powers to a provincial legislature, nor a provincial legislature any of its powers to Parliament, Parliament can delegate the administration of a federal Act to provincial agencies (as it has done with the regulation of interprovincial and international highway traffic); and a provincial legislature can delegate the administration of a provincial Act to a federal agency. This “administrative delegation” is an important aspect of the flexibility of our Constitution.

**The Fathers of Confederation evidently felt that Sable Island, “the graveyard of the Atlantic,” was such a menace to shipping that it must be under the absolute control of the national government, just like lighthouses. So they placed it under the exclusive legislative jurisdiction of the national Parliament (by section 91, head 9, of the Constitution Act, 1867). They also (by the third schedule of that Act) transferred the actual ownership from the Province of Nova Scotia to the Dominion of Canada, just as they did with the Nova Scotia lighthouses.*



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Photo: Courtesy of the Canadian Forces/MCpl Michel Durand



The Constitution gives the federal Parliament exclusive power over national defence.



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Canadian and American Government



Canada and the United States are both democracies. They are also both federal states. But there are important differences in the way Canadians and Americans govern themselves.

One fundamental difference is that the United States is a country of one basic language. Canada is a country of two basic languages. The Fathers of Confederation deliberately chose to make it so.

Our official recognition of bilingualism is limited, but expanding. For example, it was at the specific request of the New Brunswick government that the adoption of French and English as the official languages of that province was enshrined in the Constitution. Ontario, which has the largest number of French-speaking people outside Quebec, has provided French schools and an increasing range of services in French for Franco-Ontarians. Several other provinces have taken steps in the same direction.

But under the Constitution, every province except Quebec, New Brunswick and Manitoba is absolutely free to have as many official languages as it pleases, and they need not include either English or French. For example, Nova Scotia could make Gaelic its sole official language, or one of two, three or a dozen official languages in that province. Alberta could make Ukrainian its sole official language, or Ukrainian, Polish and classical Greek its three official languages. Quebec, New Brunswick and Manitoba also are free to have as many official languages as they please, but they must include English and French.

A second basic difference between our Constitution and the American is, of course, that we are a constitutional monarchy and they are a republic. That looks like only a formal difference. It is very much more, for we have parliamentary-cabinet government, while the Americans have presidential-congressional.

What does that mean? What difference does it make?

First, in the United States the head of state and the head of the government are one and the same. The president is both at once. Here, the Queen, ordinarily represented by the Governor General, is the head of state, and the prime minister is the head of the government. Does that make any real difference? Yes: in



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Canada, the head of state can, in exceptional circumstances, protect Parliament and the people against a prime minister and ministers who may forget that “minister” means “servant,” and may try to make themselves masters. For example, the head of state could refuse to let a cabinet dissolve a newly elected House of Commons before it could even meet, or could refuse to let ministers bludgeon the people into submission by a continuous series of general elections. The American head of state cannot restrain the American head of government because they are the same person.

For another thing, presidential-congressional government is based on a separation of powers. The American president cannot be a member of either house of Congress. Neither can any of the members of his or her cabinet. Neither the president nor any member of the cabinet can appear in Congress to introduce a bill, or defend it, or answer questions, or rebut attacks on policies. No member of either house can be president or a member of the cabinet.

Parliamentary-cabinet government is based on a concentration of powers. The prime minister and every other minister must by custom (though not by law) be a member of one house or the other, or get a seat in one house or the other within a short time of appointment. All government bills must be introduced by a minister or someone speaking on his or her behalf, and ministers must appear in Parliament to defend government bills, answer daily questions on government actions or policies, and rebut attacks on such actions or policies.

In the United States, the president and every member of both houses is elected for a fixed term: the president for four years, the senators

for six (one-third of the Senate seats being contested every two years), the members of the House of Representatives for two. The only way to get rid of a president before the end of the four-year term is for Congress to impeach and try him or her, which is very hard to do.

As the president, the senators and the representatives are elected for different periods, it can happen, and often does, that the president belongs to one party while the opposing party has a majority in either the Senate or the House of Representatives or both. So for years on end, the president may find his or her legislation and policies blocked by an adverse majority in one or both houses. The president cannot appeal to the people by dissolving either house, or both: he or she has no such power, and the two houses are there for their fixed terms, come what may, until the constitutionally fixed hour strikes.

And even when the elections for the presidency, the House of Representatives, and one-third of the Senate take place on the same day (as they do every four years), the result may be a Republican president, a Democratic Senate and a Republican House of Representatives or various other mixtures.

A president, accordingly, may have a coherent program to present to Congress, and may get senators and representatives to introduce the bills he or she wants passed. But each house can add to each of the bills, or take things out of them, or reject them outright, and what emerges from the tussle may bear little or no resemblance to what the president wanted. The majority in either house may have a coherent program on this or that subject; but the other house can add to it, or take things out of it, or



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throw the whole thing out; and again, what (if anything) emerges may bear little or no resemblance to the original. Even if the two houses agree on something, the president can, and often does, veto the bill. The veto can be overridden only by a two-thirds majority in both houses.

So when an election comes, the president, the senator, the representative, reproached with not having carried out his or her promises can always say: “Don’t blame me! I sent the bill to Congress, and the Senate (or the representatives, or both) threw it out, or mangled it beyond recognition”; “I introduced the bill I’d promised in the Senate, but the House of Representatives threw it out or reduced it to shreds and tatters (or the president vetoed it)”; “I introduced my bill in the House of Representatives, but the Senate rejected it or made mincemeat of it (or the president vetoed it). Don’t blame me!”

So it ends up that nobody — not the president, not the senators, not the representatives — can be held really responsible for anything done or not done. Everybody concerned can honestly and legitimately say, “Don’t blame me!”

True, a dissatisfied voter can vote against a president, a representative or a senator. But no matter what the voters do, the situation remains essentially the same. The president is there for four years and remains there no matter how often either house produces an adverse majority. If, halfway through the president’s four-year term, the elections for the House and Senate return adverse majorities, the president still stays in office for the remaining two years with enormous powers. And he or she cannot get rid of an adverse House of Representatives or Senate by ordering a new election. The

adverse majority in one or both houses can block many things the president may want to do, but it cannot force him or her out of office. The president can veto bills passed by both houses. But Congress can override this veto by a two-thirds majority in both houses. The House of Representatives can impeach the president, and the Senate then tries him or her, and, if it so decides, by a two-thirds majority, removes him or her. No president has ever been removed, and there have been only three attempts to do it. In one, the Senate majority was too small; in the second, the president resigned before any vote on impeachment took place in the House of Representatives; and in the third, although the president was impeached, he was acquitted by the Senate.

Our Canadian system is very different. Terms of office are not rigidly fixed. All important legislation is introduced by the government, and all bills to spend public funds or impose taxes must be introduced by the government and neither house can raise the amounts of money involved. As long as the government can keep the support of a majority in the House of Commons, it can pass any legislation it sees fit unless an adverse majority in the Senate refuses to pass the bill (which very rarely happens nowadays). If it loses its majority support in the House of Commons, it must either make way for a government of another party or call a fresh election. If it simply makes way for a government of a different party, then that government, as long as it holds its majority in the House of Commons, can pass any legislation it sees fit, and if it loses that majority, then it, in its turn, must either make way for a new government or call a fresh election. In the United States, president and Congress can be locked in fruitless combat for years on end. In Canada, the government and the House of



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Photo: Dianne Brydon



Congress meets in the Capitol, in Washington, D.C.

Commons cannot be at odds for more than a few weeks at a time. If they differ on any matter of importance, then, promptly, there is either a new government or a new House of Commons.

Presidential-congressional government is neither responsible nor responsive. No matter how often either house votes against the president's measures, there he or she stays. The president can veto bills passed by both houses, but cannot appeal to the people by calling an election to give him or her a Congress that will support him or her. Parliamentary-cabinet government, by contrast, is both responsible and responsive. If the House of Commons votes want of confidence in a cabinet, that cabinet must step down and make way for a new government formed by an opposition

party (normally the official Opposition), or call an election right away so the people can decide which party will govern.

An American president can be blocked by one house or both for years on end. A Canadian prime minister, blocked by the House of Commons, must either make way for a new prime minister, or allow the people to elect a new House of Commons that will settle the matter, one way or another, within two or three months. That is real responsibility.

A third basic difference between our system and the Americans' is that custom, usage, practice and "convention" play a far larger part in our Constitution than in theirs. For example, the president of the United States is included in the



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written Constitution: his or her qualifications for the position, the method of election, the method of removal — all the essential powers of office, in black and white, unchangeable except by formal constitutional amendment.

The Canadian prime minister did not appear in the written Constitution until 1982. It still contains not one syllable on prime ministerial qualifications, the method of election or removal, or the prime minister's powers (except for the calling of constitutional conferences). Nor is there anything on any of these matters in any Act of Parliament, except for provision of a salary, pension and residence for the person holding the recognized position of first minister. Everything else is a matter of established usage, of "convention." There is nothing in any law requiring the prime minister or any other minister to have a seat in Parliament; there is just a custom that he or she must have a seat,

or get one within a reasonable time. There is nothing in any law to say that a government that loses its majority in the House of Commons on a matter of confidence must either resign (making way for a different government in the same House) or ask for a fresh general election.

A fourth basic difference between the American and Canadian systems is in the type of federalism they embody. The American system was originally highly decentralized. The federal Congress was given a short list of specific powers; everything not mentioned in that list belonged to the states "or to the people" (that is, was not within the power of either Congress or any state legislature). "States' rights" were fundamental. The Fathers of Confederation, gazing with horror at the American Civil War, decided that "states' rights" were precisely what had caused it, and acted accordingly.

Photo: Library of Parliament/Tom Littlemore



The Senate and the House of Commons meet in the Parliament Buildings.



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“Here,” said Sir John A. Macdonald, “we have adopted a different system. We have expressly declared that all subjects of general interest not distinctly and exclusively conferred upon the local governments and legislatures shall be conferred upon the general government and legislature. We have thus avoided that great source of weakness that has been the disruption of the United States. We hereby strengthen the central Parliament, and make the Confederation one people and one government, instead of five peoples and five governments, with merely a point of authority connecting us to a limited and insufficient extent.”

The Fathers also, as we have seen, gave a long list of specific examples of exclusive national powers. They further provided that the members of the Senate, and all judges from county courts up (except judges of probate in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) should be appointed by the national government, and that all lieutenant-governors of the provinces should be appointed, instructed and removable by the national government. They gave the national government and Parliament certain specific powers to protect the educational rights of the Protestant and Roman Catholic minorities of the Queen’s subjects. They gave the national government power to disallow (wipe off the statute book) any acts of provincial legislatures, within one year of their passage.

In both the United States and Canada, however, the precise meaning of the written Constitution is settled by the courts. In the United States the courts have, in general, so interpreted their Constitution as to widen federal and narrow state powers. In Canada, the courts (notably the Judicial Committee of the British Privy Council, which, till 1949, was our highest court) have in general so interpreted the *Constitution*

Act, 1867, as to narrow federal power and widen provincial power. The result is that the United States is, in actual fact, now a much more highly centralized federation than Canada, and Canada has become, perhaps, the most decentralized federation in the world. Nonetheless, the fact that under our Constitution the powers not specifically mentioned come under the national Parliament gives the central authority enough strength and leeway to meet many of the changed and changing conditions the years have brought.



How Canadians Govern Themselves

The Rule of Law and the Courts

Photo: Supreme Court of Canada/Philippe Landreville



The Supreme Court of Canada Building.

Responsible government and federalism are two cornerstones of our system of government. There is a third, without which neither of the first two would be safe: the rule of law.

What does the rule of law mean?

It means that everyone is subject to the law; that no one, no matter how important or powerful, is above the law — not the government; not the prime minister, or any other minister; not the Queen or the Governor General or any lieutenant-governor; not the most powerful

bureaucrat; not the armed forces; not Parliament itself, or any provincial legislature. None of these has any powers except those given to it by law: by the *Constitution Act, 1867*, or its amendments; by a law passed by Parliament or a provincial legislature; or by the Common Law of England, which we inherited, and which, though enormously modified by our own Parliament or provincial legislatures, remains the basis of our constitutional law and our criminal law, and the civil law (property and civil rights) of the whole country except Quebec (which has its own civil code).



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If anyone were above the law, none of our liberties would be safe.

What keeps the various authorities from getting above the law, doing things the law forbids, exercising powers the law has not given them?

The courts. If they try anything of the sort, they will be brought up short by the courts.

But what's to prevent them from bending the courts to their will?

The great principle of the independence of the judiciary, which is even older than responsible government. Responsible government goes back only about 200 years. The independence of the judiciary goes back over 300 years to the English *Act of Settlement, 1701*, which resulted from the English Revolution of 1688. That Act provided that the judges, though appointed by the King (nowadays, of course, on the advice of a responsible cabinet), could be removed only if both houses of Parliament, by a formal address to the Crown, asked for their removal. If a judge gave a decision the government disliked, it could not touch him or her, unless both houses agreed. In the three centuries that have followed, only one judge in the United Kingdom has been so removed, and none since 1830.

The Constitution provides that almost all our courts shall be provincial, that is, created by the provincial legislatures. But it also provides that the judges of all these courts from county courts up (except courts of probate in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) shall be appointed by the federal government. What is more, it provides that judges of the provincial superior courts, which have various names, and of the

provincial courts of appeal shall be removable only on address to the Governor General by both houses of Parliament. The acts setting up the Supreme Court of Canada, the Federal Court of Appeal, the Federal Court and the Tax Court of Canada have the same provision. No judge of any Canadian superior court has ever been so removed. All of them are perfectly safe in their positions, no matter how much the government may dislike any of their decisions. The independence of the judiciary is even more important in Canada than in Britain, because in Canada the Supreme Court interprets the written Constitution, and so defines the limits of federal and provincial powers.

With the inclusion of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the role of the courts has become even more important, since they have the tasks of enforcing the rights and of making the freedoms effective.

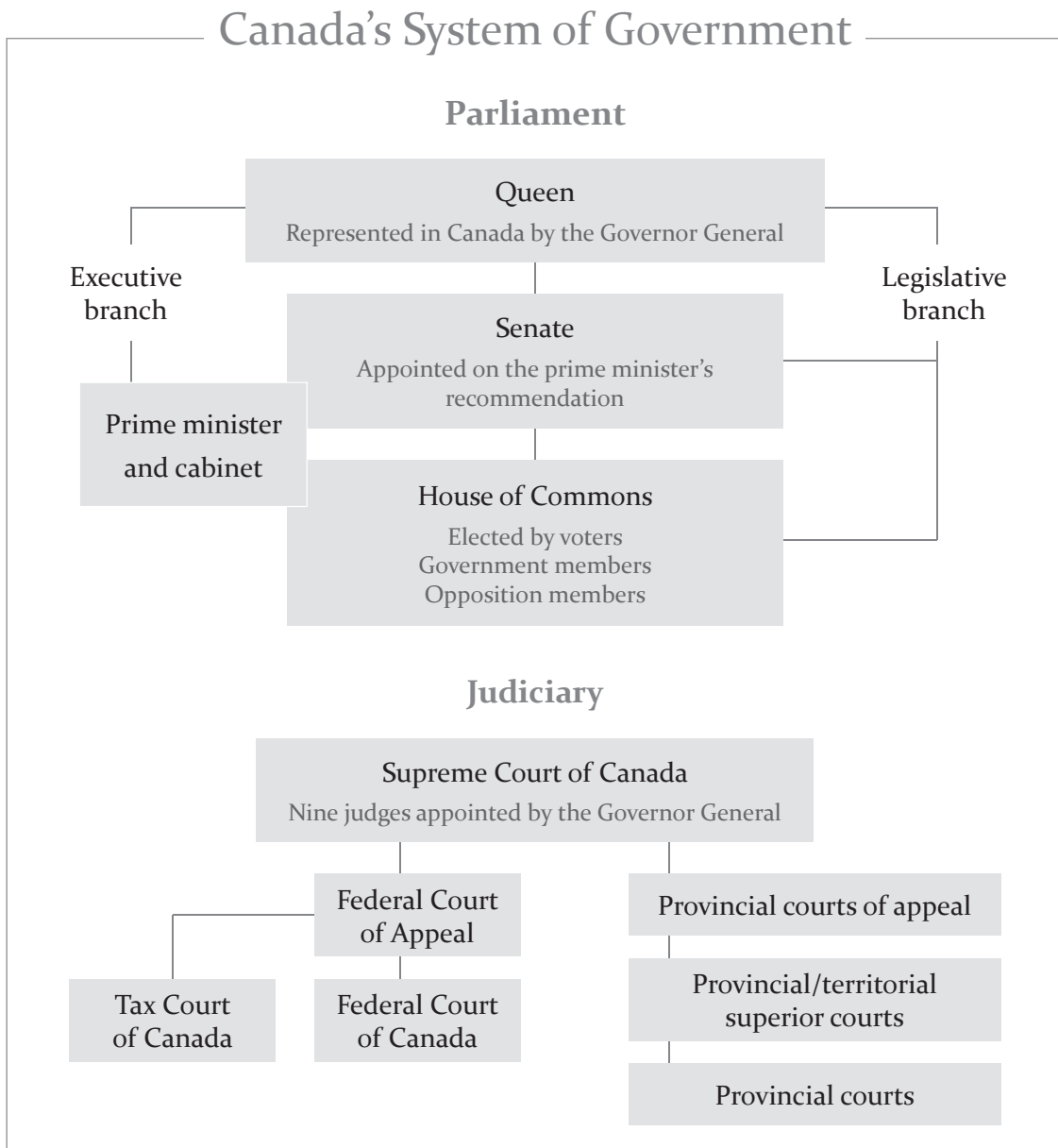
Judges of the county courts can be removed only if one or more judges of the Supreme Court of Canada, or the Federal Court, or any provincial superior court, report after inquiry that they have been guilty of misbehaviour, or have shown inability or incapacity to perform their duties.

The Supreme Court of Canada, established by an Act of the national Parliament in 1875, consists of nine judges, three of whom must come from the Quebec Bar. The judges are appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the national cabinet, and hold office until they reach age 75. The Supreme Court has the final decision not only on constitutional questions but also on defined classes of important cases of civil and criminal law. It deals also with appeals from decisions of the provincial courts of appeal.



How Canadians Govern Themselves

The Institutions of Our Federal Government





By the *Constitution Act, 1867*, “the executive government of and over Canada is declared to continue and be vested in the Queen.” She acts, ordinarily through the Governor General, whom she appoints, on the advice of the Canadian prime minister. The Governor General normally holds office for five years, though the tenure may be extended for a year or so.

Parliament consists of the Queen, the Senate and the House of Commons.

The Queen

The Queen is the formal head of the Canadian state. She is represented federally by the Governor General, and provincially by the lieutenant-governors. Federal acts begin: “Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and the House of Commons, enacts as follows...”; acts in most provinces begin with similar words. Parliament (or the provincial legislature) meets only at the royal summons; no house of Parliament (or legislature) is equipped with a self-starter. No federal or provincial bill becomes law without Royal Assent. The monarch has, on occasion, given the assent personally to federal acts, but the assent is usually given by the Governor General or a deputy, and to provincial acts by the lieutenant-governor or an administrator.

The Governor General and the lieutenant-governors have the right to be consulted by their ministers, and the right to encourage or warn them. But they almost invariably must act on their ministers’ advice, though there may be very rare occasions when they must, or may, act without advice or even against the advice of the ministers in office.

The Senate

The Senate usually has 105 members: 24 from the Maritime provinces (10 from Nova Scotia, 10 from New Brunswick, four from Prince Edward Island); 24 from Quebec; 24 from Ontario; 24 from the Western provinces (six each from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia); six from Newfoundland and Labrador; and one each from the Yukon Territory, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. There is provision also for four or eight extra senators to break a deadlock between the Senate and the House: either one or two each from the Maritime region, Quebec, Ontario and the West; but this has been used only once, in 1990.

The senators are appointed by the Governor General on the recommendation of the prime minister. Senators must be at least 30 years old, and must have real estate worth \$4,000 net, and total net assets of at least \$4,000. They must reside in the province or territory for which they are appointed; in Quebec, they must reside, or have their property qualification, in the particular one of Quebec’s 24 senatorial districts for which they are appointed. Till 1965, they held office for life; now, they hold office until age 75 unless they miss two consecutive sessions of Parliament. Since 2006, the government has introduced bills on several occasions proposing a constitutional amendment that would limit the tenure of new senators.

The Senate can initiate any bills except bills providing for the expenditure of public money or imposing taxes. It can amend or reject any bill whatsoever. It can reject any bill as often as it sees fit. No bill can become law unless it has been passed by the Senate.



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How Canadians Govern Themselves

Photo: Library of Parliament/Marc Fowler



The Senate in session.

In theory these powers are formidable. But the Senate rarely rejects a bill passed by the House of Commons, and has very rarely insisted on an amendment that the House of Commons rejected. In other cases, the Senate has simply not adopted bills before the end of a session, thereby effectively stopping them from becoming law.

Most of the amendments the Senate makes to bills passed by the Commons are clarifying or simplifying amendments, and are almost always accepted by the House of Commons. The Senate's main work is done in its committees, where it goes over bills clause by clause and hears evidence, often voluminous, from groups and individuals who would be

affected by the particular bill under review. This committee work is especially effective because the Senate has many members with specialized knowledge and long years of legal, business or administrative experience. Their ranks include ex-ministers, ex-premiers of provinces, ex-mayors, eminent lawyers and experienced farmers.

In recent decades, the Senate has taken on the task of investigating important public concerns such as health care, national security and defence, aboriginal affairs, fisheries, and human rights. These investigations have produced valuable reports, which have often led to changes in legislation or government policy. The Senate usually does this kind of work far



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more cheaply than Royal Commissions or task forces because its members are paid already and it has a permanent staff at its disposal.

The House of Commons

The House of Commons is the major law-making body. In each of the country's 308 constituencies, or ridings, the candidate who gets the largest number of votes is elected to the House of Commons, even if his or her vote is less than half the total. The number of constituencies may be changed after every 10-year census, pursuant to the Constitution and the *Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act* which allot parliamentary seats roughly on the basis of population. Every province must have

at least as many members in the Commons as it had in the Senate before 1982. The constituencies vary somewhat in size, within prescribed limits.

Political Parties

Our system could not work without political parties. Our major and minor federal parties were not created by any law, though they are now recognized by the law. We, the people, have created them ourselves. They are voluntary associations of people who hold broadly similar opinions on public questions.

The party that wins the largest number of seats in a general election ordinarily forms the

Photo: Library of Parliament/Roy Grogan



The House of Commons in session.



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government. Its leader is asked by the Governor General to become prime minister. If the government in office before an election comes out of the election without a clear majority, it has the right to meet the new House of Commons and see whether it can get enough support from the minor parties to give it a majority. This happened in 1925–26, 1962, 1965, 1972, 2004, 2006 and 2008.

The second largest party (or the largest party in the instance when the government in office does not win the highest number of seats but is able to form a government with the support of minor parties) becomes the official Opposition and its leader becomes the person holding the recognized position of leader of the Opposition. The leader of the Opposition gets

the same salary as a minister. The leader of any party that has at least 12 seats also gets a higher salary than an ordinary member of the House of Commons.

Each of these recognized parties — including the government and the official Opposition — gets public money for research.

Why? Because we want criticism, we want watchfulness, we want the possibility of an effective alternative government if we are displeased with the one we have. The party system reflects the waves of opinion as they rise and wash through the country. There is much froth, but deep swells move beneath them, and they set the course of the ship.

The Prime Minister

As we have already noted, the prime ministership (premiership), like the parties, is not created by law, though it is recognized by the law. The prime minister is normally a member of the House of Commons (there have been two from the Senate, from 1891 to 1892 and from 1894 to 1896). A non-member can hold the office but, by custom, must seek election to a seat very soon. A prime minister may lose his or her seat in an election, but can remain in office as long as the party has sufficient support in the House of Commons to be able to govern, though again, he or she must, by custom, win a seat very promptly. The traditional way of arranging this is to have a member of the party resign, thereby creating a vacancy, which gives the defeated prime minister the opportunity to run in a by-election. (This arrangement is also generally followed when the leader of the Opposition or other party leader is not a member.)

Area	Seats
Ontario	106
Quebec	75
British Columbia	36
Alberta	28
Manitoba	14
Saskatchewan	14
Nova Scotia	11
New Brunswick	10
Newfoundland and Labrador	7
Prince Edward Island	4
Northwest Territories	1
Nunavut	1
Yukon Territory	1
Total	308



Photo: ©NCC/CCN



The Prime Minister lives at 24 Sussex Drive, a home originally named Gorffwysfa, Welsh for “a place of peace.”

The prime minister is appointed by the Governor General. Ordinarily, the appointment is straightforward. If the Opposition wins more than half the seats in an election, or if the government is defeated in the House of Commons and resigns, the Governor General must call on the leader of the Opposition to form a new government.

The prime minister used to be described as “the first among equals” in the cabinet, or as “a moon among minor stars.” This is no longer so. He or she is now incomparably more powerful than any colleague. The prime minister chooses the ministers in the first place, and can also ask any of them to resign; if the minister refuses, the prime minister can advise the Governor General to remove that minister and the advice would invariably be followed. Cabinet decisions do not necessarily go by majority vote. A strong prime minister, having listened to everyone’s

opinion, may simply announce that his or her view is the policy of the government, even if most, or all, the other ministers are opposed. Unless the dissenting ministers are prepared to resign, they must bow to the decision.

The Cabinet

As mentioned, the prime minister chooses the members of the cabinet. All of them must be or become members of the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada. Privy Councillors are appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the prime minister, and membership is for life, unless a member is dismissed by the Governor General on the same advice. All cabinet ministers and former cabinet ministers are always members, as are the Chief Justice of Canada and former chief justices and, usually, ex-Speakers of the Senate and of the House of Commons. Various other prominent citizens



How Canadians Govern Themselves

Photo: Library of Parliament/Doug Millar



Cabinet meets around this oval table.

can be made members simply as a mark of honour. The whole Privy Council as such never meets. Only the ministers and a handful of non-ministers attend the rare ceremonial occasions when the Privy Council is called together, such as proclaiming the accession of a new King or Queen and consenting to a royal marriage (the last time was in 1981). The cabinet, “the Committee of the Privy Council,” is the Council’s operative body.

By custom, almost all the members of the cabinet must be members of the House of Commons, or, if not already members, must win seats. Since Confederation, on occasion, people who were not members of either house have been appointed to the cabinet (as happened most recently in 1996 and 2006), but they had to get seats in the House or the Senate within a reasonable time, or resign from the cabinet.

General Andrew McNaughton was Minister of National Defence for nine months in 1944–45 without a seat in either house, but after he had twice failed to get elected to the Commons, he had to resign.

Senators can be members of the cabinet; the first cabinet, of 13 members, had five senators. Twice between 1979 and 1984, there were three or four senators in the cabinet. The Conservatives, in 1979, elected very few MPs from Quebec, and the Liberals, in 1980, elected only two from the four Western provinces. So both parties had to eke out the necessary cabinet representation for the respective provinces by appointing more senators to the cabinet. Except for a brief period in 1926, every senator appointed leader of the government in the Senate has been a cabinet minister. No senator can sit in the House of Commons, and no member of the House of



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Commons can sit in the Senate. But a minister from the House of Commons may, by invitation of the Senate, come to that chamber and speak. The same opportunities are available to a senator.

By custom, every province must, if possible, have at least one cabinet minister. Of course, if a province does not elect any government supporters, this becomes difficult. In that case, the prime minister may put a senator from that province into the cabinet, or get some member from another province to resign his or her seat and then try to get a person from the “missing” province elected there. In 1921, the Liberals did not elect a single member from Alberta. The Prime Minister, Mr. King, solved the problem of Alberta representation in the cabinet by getting the Hon. Charles Stewart, Liberal ex-premier of Alberta, nominated in the Quebec constituency of Argenteuil and then elected. Whether Mr. King’s ploy would work now is quite another question. The voters of today do not always look with favour upon outside candidates being “parachuted” into their ridings. The smallest province, Prince Edward Island, has often gone unrepresented in the cabinet for years at a stretch.

By custom also, Ontario and Quebec usually have 10 or 12 ministers each, provided each province has elected enough government supporters to warrant such a number. Historically, at least one minister from Quebec was an English-speaking Protestant, and there was at least one minister from the French-speaking minorities outside Quebec, normally from New Brunswick or Ontario, or both. It also used to be necessary to have at least one English-speaking (usually Irish) Roman Catholic minister. Since the appointment of the Hon. Ellen Fairclough to the cabinet in

1957, women have won increased recognition, and Canada’s multicultural nature has been reflected in cabinet representation from Jewish and non-English, non-French, ethnocultural minorities.

The Speakers

The Speaker of the Senate is appointed by the Governor General on the recommendation of the prime minister.

The Speaker of the House of Commons is elected by the House itself after each general election or if a vacancy occurs. He or she must be a member of the House. The Speaker is its presiding officer, decides all questions of procedure and order, controls the House of Commons staff, and is expected to be impartial, non-partisan and as firm in enforcing the rules against the prime minister as against the humblest opposition backbencher. The Speaker withdraws from day-to-day party activities; for example, he or she does not attend caucus meetings.

For many years, the Commons’ Speaker was nominated by the prime minister. In 1985, however, the Commons adopted a new system whereby the Speaker was elected by secret ballot in the Commons chamber. Any member, except ministers of the Crown, party leaders and anyone holding an office within the House, may stand for election. The system goes a considerable way toward securing the Speaker against any lingering suspicion that he or she is the government’s choice and that the speakership is simply one of a number of prime ministerial appointments. Since the introduction of the secret ballot election, the Speaker was re-elected on two occasions after a change of government.



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This new procedure also resulted in a break with the earlier custom of an alternating French- and English-speaking Speaker in the Commons. Similarly, it used to be the case in the House of Commons that if the Speaker was English-speaking, the Deputy Speaker must be French-speaking, and vice versa; this is no longer always true. The Deputy Speaker has occasionally been chosen from one of the opposition parties.

In many instances, an anglophone Speaker of the Senate has been succeeded by a francophone, and vice versa. However, since 1980, the pattern of alternating linguistic groups has not been maintained, with five consecutive francophone Speakers being followed by two anglophone Speakers.

Photo: Canadian Heritage



The Queen performs many ceremonial duties when visiting Canada.



What Goes On in Parliament

Opening of a Session

If the opening of a session also marks the beginning of a newly elected Parliament, you will find the members of the House of Commons milling about in their chamber, a body without a head. On a signal, the great doors of the chamber are slammed shut. They are opened again after three knocks, and the Usher of the Black Rod arrives from the Senate. He or she has been sent by the deputy of the Governor General, who is not allowed to enter the Commons, to announce that the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of Honourable Members in the Chamber of the Honourable the Senate. The members then proceed to the Senate Chamber, where the Speaker of the Senate says: "I have it in command to let you know that His Excellency [Her Excellency] the Governor General does not see fit to declare the causes of his [her] summoning the present Parliament of Canada until the Speaker of the House of Commons shall have been chosen according to law." The members then return to their own chamber and elect their Speaker.

Once the Governor General arrives in the Senate, the Usher of the Black Rod is again dispatched to summon the House of Commons, and the members troop up again to stand at the bar of the Upper House. The Speaker of the House of Commons then informs the Governor General of his or her election, and asks for the

Photo: Library of Parliament/McElligott Photography



"Evil to the one who thinks evil," motto of the Order of the Garter, is inscribed on the Black Rod. It is used to knock on the door of the House of Commons when the House is summoned to the Senate.

Crown's confirmation of all the traditional rights and privileges of the Commons. The Speaker of the Senate delivers that confirmation, and the Governor General delivers the Speech from the Throne, partly in English, partly in French.

The speech, which is written by the cabinet, sets forth the government's view of the condition of the country and the policies it will follow, and the bills it will introduce to deal with that condition. The members of the House of Commons then return to their own chamber, where, normally, the prime minister immediately introduces Bill C-1, An Act respecting the Administration of Oaths of Office. This is a dummy bill, never heard of



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Photo: Sgt Serge Gouin, Rideau Hall
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Rideau Hall is the residence of the Governor General.

again till the opening of the next session. It is introduced to reassert the House of Commons' right to discuss any business it sees fit before considering the Speech from the Throne. This right was first asserted by the English House of Commons more than 300 years ago, and is reasserted there every session by a similar pro forma bill.

This formal reassertion of an ancient right of the Commons has been of very great practical use in Canada more than once. In 1950, for example, a nation-wide railway strike demanded immediate action by Parliament. So the moment the House came back from the Senate Chamber, the prime minister introduced Bill C-1, but this time no dummy; it was a bill to end the strike and send the railway workers back to work, and it was put through all its stages, passed by both houses,

and received Royal Assent before either house considered the Speech from the Throne at all. Had it not been for the traditional assertion of the right of the Commons to do anything it saw fit before considering the speech, this essential emergency legislation would have been seriously delayed.

The address in reply to the Speech from the Throne is, however, normally the first real business of each session (a "sitting" of the House usually lasts a day; a "session" lasts for months, or even years, though there must be at least one sitting per year). A government supporter moves, and another government supporter seconds, a motion for an address of thanks to the Governor General for the gracious speech. The opposition parties move amendments critical of the government and



its policies, and expressing want of confidence in the government. Debate on this address and the amendments is limited to seven days, and ranges over the whole field of the nation's business.

A Working Day in the Commons

At the beginning of each sitting of the House, the Speaker takes the chair, the Sergeant-at-Arms lays the Mace (a gold-plated war club, symbol of the House's authority) on the long table in front of the Speaker, and the Speaker reads the daily prayer. Government supporters sit to the Speaker's right, members of opposition parties to the left. The first few rows of desks on the government side, near the centre, are occupied by the prime minister and the cabinet. Opposite them sit the leader of the official Opposition and the chief members of his or her party. In the rest of the House, the actual seating arrangements depend on the number of members elected from each political party. The leaders of the other major opposition parties sit in the front row farther down the chamber, at the opposite end from the Speaker. At the long table sit the clerk of the House, the deputy clerk, and the other "table officers," who keep the official record of decisions of the House. At desks in the wide space between government and Opposition sit the proceedings monitors, English and French, who identify each speaker and the person being addressed. This information complements the electronic recording of proceedings, which are published the next day. There is simultaneous translation, English and French, for all speeches, and all the proceedings are televised and recorded.

After certain routine proceedings, the House considers Government Orders on most days. Every day the House sits there is a question

period, when members (chiefly opposition) question ministers on government actions and policies. This is usually a very lively 45 minutes, and is a most important part of the process of keeping the government responsible and responsive.

Most of the rest of the day is taken up with bills, which are in fact proposed laws. Any member can introduce a bill, but most of the time is reserved for bills introduced by the government.

One hour of each day is reserved for the consideration of any business sponsored by a private member, that is, by any member who is not part of the cabinet.

A cabinet minister or backbench member proposing a bill first moves for the House's "leave" to introduce it. This is given automatically and without debate or vote. Next comes the motion that the bill be read a first time and printed. This also is automatic and without debate or vote. On a later day comes the motion for second reading (although sometimes a bill is sent directly to a committee before second reading). This is the stage at which members debate the principle of the bill. If it passes second reading, it goes to a committee of the House, usually a standing committee. Each such committee may hear witnesses, and considers the bill, clause by clause, before reporting it (with or without amendments) back to the House. The size of these committees varies from Parliament to Parliament, but the parties are represented in proportion to their strength in the House itself. Some bills, such as appropriation bills (based on the Estimates), which seek to withdraw money from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, are dealt with by the whole House acting as a committee.



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Committees, sitting under less formal rules than the House, examine bills clause by clause. Each clause has to be passed. Any member of the committee can move amendments. When all the clauses have been dealt with, the chairperson reports the bill to the House with any amendments that have been adopted.

When a committee has reported the bill to the House, members at this “report stage” may move amendments to the various clauses (usually, amendments they have not had the opportunity to propose in committee). When these have been passed, or rejected, the bill goes to third reading. If the motion for third reading carries, the bill goes to the Senate, where it goes through much the same process. Bills initiated in the Senate and passed there come to the Commons, and go through the same stages as Commons bills. No bill can

become law (become an Act) unless it has been passed in identical form by both houses and has been assented to, in the Queen’s name, by the Governor General or a deputy of the Governor General (usually a Supreme Court judge). Assent has never been refused to a federal bill, and our first prime minister declared roundly that refusal was obsolete and had become unconstitutional. In Britain, Royal Assent has never been refused since 1707.

There are some 20 or more standing committees (Agriculture and Agri-Food, Canadian Heritage, Veterans Affairs, and so on) whose members are appointed at the beginning of each session or in September of each year, to oversee the work of government departments, to review particular areas of federal policy, to exercise procedural and administrative responsibilities related to Parliament, to consider matters

Photo: Canadian Tourism Commission



Both Senate and House of Commons committees discuss issues around agriculture and agri-food.



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referred to them by the House, and to report their findings and proposals to the House for its consideration.

Included in the work of standing committees is the consideration of the government's spending Estimates. The Standing Orders provide for these Estimates to be sent to the committees for review.

Finally, standing committees are designated as having certain matters permanently referred to them (such as reports tabled in the House pursuant to a statute, and the annual report of certain Crown corporations). Each of these automatic Orders of Reference is permanently before the committees, and may be considered and reported on as the committees deem appropriate.

The House of Commons can, and does, set up special committees for the examination of particular subjects, including legislative committees whose mandate is solely to examine a particular piece of legislation. It also establishes, with the Senate, joint committees of the two houses.

End of a Session

A session ends when the Governor General accepts the prime minister's advice to "prorogue" Parliament until the next session, which must, by law, come within a year. Prorogation brings the business of both the Senate and the House of Commons to an end. All pending legislation dies on the Order Paper and committee activity ceases, though all members and officials of the government and both houses remain in office.



How Canadians Govern Themselves

Provinces and Municipalities

Every province has a legislative assembly (there are no upper houses) that is very similar to the House of Commons and transacts its business in much the same way. All bills must go through three readings and receive Royal Assent by the lieutenant-governor. In the provinces, assent

has been refused 28 times, the last in 1945, in Prince Edward Island. Members of the legislature are elected from constituencies established by the legislature roughly in proportion to population, and whichever candidate gets the largest number of votes is elected, even if his or her vote is less than half the total.

Municipal governments — cities, towns, villages, counties, districts, metropolitan regions — are set up by the provincial legislatures, and have such powers as the legislatures see fit to give them. Mayors, Reeves and councillors are elected on a basis that the provincial legislature prescribes.

There are now roughly 4,000 municipal governments in the country. They provide us with such services as water supply, sewage and garbage disposal, roads, sidewalks, street lighting, building codes, parks, playgrounds, libraries and so forth. Schools are generally looked after by school boards or commissions elected under provincial education acts.

Through self-government and land claims agreements, aboriginal peoples are increasingly assuming powers and responsibilities similar to those enjoyed by provinces and municipalities.



Municipal governments take care of city parks.



Living Government

We are apt to think of government as something static; as a machine that was built and finished long ago. Actually, since our democratic government is really only the sum of ourselves, it grows and changes as we do. Canada today is not the Canada of 1867, and neither is the Act that made it. It has been changed by many amendments, all originated by us, the people of Canada. How we govern ourselves has also been changed by judicial interpretation of the written Constitution, by custom and usage, and by arrangements between the national and provincial legislatures and governments as to how they would use their respective powers. These other ways in which our system has changed, and is changing, give it great flexibility, and make possible a multitude of special arrangements for particular provinces or regions within the existing written Constitution, without the danger of “freezing” some special arrangement that might not have worked out well in practice.

There may still be many changes. Some are already in process, some have been slowly evolving since 1867, and some are only glimmerings along the horizon. They will come, as they always do in the parliamentary process, at the hands of many governments, with the clash of loud debate, and with the ultimate agreement of the majority who cast their votes.

We are concerned with the relations between French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians, and with the division of powers between the federal and provincial governments. We always have been. But the

search for areas of agreement and the making of new adjustments has been a continual process from the beginning. The recognition of the French fact, which was limited in 1867, now embraces, in greater or lesser degree, the whole of Canada. All federal services must be available where required in either language. Federal, Quebec and Manitoba courts have always had to be bilingual. New Brunswick is now constitutionally bilingual. Criminal justice must now be bilingual wherever the facilities exist or can be made available.

The country’s resources grow; the provinces’ and territories’ needs change. Some are rich, others less well off. Federalism makes possible a pooling of financial resources and reduction of such disparities. Federal-provincial conferences, bringing together all the heads of government, have been held fairly frequently since the first one in 1906, and are a major force in evolving new solutions. Yet there are always areas of dispute, new adjustments required, and special problems to be met.

Historically, Canada is a nation founded by the British and the French. Yet it is now a great amalgam of many peoples. They have common rights and needs, and their own particular requirements within the general frame of the law. All these must be recognized. We are far yet from realizing many of our ideals, but we have made progress.

As a country we have grown richer, but we have paid a price in terms of environmental pollution. We are leaving the farms and bushlands and



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How Canadians Govern Themselves

crowding into the cities. Ours is becoming a computerized, industrialized, urbanized, and ever more multicultural society, and we face the difficulties of adapting ourselves and our institutions to new lifestyles.

These changes have produced a new concern for an environment that our forebears took for granted. We believe in just and peaceful sharing, but how is that to be achieved? We have gained for ourselves a certain measure of security for the aged and sick and helpless, yet poverty is still with us. So are regional disparities.

These are all problems of government, and therefore your problems. They all concern millions of people and are difficult to solve. Parliaments and parties, like life, have no instant remedies, but they have one common aim. It is to get closer to you, to determine your real will, and to endeavour to give it form and thrust for action. That is the work you chose them for, and it can be done in the end only with your help. When you take an interest in your community, when you form an opinion in politics, and when you go to cast your vote, you are part of government.

Photo: Elections Canada



Voting is one way of participating directly in our democracy.



Governors General of Canada since 1867

	Assumed Office
1 The Viscount Monck , GCMG.....	July 1, 1867
2 Lord Lisgar , GCMG	Feb. 2, 1869
3 The Earl of Dufferin , KP, GCMG, KCB	June 25, 1872
4 The Marquess of Lorne , KT, GCMG.....	Nov. 25, 1878
5 The Marquess of Lansdowne , GCMG	Oct. 23, 1883
6 Lord Stanley of Preston , GCB	June 11, 1888
7 The Earl of Aberdeen , KT, GCMG	Sept. 18, 1893
8 The Earl of Minto , GCMG	Nov. 12, 1898
9 The Earl Grey , GCMG	Dec. 10, 1904
10 Field Marshal H.R.H. The Duke of Connaught , KG	Oct. 13, 1911
11 The Duke of Devonshire , KG, GCMG, GCVO	Nov. 11, 1916
12 Gen. The Lord Byng of Vimy , GCB, GCMG, MVO.....	Aug. 11, 1921
13 The Viscount Willingdon of Ratton , GCSI, GCIE, GBE	Oct. 2, 1926
14 The Earl of Bessborough , GCMG	April 4, 1931
15 Lord Tweedsmuir of Elsfeld , GCMG, GCVO, CH.....	Nov. 2, 1935
16 Maj. Gen. The Earl of Athlone , KG, PC, GCB, GCMG, GCVO, DSO	June 21, 1940
17 Field Marshal The Rt. Hon. Viscount Alexander of Tunis , KG, GCB, GCMG, CSI, DSO, MC, LLD, ADC	April 12, 1946
18 The Rt. Hon. Vincent Massey , PC, CH.....	Feb. 28, 1952
19 Maj. Gen. The Rt. Hon. Georges Philias Vanier , PC, DSO, MC, CD	Sept. 15, 1959
20 The Rt. Hon. Daniel Roland Michener , PC, CC.....	April 17, 1967



How Canadians Govern Themselves

21	The Rt. Hon. Jules Léger , CC, CMM	Jan. 14, 1974
22	The Rt. Hon. Edward Richard Schreyer , PC, CC, CMM, CD.....	Jan. 22, 1979
23	The Rt. Hon. Jeanne Sauvé , PC, CC, CMM, CD.....	May 14, 1984
24	The Rt. Hon. Ramon John Hnatyshyn , PC, CC, CMM, CD, QC.....	Jan. 29, 1990
25	The Rt. Hon. Roméo-A. LeBlanc , PC, CC, CMM, CD	Feb. 8, 1995
26	The Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson , PC, CC, CMM, COM, CD	Oct. 7, 1999
27	The Rt. Hon. Michaëlle Jean , CC, CMM, COM, CD	Sept. 27, 2005
28	The Rt. Hon. David Lloyd Johnston , CC, CMM, COM, CD, AB, LLB, DD	Oct. 1, 2010

Visit www.parl.gc.ca for a current list of Governors General of Canada since 1867, or contact the Library of Parliament Information Service (see Preface, page i).



Canadian Prime Ministers since 1867

1	Rt. Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald	Liberal-Conservative
	July 1, 1867 to Nov. 5, 1873	
2	Hon. Alexander Mackenzie*	Liberal
	Nov. 7, 1873 to Oct. 8, 1878	
3	Rt. Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald	Liberal-Conservative
	Oct. 17, 1878 to June 6, 1891	
4	Hon. Sir John J.C. Abbott*	Liberal-Conservative
	June 16, 1891 to Nov. 24, 1892	
5	Rt. Hon. Sir John S.D. Thompson	Liberal-Conservative
	Dec. 5, 1892 to Dec. 12, 1894	
6	Hon. Sir Mackenzie Bowell*	Conservative
	Dec. 21, 1894 to April 27, 1896	
7	Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Tupper* (Baronet).....	Conservative
	May 1, 1896 to July 8, 1896	
8	Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier	Liberal
	July 11, 1896 to Oct. 6, 1911	
9	Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Laird Borden	Conservative
	Oct. 10, 1911 to Oct. 12, 1917	
10	Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Laird Borden	Conservative**
	Oct. 12, 1917 to July 10, 1920	
11	Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen	Conservative
	July 10, 1920 to Dec. 29, 1921	
12	Rt. Hon. William Lyon Mackenzie King	Liberal
	Dec. 29, 1921 to June 28, 1926	

* Prior to 1968, “Right Honourable” was accorded only to prime ministers who had been sworn into the Privy Council for the U.K. Prime ministers Mackenzie, Abbott and Bowell were only members of the Canadian Privy Council and Prime Minister Tupper became a U.K. Privy Councillor after his term as Canada’s prime minister.

** During his second period in office, Prime Minister Borden headed a coalition government.



How Canadians Govern Themselves

13	Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen	Conservative
	June 29, 1926 to Sept. 25, 1926	
14	Rt. Hon. William Lyon Mackenzie King	Liberal
	Sept. 25, 1926 to Aug. 7, 1930	
15	Rt. Hon. Richard Bedford Bennett (became Viscount Bennett, 1941)	Conservative
	Aug. 7, 1930 to Oct. 23, 1935	
16	Rt. Hon. William Lyon Mackenzie King	Liberal
	Oct. 23, 1935 to Nov. 15, 1948	
17	Rt. Hon. Louis Stephen St-Laurent	Liberal
	Nov. 15, 1948 to June 21, 1957	
18	Rt. Hon. John George Diefenbaker	Progressive Conservative
	June 21, 1957 to Apr. 22, 1963	
19	Rt. Hon. Lester Bowles Pearson	Liberal
	Apr. 22, 1963 to Apr. 20, 1968	
20	Rt. Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau	Liberal
	Apr. 20, 1968 to June 4, 1979	
21	Rt. Hon. Charles Joseph Clark	Progressive Conservative
	June 4, 1979 to March 3, 1980	
22	Rt. Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau	Liberal
	March 3, 1980 to June 30, 1984	
23	Rt. Hon. John Napier Turner	Liberal
	June 30, 1984 to Sept. 17, 1984	
24	Rt. Hon. Martin Brian Mulroney	Progressive Conservative
	Sept. 17, 1984 to June 25, 1993	
25	Rt. Hon. A. Kim Campbell	Progressive Conservative
	June 25, 1993 to Nov. 4, 1993	
26	Rt. Hon. Jean Joseph Jacques Chrétien	Liberal
	Nov. 4, 1993 to Dec. 11, 2003	
27	Rt. Hon. Paul Edgar Philippe Martin	Liberal
	Dec. 12, 2003 to Feb. 5, 2006	
28	Rt. Hon. Stephen Joseph Harper	Conservative
	Feb. 6, 2006 -	

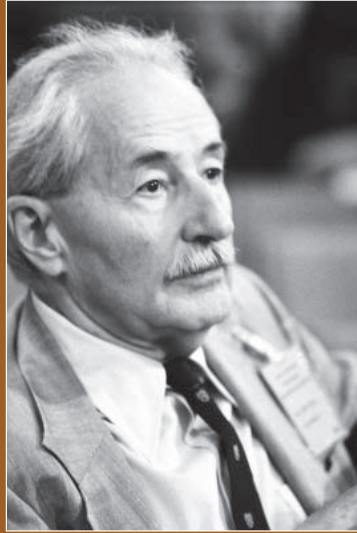
Visit www.parl.gc.ca for a current list of prime ministers of Canada since 1867, or contact the Library of Parliament Information Service (see Preface, page i).



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Photo: Jean-Marc Carisse



Senator Eugene Forsey wanted us to understand how our government works for one very simple reason — there is nothing Canadians do in any given day that is not affected by how we govern ourselves. As he says inside this booklet: “We cannot work or eat or drink; we cannot buy or sell or own anything; we cannot go to a ball game or a hockey game or watch TV without feeling the effects of government. We cannot marry or educate our children, cannot be sick, born or buried without the hand of government somewhere intervening.”

Through this lively and readable booklet, Senator Forsey has helped tens of thousands of students, teachers, legislators and ordinary citizens in Canada and around the world understand the Canadian system of government.

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SECTION
3

Canada's Democracy in Action

Elections

According to the *Constitution Act*, national **elections** must be held at least once every five years to decide who will represent Canadians in the **House of Commons**.

Canada is divided into areas called **ridings** (also called **constituencies** or electoral districts). Canadian **citizens vote** for the candidate in their riding they think will best represent them. In a riding there may be several different candidates, each from a different political party or running independently.

How does a person become a candidate? First, he or she has to be *nominated* (or chosen) by fellow party members in his or her riding during a special meeting called a *nomination meeting*. If more than one person in the party wants to be a candidate for that riding, there is a vote during the nomination meeting to decide who it will be.

If a person does not belong to a party, then he or she can run for election in his or her riding as an *independent candidate*.

On Election Day, the candidate who gets the most **votes** becomes a **Member of Parliament** (MP) and represents his or her riding in the House of Commons in Ottawa. The party with the most number of elected MPs across the country usually forms *the Government*. The leader of that party becomes the **Prime Minister**.

TALK ABOUT IT!

Find a partner. Talk about other ways the word *run* is used (examples: running to catch a bus, running a business, a runny nose, running out of time). Use a dictionary to find other examples. Write down all the uses you can. How would some of these things be expressed in your home language?



DID YOU KNOW? — Because each riding should represent a relatively fixed number of people (approximately 70,000), as the population increases, the number of ridings has to be increased and the boundaries redrawn. In 1867, Canada had only 4 provinces and 181 ridings. In 2009, with 10 provinces and 3 territories, the number of ridings was 308.

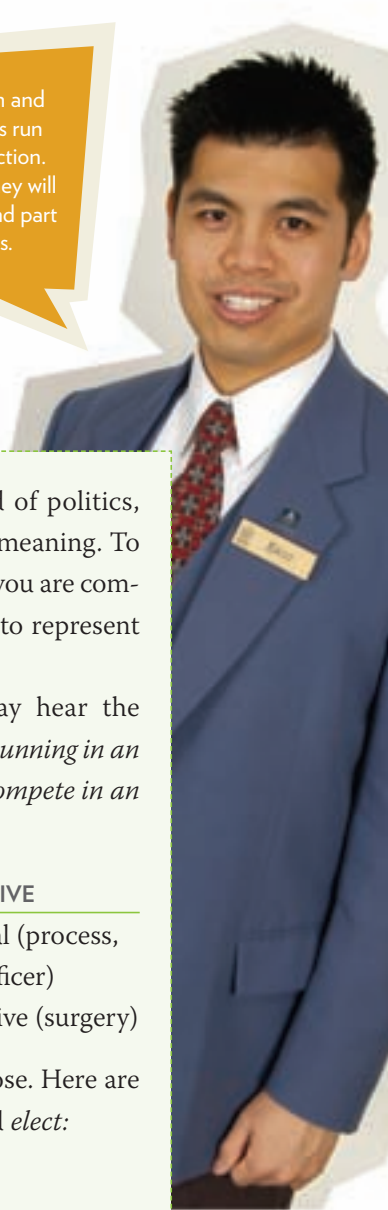




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Running for office takes dedication and lots of hard work. Some candidates run many times before they win an election. Once the candidates are elected, they will spend part of the year in Ottawa, and part of the year in their home ridings.



WORD BUILDER – In the world of politics, the verb *to run* has a specific meaning. To run in an election means that you are competing with other candidates to represent your riding.

During an election, you may hear the expressions *run for office* and *running in an election*. They both mean *to compete in an election as a candidate*.

VERB	NOUN	ADJECTIVE
to elect	election	electoral (process, vote, officer) or elective (surgery)

The word *elect* means to choose. Here are a few sentences with the word *elect*:

- She was elected in 2006.
- An election will be held this year.
- He is the **Chief Electoral Officer**.



Dissolving Parliament

The Prime Minister asks the **Governor General** to end (or dissolve) **Parliament** and call an election. **Dissolution** (the act of dissolving) happens when:

- the Government's fixed four-year term is complete
- the Government loses a vote on certain important **bills** – on the **budget**, for example – in the House of Commons
- a majority of MPs vote to defeat the Government in the House of Commons on a *vote of confidence*, including a vote against certain important government measures or bills, such as the budget

Even with the fixed four-year term, an election could still be held after the Government loses an important vote in the House of Commons.

Campaigns

After an election is called and before the day voting takes place (usually called Election Day), each candidate competes with the other candidates in the riding to convince voters why he or she is the best choice. This is called a *campaign*. A candidate tells voters his or her message in many different ways:

- campaign signs
- door-to-door canvassing
- advertising campaigns (on television, radio, billboards and in newspapers, for example)
- public meetings
- **debates**

Many of these activities cost money. There are rules about how much money candidates are allowed to spend on campaigns, and how much money people are allowed to give to candidates.

Of course, to do all this work, candidates have several people helping them. These people are called *campaign workers*. People of any age, including youth, can help out on campaigns.

WORD BUILDER – A teacher can dismiss class – that is, the teacher can tell the class that they can go home. The Governor General can dissolve Parliament, which is somewhat similar. These words both start with *dis-*. Take a look at these words:

- disable
- dissolve
- disappear
- disagree

Like the prefix *un-*, *dis* makes the root word into its opposite. Try using *dis* with the following familiar words, then create some sentences with them: advantage, approve, believe, colour, comfort, connection, courage, engage, infect, illusion, satisfy, respect.

Sometimes, the *dis* word is used more than the root: disgust, for example. The root *gust* (which is associated with the sense of taste) is not as familiar to English speakers as *disgust*.





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WHAT ABOUT ME?

Have you ever participated in an election? Some ways that young people across Canada get involved in elections are by helping candidates, by bringing up important issues at public debates and forums and by expressing their opinions in letters to newspapers. Some issues that are often important to young Canadians are crime, access to colleges and universities, employment and skills training and equal rights. Think about what election issues are important to you.

Political Parties

Canada has many different political parties. People in the same party usually have similar opinions about public issues. In Parliament, members of different parties often have different opinions. This is why there are sometimes disagreements during elections and when Parliament is **sitting**.

Having different parties allows criticism and encourages watchfulness. Canadians have a choice in expressing different views by voting for a member from a specific party during election time. This is called the *party system*.

WHAT ABOUT ME?

You probably have opinions and ideas of what would be good for Canada. Think about one issue that is important to you (the environment, immigration, education, or **law** and order, for example). Research some of the major political parties in Canada to find out where they stand on your issue. Which one do you think has the best ideas? Imagine you are creating a political party. What issues are important?



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W **WORD BUILDER** – The word *campaign* comes from the Latin *campus*, which means *field*. In ancient times, armies would *take to the field* when they fought. In English, we still use the word *campaign* to mean a military battle or series of battles. We can also use the word *race* to describe an election competition. *Race* comes from the Old Norse *ras*, meaning *running water*. Like many words in English, we can use *race* either as a noun or as a verb.

NOUN	VERB	EXAMPLES
race	to race	She ran a very good race. He raced to the finish line.
vote	to vote	
form	to form	
act	to act	
help	to help	

W **WORD BUILDER**

- issue
- policy
- idea
- opinion

These words are difficult to explain because they are abstract. Look them up in a dictionary if you do not know them. Can you use these words in a sentence?



Voting

A Canadian citizen who is 18 years of age or older by Election Day can vote after he or she has registered with Elections Canada. Elections Canada will then send out a voter information card and add him or her to the voters' list.

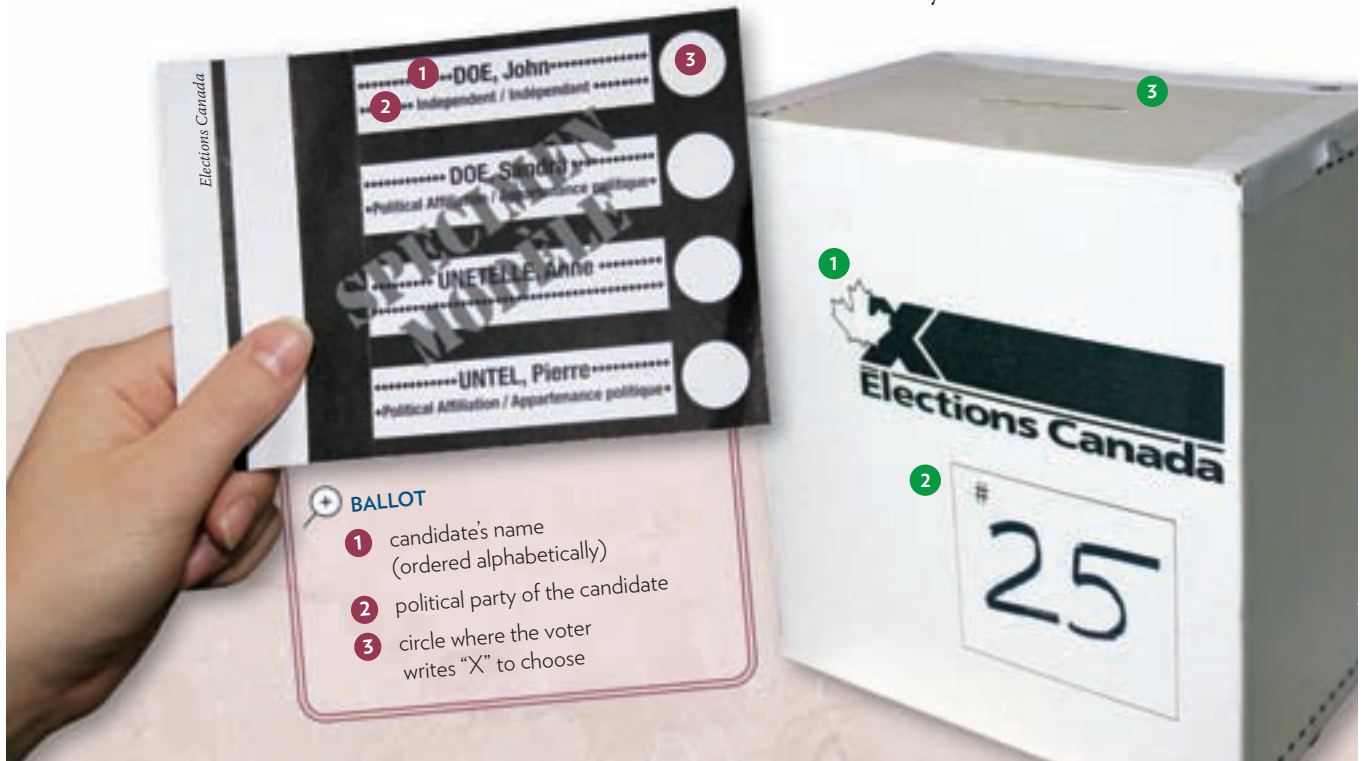
On Election Day, most voters go to a nearby location called a *polling station*, where their names are checked off the voters' list if they are already registered. If they have not yet registered, they can do so at this time. At the polling station, each voter is given a ballot (a piece of paper listing all the candidates in the riding). Voters do not have to tell anyone who they are voting for — it is a secret ballot.

Voters make an X beside the name of the candidate they prefer. Then they fold up the ballot and place it into a ballot box.

If they incorrectly mark a ballot, or mark more than one name, that is called a *spoiled ballot* and it will not be counted.

Citizens can vote even if they are travelling away from home or out of the country on Election Day. Elections Canada has information on how to vote by using a special mail-in ballot.

Once the voting ends, the votes are collected and added up. This can take a long time. Television stations have special news programs to report the election results. Some races are very close and are decided by a small number of votes.





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The minimum age to run in an election is 18 years old. The youngest person ever elected to Parliament was Claude-André Lachance, who was 20 years old when he was elected in 1974.

TALK ABOUT IT!

You or someone in your family probably know about elections in other countries. Ask your family about elections in your country of origin. Here are some questions you might want to ask:

- Who was allowed to vote?
- How often were elections held?
- Where did people vote?
- Was the ballot secret?
- How did people find out who had won?

Back in your classroom, find out if your classmates have similar stories.



BALLOT BOX

- 1 Elections Canada logo
- 2 polling station number
- 3 slot for completed ballot



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Forming a Government

When the election is over, all winning candidates are called Members of Parliament, or MPs for short. The MPs who belong to parties that are *not* forming the Government are called **opposition** MPs. The **Official Opposition** is usually the party with the second-highest number of elected members after the winning party. The leader of this party is called the **Leader of the Official Opposition**.

DID YOU KNOW? – Canada's first Prime Minister, the **Right Honourable** Sir John A. Macdonald (pictured at right), called the **Senate** a place of "sober second thought."



House of Commons Collection, Ottawa

When it is time for Parliament to sit, all **Parliamentarians** will discuss and debate new bills (proposed laws), and make decisions that affect every Canadian. For more information on bills, see *Process of Passing a Bill* in Section 4.



I work in the Parliament Buildings. When Parliament is in **session**, the **Senators** and MPs are in town. They meet to discuss issues and policy, and to debate bills, both in the **Chambers** and in **committee**.

WHAT ABOUT ME?

Who is your MP? What riding do you live in? What party does your MP belong to? Do you know where your MP's riding office is? Look it up if you do not know! Your MP has people working in his or her office who can help you if you have a problem, such as difficulty getting a government service, or if you have a complaint or question about government. It is your MP's job to listen to *all* his or her **constituents** (people who live in a riding), even if they did not vote for him or her or did not vote at all.

THINK ABOUT IT

Elders often have a lot of experience to share. Sometimes we call this wisdom. How are elders treated in your family and community?

WORD BUILDER

SENATE

This word comes from the Latin *senex*, meaning *elder*. Literally, it means a *council of elders*.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

The word *commons* comes from the Latin *communis*, which means *shared by many*. Other related words are community, communication and commune.



1. Parliamentary Institutions

The Canadian System of Government

Canada is a parliamentary democracy: its system of government holds that the law is the supreme authority. The *Constitution Act, 1867*, which forms the basis of Canada's written constitution, provides that there shall be one Parliament for Canada, consisting of three distinct elements: the Crown, the Senate and the House of Commons. However, as a federal state, responsibility for lawmaking in Canada is shared among one federal, ten provincial and three territorial governments.

The power to enact laws is vested in a legislature composed of individuals selected to represent the Canadian people. Hence, it is a “representative” system of government. The federal legislature is bicameral: it has two deliberative “houses” or “chambers” — an upper house, the Senate, and a lower house, the House of Commons. ^[19] The Senate is composed of individuals appointed by the Governor General to represent Canada's provinces and territories. Members of the House of Commons are elected by Canadians who are eligible to vote. ^[10] The successful candidates are those who receive the highest number of votes cast among the candidates in their electoral district in this single-member, simple-plurality system.

Canada is also a constitutional monarchy, in that its executive authority is vested formally in the Queen through the Constitution. ^[11] Every act of government is carried out in the name of the Crown, but the authority for those acts flows from the Canadian people. ^[12] The executive function belongs to the Governor in Council, which is, practically speaking, the Governor General acting with, and on the advice of, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. ^[13]

U3L3A3 | Compare and contrast democracies | Article 4

Political parties play a critical role in the Canadian parliamentary system. ^[14] Parties are organizations, bound together by a common ideology, or other ties, which seek political power in order to implement their policies. In a democratic system, the competition for power takes place in the context of an election.

Finally, by virtue of the Preamble to the *Constitution Act, 1867*, which states that Canada is to have “Constitution similar in Principle to that of the United Kingdom”, Canada’s parliamentary system derives from the British, or “Westminster”, tradition. The Canadian system of parliamentary government has the following essential features:

- Parliament consists of the Crown and an upper and lower legislative Chamber;
- Legislative power is vested in “Parliament”; to become law, legislation must be assented to by each of Parliament’s three constituent parts (i.e., the Crown, the Senate and the House of Commons);
- Members of the House of Commons are individually elected to represent their constituents within a single electoral district; elections are based on a single-member constituency, first-past-the-post or simple-plurality system (i.e., the candidate receiving more votes than any other candidate in that district is elected);
- Most Members of Parliament belong to and support a particular political party; ^[15]
- The leader of the party having the support of the majority of the Members of the House of Commons is asked by the Governor General to form a government and becomes the Prime Minister;
- The party, or parties, opposed to the government is called the opposition (the largest of these parties is referred to as the “official” opposition);

U3L3A3 | Compare and contrast democracies | Article 4

- The executive powers of government (the powers to execute or implement government policies and programs) are formally vested in the Crown, but effectively exercised by the Prime Minister and Cabinet, whose membership is drawn principally from Members of the House belonging to the governing party;
- The Prime Minister and Cabinet are responsible to, or must answer to, the House of Commons as a body for their actions; and
- The Prime Minister and Cabinet must enjoy the confidence of the House of Commons to remain in office. Confidence, in effect, means the support of a majority of the House.

Please note —

As the rules and practices of the House of Commons are subject to change, users should remember that this edition of *Procedure and Practice* was **published in January 2000**. Standing Order changes adopted since then, as well as other changes in practice, are not reflected in the text. The Appendices to the book, however, have been updated and now include information up to the end of the 38th Parliament in November 2005.

To confirm current rules and practice, please consult the [latest version of the Standing Orders](#) on the Parliament of Canada Web site.

For further information about the procedures of the House of Commons, please contact the Table Research Branch at (613) 996-3611 or by e-mail at trbdrb@parl.gc.ca.



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U3L3A3 | Compare and contrast democracies | Article 4



Government structure in Norway

Bjoern Rongevaer, KS

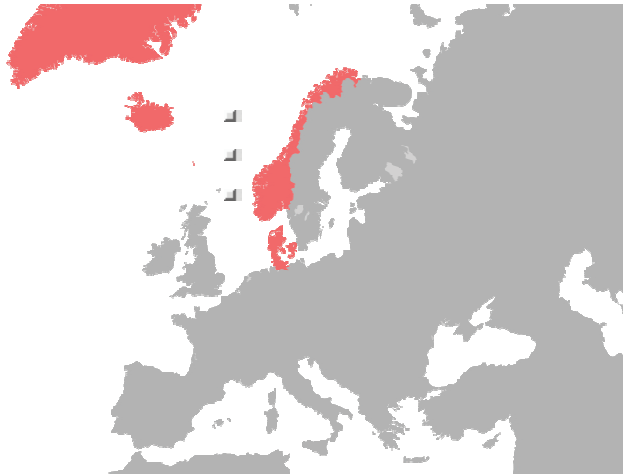


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Historical background

- Unification of Norway about 800
- Weakening and disintegration of Norwegian state after internal conflicts and plague (the Black Death)
- Union with, later a province of Denmark 1530 - 1814 (434 years)



KS 



community choices unit three

U3L3A3 | Compare and contrast democracies | Article 4



- Union with Sweden 1814 – 1905

The Norwegian constitution – 17 May 1814 - three main principles:

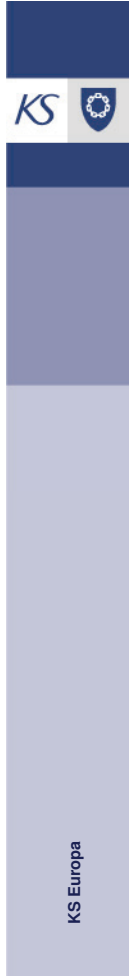
- sovereignty of the people,
- separation of powers,
- human rights

- Separate institutions

- Alderman Act 1837 – defined local authorities' rights and responsibilities.

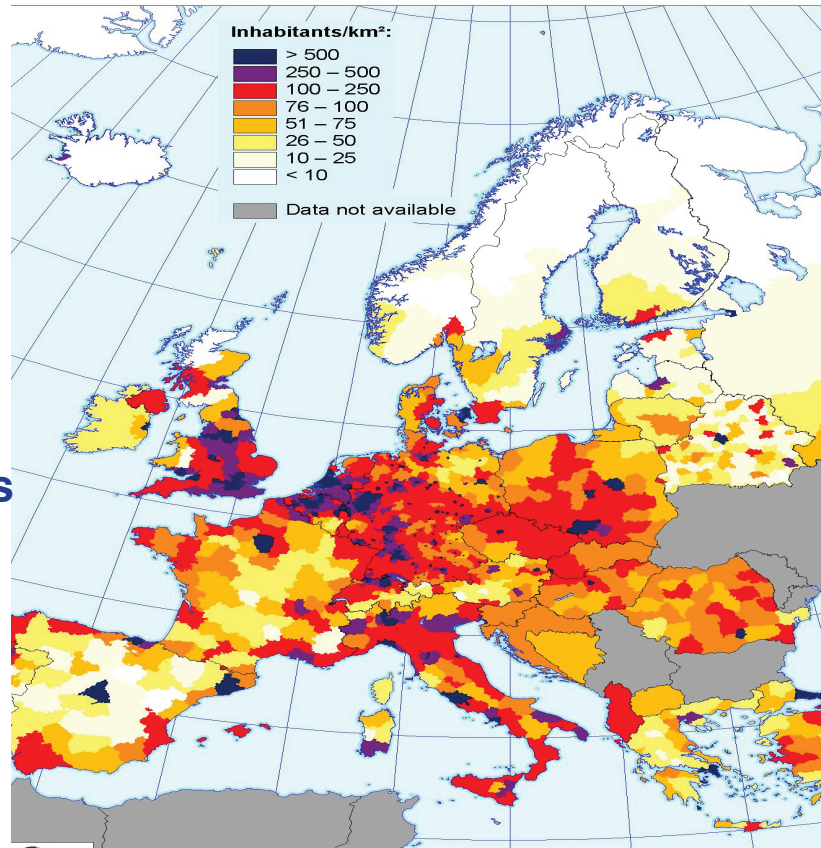
- Parliamentary system from 1884

- Current Local Government Act 1992



Norway

- 1800 km from north to south
- 342.000 km²
- 5 mill inhabitants
- 16 inhabitants km²





Finmark

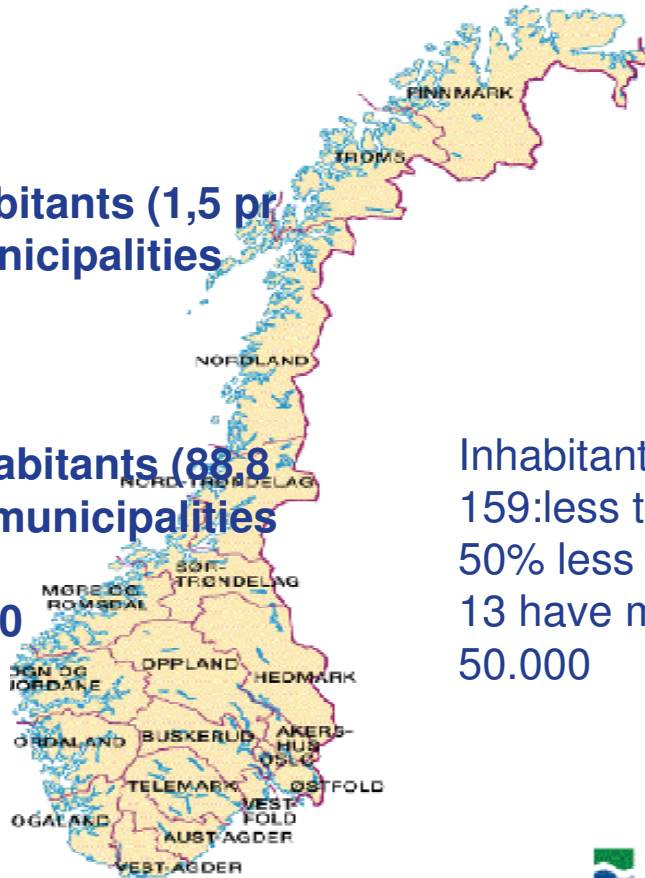
**49.000 km2,
73.000 inhabitants (1,5 pr
km2) 19 municipalities**

Vestfold

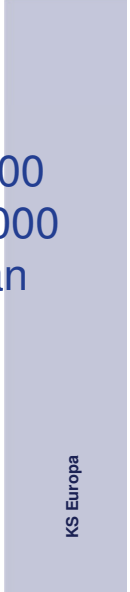
**2.200 km2,
210.000 inhabitants (88,8
pr km2) 14 municipalities**

Oslo 620.000

Utsira 214



Inhabitants
159:less than 3.000
50% less than 5.000
13 have more than
50.000

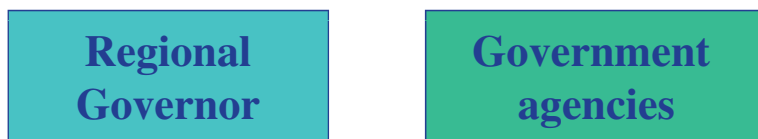


GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

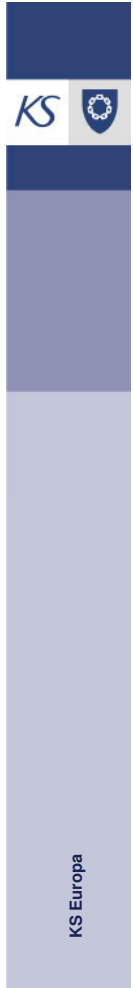
National government



Regional state level (administration)



Local/Regional government (elected)



ELECTIONS

- Election period: 4 years

Local/regional elections

2007 2009 2015



2009 2013



National elections

Responsibilities of national authorities

- National Insurance Scheme
- Specialized health care (hospitals)
- Specialized social services (child welfare and substance abuse institutions)
- Higher education and universities
- Labour market
- Refugees and immigrants
- National roads and railways, agricultural issues, environmental issues
- Law enforcement (police, prisons)
- Defence and armed forces
- Foreign policy

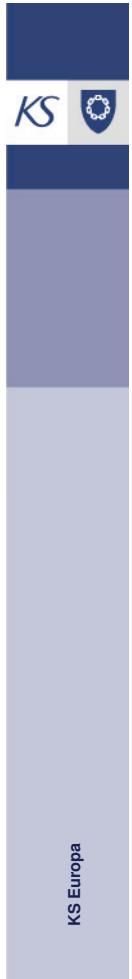
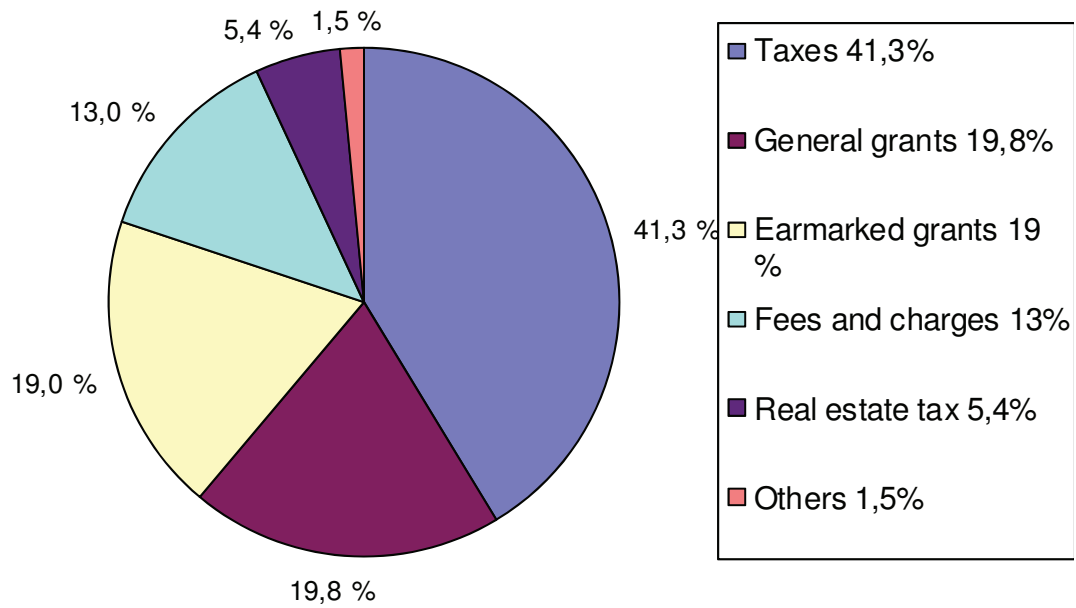
Responsibilities of county authorities

- Secondary education
- Regional development
 - County roads and public transport
 - Regional planning and development
 - Business development
 - Culture (museums, heritage)

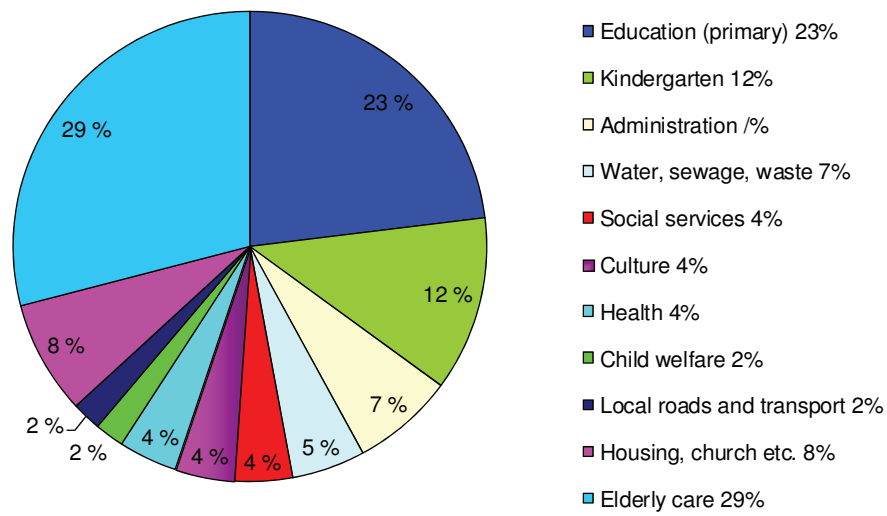
Responsibilities of municipalities

- Preschool and primary education
- Care for the elderly and disabled, social services (social assistance, child welfare, drug/alcohol)
- Local planning (land use), agricultural issues, environmental issues, local roads, harbours
- Culture
- Utilities (water, sewage, waste)

Municipal revenues

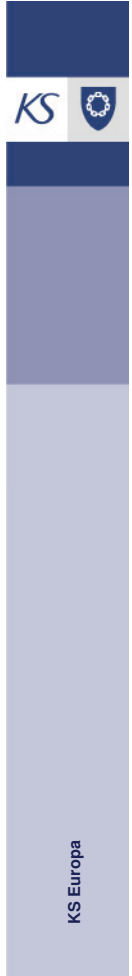


Municipal expenditures



Local government sector in a national context (figures from 2007)

- Income in local government sector amounts 16,9% of GDP in continental Norway
- Employment in local government sector amounts to 18,7% of all employees in Norway



Politics of Norway

Politics in Norway take place in the framework of a parliamentary representative democratic constitutional monarchy. Executive power is exercised by the King's council, the cabinet, led by the Prime Minister of Norway. Legislative power is vested in both the government and the Storting, elected within a multi-party system. The Judiciary is independent of the executive branch and the legislature.

- 2007: Removed the old system of division of Stortinget into the Odelsting and Lagting (took effect after the 2009 general election). Changes to the Court of Impeachment. Parliamentary system now part of the Constitution (previously this was only a constitutional custom) (new § 15)
- 2009: same-sex marriage legalized

1 Constitutional development

The Norwegian constitution, signed by the Eidsvoll assembly on 17 May 1814, transformed Norway from being an absolute monarchy into a constitutional monarchy. The 1814 constitution granted rights such as freedom of speech (§100) and rule of law (§§ 96, 97, 99). Important amendments include:

- November 4, 1814: Constitution reenacted in order to form a personal union with the king of Sweden
- 1851: Constitutional prohibition against admission of Jews lifted
- 1884: Parliamentarism has evolved since 1884 and entails that the cabinet must not have the parliament against it (an absence of mistrust, but an express of support is not necessary), and that the appointment by the King is a formality when there is a clear parliamentary majority. This parliamentary rule has the status of constitutional custom. All new laws are passed and all new governments are therefore formed *de jure* by the King, although not *de facto*. After elections resulting in no clear majority, the King appoints the new government *de facto*
- 1887: Prohibition against monastic orders lifted
- 1898: Universal male suffrage established
- 1905: Union with Sweden dissolved
- 1913: Universal suffrage established
- 1956: Religious freedom formalised and prohibition against Jesuits lifted
- 2004: New provision on freedom of expression, replacing the old § 100

2 Executive branch

Further information: Cabinet of Norway

Norway is a constitutional monarchy, where the King



Harald V has been King of Norway since 1991. The Norwegian king has mainly symbolic powers.

has a mainly symbolic power. The Royal House is a branch of the princely family of Glücksburg, originally from Schleswig-Holstein in Germany. The functions of the King, Harald V, are mainly ceremonial, but he has influence as the symbol of national unity. Although the



Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway (2013-) and leader of the Conservative Party.

constitution of 1814 grants important executive powers to the King, these are always exercised by the Council of State in the name of the King (King's Council, or cabinet). The King is also High Protector of the Church of Norway (the state church), Grand Master of The Royal Norwegian Order of St. Olav, and symbolically Supreme Commander of the Norwegian armed forces.

The Council of State is formally convened by the reigning monarch. The Council of State consists of a Prime Minister and his council, formally appointed by the King. Parliamentarism has evolved since 1884 and entails that the cabinet must not have the parliament against it, and that the appointment by the King is a formality. The council must have the confidence of the Norwegian legislative body, known as the Storting. In practice, the monarch will ask the leader of a parliamentary block that has a majority in the Storting to form a government. After elections resulting in no clear majority to any party or coalition, the leader of the party most likely to be able to form a government is appointed Prime Minister. Since World War II, most non-Socialist governments have been coalitions, and Labour Party governments have often relied on the support of other parties to retain the necessary parliamentary votes.

The executive branch is divided into the following Ministries:

Main article: List of Norwegian ministries

- Office of the Prime Minister (*Statsministerens kontor*)
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food (*Landbruks- og matdepartementet*)
- Ministry of Children and Equality (*Barne- og likestillingsdepartementet*)
- Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs (*Kultur- og kirkedepartementet*)
- Ministry of Defence (*Forsvarsdepartementet*)

- Ministry of Education and Research (*Kunnskapsdepartementet*)
- Ministry of the Environment (*Miljøverndepartementet*)
- Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*)
- Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs (*Fiskeri- og kystdepartementet*)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Utenriksdepartementet*)
- Ministry of Government Administration and Reform (*Fornyings- og administrasjonsdepartementet*)
- Ministry of Health and Care Services (*Helse- og omsorgsdepartementet*)
- Ministry of Justice and the Police (*Justis- og politidepartementet*)
- Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion (*Arbeids- og inkluderingsdepartementet*)
- Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (*Kommunal- og regionaldepartementet*)
- Ministry of Petroleum and Energy (*Olje- og energidepartementet*)
- Ministry of Trade and Industry (*Nærings- og handelsdepartementet*)
- Ministry of Transport and Communications (*Samferdselsdepartementet*)

2.1 Governments 1935–1981

The Labour Party has been the largest party in Parliament ever since the election of 1927 up to the recent 2009 election. Labour formed their first brief minority government in 1928 which lasted for 18 days only. After the 1936 election the Labour Party formed a new minority government, which had to go into exile 1940–45 because of the German occupation of Norway. After a brief trans-party government following the German capitulation in 1945, Labour gained a majority of the seats in parliament in the first post-war election of 1945.

Norway was ruled by Labour governments from 1945 to 1981, except for three periods (1963, 1965–71, and 1972–73). The Labour Party had a single party majority in the Storting from 1945 to 1961. Since then no party has single-handedly formed a majority government, hence minority and coalition governments have been the rule. After the centre-right Willoch government lost its parliamentary majority in the election of 1985, there were no majority governments in Norway until the second Stoltenberg government was formed after the 2005 election.



Kåre Willoch (Conservative Party) was Prime Minister from 1981 until 1986.

2.2 Governments 1981–2005

From 1981 to 1997, governments alternated between minority Labour governments and Conservative-led centre-right governments. The centre-right governments gained power in 3 out of 4 elections during this period (1981, 1985, 1989), whereas Labour toppled those governments twice between elections (1986, 1990) and stayed in power after one election (1993). Elections take place in September and governments change in October of election years.

Conservative leader Kåre Willoch formed a minority government after the election of 1981. In 1983, midway between elections, this government was expanded to a majority three-party coalition of the Conservatives, the Centre Party and the Christian Democrats. In the election of 1985 the coalition lost its majority but stayed in office until 1986, when it stepped down after losing a parliamentary vote on petrol taxes.

Labour leader Gro Harlem Brundtland served three periods as Prime Minister. First briefly from February 1981 until the election the same year, then from May 1986 to the election of 1989, and last from November 1990 until October 1996 when she decided to step out of domestic politics. Brundtland strongly influenced Norwegian politics and society during this period and was nicknamed the “national mother”.

After the election of 1989 a centre-right coalition was formed with the same three parties as in 1983–1986, this time headed by Conservative leader Jan P. Syse. This coalition governed from 1989 to November 1990 when it collapsed from inside over the issue of Norwegian membership in the European Economic Area.

When Brundtland resigned in 1996, Labour leader Thorbjørn Jagland formed a new Labour government that stayed in office until October 1997 when he, after the



Thorbjørn Jagland (Labour) was Prime Minister 1996–97. He has later become Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

September 1997 election, declared that his government would step down because the Labour Party failed to win at least 36.9% of the national vote – the percentage Labour had won in the 1993 election.

A three-party minority coalition of the Centre, Christian Democratic, and Liberal parties, headed by Christian Democrat Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik, moved into office in October 1997. That government fell in March 2000 over the issue of proposed natural gas plants, opposed by Bondevik due to their impact on climate change.

The Labour Party’s Jens Stoltenberg, a Brundtland protégé, took over in a minority Labour government but lost power in the September 2001 election when Labour posted its worst performance since World War I.

Bondevik once again became Prime Minister in 2001, this time as head of a minority coalition of the Conservatives, Christian Democrats and Liberals, a coalition dependent on support from the Progress Party. This government was the first to stay in office for a complete four-year election period since Per Borten’s coalition government of 1965–69.

2.3 Cabinet 2005-2013

A coalition between the Labour Party, Socialist Left Party, and Centre Party, took over from 17 October 2005 after the 2005 general election, where this coalition obtained a majority of 87 out of 169 seats in the Storting.



Jens Stoltenberg became Prime Minister and formed a cabinet known as Stoltenberg's Second Cabinet.

This was a historical coalition in several aspects. It was the first time the Socialist Left sat in cabinet, the first time the Labour Party sat in a coalition government since the 1945 four-month post-war trans-party government (otherwise in government alone), and the first time the Centre Party sat in government along with socialist parties (otherwise in coalition with conservative and/or other centre parties).

In the 2009 general election the coalition parties kept the majority in the Storting by winning 86 out of 169 seats.^[1] Stoltenberg's second cabinet thus continued. There have been several reshuffles in the cabinet during its existence.

2.4 Current Cabinet

In the 2013 election, the incumbent red–green coalition government obtained 72 seats and lost its majority. The election ended with a victory for the four opposition non-socialist parties, winning a total of 96 seats out of 169 (85 needed for a majority). Following convention, Stoltenberg's government resigned and handed over power in October 2013. The Labour Party, however, remained the largest party in parliament with 30.8% of the popular vote. The Progress Party also lost ground, but nevertheless participates in the new cabinet. Among the smaller parties, the centrist Liberal Party and Christian Peoples Party hold the balance of power. Both campaigned on a change in government. On September 30 the two smaller parties announced that they would support a minority coalition of the Conservative and Progress parties, but they would not take seats in the cabinet themselves.

See also the category Norwegian politicians and list of Norwegian governments.

3 Legislative branch

Norway has a unicameral Parliament, the Storting ("Great Council"), with members elected by popular vote for a four year term (during which it may not be dissolved) by proportional representation in multi-member constituencies. Suffrage is obtained by 18 years of age; voting rights are granted in the same year as one's 18th birthday.

The Storting currently has 169 members (increased from 165, effective from the elections of 12 September 2005). The members are elected from the 19 counties for 4-year terms according to a system of proportional representation. Until 2009, the Storting divided itself into two chambers, the *Odelsting* and the *Lagting* for the sole purpose of voting on legislation. Laws were proposed by the government through a Member of the Council of State



Stortinget, Oslo

or by a member of the Odelsting and decided on by the Odelsting and Lagting, in case of repeated disagreement by the joint Storting. In practice, the Lagting rarely disagreed and mainly just rubber-stamped the Odelsting's decision. In February 2007, the Storting passed a constitutional amendment to repeal the division, which abolished the Lagting for the 2009 general election, thereby establishing a fully unicameral system.^[2]

4 Political parties and elections

Further information: Norwegian parliamentary election, 2013

Further information: Norwegian parliamentary election, 2009

Further information: Norwegian parliamentary election, 2005

For other political parties see List of political parties in Norway. An overview on elections and election results is included in Elections in Norway.

Elections are to be held every 4 years on the second Monday of September.

5 Judicial branch

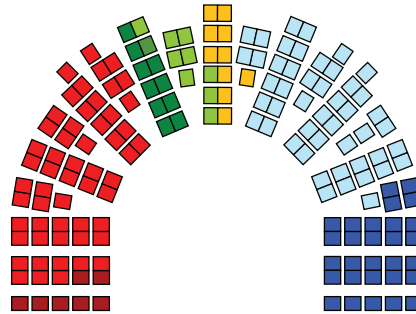
Main article: Judiciary of Norway

The Norwegian legal system is a mixture of customary law, civil law system, and common law traditions; the Supreme Court renders advisory opinions to legislature when asked; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction, with reservations.

The regular courts include the Supreme Court (*Høyesterett*) with 18 permanent judges and a president, courts of appeal (court of second instance in most cases), city and county courts (court of first instance in most cases), and conciliation councils (court of first instance in most civil-code cases). Judges attached to the regular courts are appointed by the King in council after



Siv Jensen, Minister of Finance (2013-) and leader of the Progress Party.



Distribution of seats after the election:
 Socialist Left Party (7)
 Labour Party (55)
 Centre Party (10)
 Green Party (1)
 Liberal Party (9)
 Christian Democratic Party (10)
 Conservative Party (48)
 Progress Party (29)

impeachment cases are heard by the five highest ranking Supreme Court justices and six lay members in one of the Supreme Court courtrooms The High Court of the Realm had generally lost most of its significance after 1884, and this institution has been passive ever since 1927. The new system is meant to restore the Riksstrett to its earlier significance.



Jens Stoltenberg (Labour) was Prime Minister of Norway 2005-2013.

nomination by the Ministry of Justice.

The special High Court of the Realm (*Riksstrett*) hears impeachment cases against members of the Government, Parliament, or Supreme Court. Following an amendment to the Norwegian constitution in February 2007,

6 Impeachment

Impeachment may be brought against Members of the Council of State, or of the Supreme Court or of the Storting, for criminal offenses which they may have committed in their official capacity. Indictments are raised by the Storting and judged by five Supreme Court justices and six lay judges

7 Administrative divisions

The mainland of Norway is divided into 19 counties (*fylker*, singular *fylke*): Akershus, Aust-Agder, Buskerud, Finnmark, Hedmark, Hordaland, Møre og Romsdal, Nordland, Nord-Trøndelag, Oppland, Oslo, Østfold, Rogaland, Sogn og Fjordane, Sør-Trøndelag, Telemark, Troms, Vest-Agder, and Vestfold. In addition are the island group Svalbard and the island Jan Mayen.

Counties and municipalities have local autonomy, but this autonomy is circumscribed by national controls. Counties and municipalities are subject to the oversight of a governor (*fylkesmann*) appointed by the King in the



Council of State. One governor exercises authority in both Oslo and the adjacent county of Akershus. Each county has a directly elected county assembly, led by a mayor, which decides upon matters falling within purview of the counties (upper secondary and vocational education, some culture, transport and social services). There is also a governor (*sysselemann*) on Svalbard, who is under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and not the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development as the other counties.

The counties are divided into 430 municipalities (*kommuner*, singular *kommune*). The municipalities are led by directly elected assemblies, which elect a board of aldermen and a mayor. Some municipalities, most notably Oslo, have a parliamentary system of government, where the city council elects a city government that is responsible for executive functions. Some municipalities are also divided into municipal districts or city districts (again, Oslo is one of these) responsible for certain welfare and culture services. These districts are also headed by political assemblies, in some cases elected directly by the citizens. The municipalities deal with a wide range of planning issues and welfare services, and are mostly free to engage in activities which are not explicitly restricted by law. Lately, the functions of the counties and municipalities have been the subject of debates, and changes may take place in the near future.

8 Dependent areas

Norway has three dependent areas, all in or near Antarctica: Bouvet Island in the South Atlantic Ocean, Queen Maud Land in Antarctica, and Peter I Island off West Antarctica. The Norwegian Act of 27 February 1930 declares these areas are subject to Norwegian sovereignty as dependencies.

An attempt to annex East Greenland ended in defeat at the Hague Tribunal in 1933.

9 International organization participation

AfDB, AsDB, Australia Group, BIS, CBSS, CE, CERN, EAPC, EBRD, ECE, EFTA, ESA, FAO, IADB, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICCT, ICC, ICFTU, ICRM, IDA, IEA, IFAD, IFC, International IDEA, IFRCS, IHO, ILO, IMF, International Maritime Organization, Inmarsat, Intelsat, Interpol, IOC, IOM, ISO, ITU, MINURSO, NAM (guest), NATO, NC, NEA, NIB, NSG, OECD, OPCW, OSCE, PCA, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNMIBH, UNMIK, UNMOP, UNTSO, UPU, WCO, WEU (associate), WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTrO, Zangger Committee, ABCD

10 References

- [1] Walter Gibbs: Norway Keeps Leftists in Power New York Times, September 15, 2009
- [2] "Norway to have single chamber parliament". *Norden*. 2007-02-22. Retrieved 2007-09-05.

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Facts about Venezuela's Presidential Elections and the Voting Process

Oct 4th 2012, by Various



A voting booth in Venezuela, with the full process of identification, electronic voting, and permanent ink fingerprinting to prevent voting twice.

Venezuelanalysis.com brings readers two articles with all the facts and background on the voting process and the presidential elections in Venezuela this Sunday.

Briefing - Venezuela's Presidential Election

Author: Venezuela Solidarity Campaign UK

Venezuelans go to the polls this Sunday (7 October) to elect their president. In total there are seven candidates from president. However the main choice is between the incumbent Hugo Chavez, backed by a coalition of progressive and left aligned parties and social movements, and Henrique Capriles Radonski, a state governor with strong ties to the country's elite and backed by a number of right-wing parties, who have formed a unity coalition known as the M.U.D.

VENEZUELA'S ELECTIONS – CERTIFIED AS FREE AND FAIR

This will be Venezuela's 15th set of national elections since Hugo Chavez was elected President in 1999. That is more sets of elections than took place in the 40 years prior to Hugo Chávez becoming President. It is also one of the highest number of elections held in any country in the world in that time. All have been declared free and fair including by international bodies such as the EU and Organisation of American States (OAS). In September 2012 former US President Jimmy Carter said "the election process in Venezuela is the best in the world" and that Hugo Chavez has always won "fairly and squarely". Of the previous Presidential election, held in 2006, OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza recently said: "we had no objection. It was fair" and that Venezuela "has a strong electoral system that is technically very good." The Report of the EU Observer Mission to the 2006 Venezuelan presidential election stated that it was overall conducted "in respect of national laws and international standards," with "a high turnout, and peaceful atmosphere". This scrutiny of Venezuela's election processes will continue at the coming Presidential election with 200 international witnesses, including from the Union of South American Nations (representing all 12 South American countries which vary significantly in their political composition, from Ecuador to Brazil to Colombia).

INDEPENDENT ELECTIONS

Venezuela's elections are overseen by the National Electoral Council, an independent branch of state similar to the UK Electoral Commission.



community choices unit three

U3L3A3 | Compare and contrast democracies | Article 7

The trust in this institution has been so great that earlier this year Venezuela's main right-wing opposition coalition, the M.U.D, organised for it to conduct its Presidential primaries. The M.U.D Executive Secretary described the CNE's role in this selection as "an excellent indication of the democratic institutions in the country"[1].

Previously in July 2011, the right-wing party Voluntad Popular held internal elections with support from the CNE in which Leopoldo López was chosen as National Coordinator. López – who is currently the campaign manager for Presidential candidate Henry Capriles Rodonski - expressed his appreciation for the CNE's role.

HIGH LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

As a result of the CNE's efforts to register people and to make voting easier, Venezuela has had unprecedented rates of voter turnout in recent years. Three quarters of voters went to the polls in the 2006 presidential elections and a record 66% voted in the 2010 Parliamentary elections.

Record numbers are now registered to vote – up from 11 million in 1998 to 19 million today. Over 96% of Venezuelans are now registered to vote, whereas as many as 20% of the electorate were left off the list in the past.

Access to polling stations is also greater than ever before, with their number increasing from 8,000 to 14,000 in the past decade. This has tackled a past problem whereby ballot boxes were often not accessible to those in the poorest areas, where most of the population lives.

A SECURE AND TRANSPARENT PROCESS

Venezuela uses some of the most secure and advanced voting technology for its elections. Venezuela's electronic voting system is 100% auditable with 17 audits carried out and involving all the political parties at each stage[2].

On the day of voting, the electronic voting machines are activated only when a fingerprint that corresponds to the voter's ID number in the database is registered. This system prevents fraudulent behaviour such as double voting and identity theft. There is also a clear separation in the voting between the systems that identifies the voter and another where the voter casts their ballot. Additionally, the machines print a paper receipt that can be checked by the individual voter and allows for a full manual count to be made if any results are contested. A manual count of more than half of the votes automatically takes place to ensure that the results tally.

In August 2012, Jennifer McCoy, director at the prestigious Carter Centre, described Venezuela's electronic voting system as "the most comprehensive that...I've seen in the world".[3]

Of the post-electoral audits she said it had "never had any significant discrepancy between the paper receipts and the electronic votes." [4]

The Venezuelan public had an opportunity to scrutinise the election procedures in nationwide test-run on 2 September that reviewed the electoral machinery and technology. About 1.8 million voters, around 10% of the electorate, participated in this test with the Executive Secretary of the right-wing opposition M.U.D coalition confirming that that voting in Venezuela is secret and secure[5].

POLLS SHOW STRONG LEAD FOR CHAVEZ

Polls indicate a clear win for Hugo Chávez as the most likely outcome. The average of the 18 polls conducted in September gave Hugo Chavez a 12% lead[6]. Many polls also show president approval rates of over 60%.

In August 2012, the Japanese finance organisation, Nomura Holding published a client analysis stating that Hugo Chavez has a "large lead" against Henrique Capriles Radonski which they found "unlikely to be closed ...before the October 7 election".[7] Likewise a Bank of America Merrill Lynch report earlier this year described "President Chavez's commanding lead in the polls and high level of electoral support"[8].



community choices unit three

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This poll lead is undoubtedly linked to Venezuela's expanding economy, which is growing at 6% per year, as well as new social policies which address the ongoing needs of Venezuela's poor majority. For example in the past year alone 250,000 new social houses have been built, state pensions made available for all and the minimum wage increased by 30%. These follow the policies that have successfully delivered free healthcare and education for all, slashing poverty rates in recent years.

RIGHT-WING COALITION TO REJECT RESULTS IF THEY LOSE ELECTION?

In light of the aforementioned substantial poll leads for Hugo Chávez, there are growing fears that sections of the right-wing coalition are preparing to reject the results should Venezuelans choose to re-elect President Chavez in October.

For example, Ricardo Haussmann, a key Capriles economic adviser, recently said his campaign will employ 200,000 people at the polling stations so that they can declare their own results to the world before the official announcement is made by Venezuela's independent National Electoral Council (CNE). The intention is clear: to discredit the official results and claim fraud.

As Eleazar Diza Rangel, editor of Venezuela's main national newspaper Ultimas Noticias – which is broadly sympathetic to the anti-Chávez opposition - recently explained the purpose of attempts "to claim fraud at the coming presidential elections of 7 October [would be] in order not to recognise the people's will".

A smear campaign against the independent National Electoral Council (CNE) also appears underway. For example, on August 21, head of the opposition campaign Leopold Lopez announced that the opposition would take action against alleged "risks" that he claimed the state poses to the votes. But even whilst making the claim of "bias" Lopez admitted that "In all the processes that have been done in the past there has not been a single indication that there is no guarantee that the vote is secret".

Others in the Venezuelan opposition are not supporting the tactic of preparing to cry fraud and smearing the CNE. For example Enrique Marquez MP, vice-President of the opposition party Un Nuevo Tiempo, said on 5 September that Venezuela's voting system "offers no danger to the confidentiality of the vote."^[9]

UNDERMINING THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE

Rejecting the legitimate election results in the face of a Hugo Chavez victory would be totally consistent with how sections of the Venezuelan right have previously resorted to undemocratic means. Most well known is the short-lived coup against the democratically-elected Chavez government in 2002 which abolished democracy altogether until it was overturned by popular demonstrations. In 2003, they unleashed a 64-day oil industry lock-out that saw GDP collapse by a third with the declared aim of ousting President Chavez. They then claimed fraud at the 2004 recall referendum on whether Hugo Chávez would continue as President, which he won 58% to 42%. The opposition promised to provide evidence but eight years on they are yet to do so. Then faced with certain defeat, they decided to boycott the 2005 parliamentary elections at the last minute, seeking to undermine the results, a move opposed by the Organisation of American States.

Since then opposition has sought to use the democratic process to remove Hugo Chavez. In doing so it has accepted the National Electoral Council (CNE) results that saw its presidential candidate Henry Capriles Radonski elected as a state governor, Hugo Chávez's proposed constitutional changes narrowly defeated in a referendum in 2007 and dozens of governors, mayors and MPs from parties of the right elected.

But faced with Hugo Chávez winning another six year term, some in the opposition seem set on resorting to the old ways of ignoring the will of the people.

CONCLUSION

As is normal in any democracy there is an open and vibrant election process underway with both main candidates regularly organising rallies, visiting towns, doing interviews and daily press conferences.

Whatever views are held of the Chávez-led government, its democratic mandate is without doubt. There is certainly no



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evidence from previous elections of fraud or manipulation. Jimmy Carter has described Venezuela's electoral system as amongst the "best in the world."

Any doubt about the impartiality of Venezuela's National Electoral Council (CNE) in overseeing free elections is easily dismissed by the fact that right-wing coalition have recently asked for it to oversee their own internal selections. It is not serious for it to endorse the CNE as a legitimate electoral authority in February and denounce it in October.

The truth is that any opposition attempt to cry fraud is really about covering up its own political unpopularity as the polls show.

Any such manoeuvres to undermine the real outcome need to be widely condemned. It is the right of the Venezuelan people to freely determine who their next president is. Their will must be upheld and respected

[1] <http://www.eluniversal.com/nacional-y-politica/111205/cne-presta-asisten...>

[2] <http://www.smartmatic.com/espanol/casos-de-estudio/view/article/audits-a...>

[3] <http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/7177>

[4] Spanish language interview: <http://america.infobae.com/notas/57123-Centro-Carter-hara-solo-un-seguim...> English transcript: <http://venezuela-us.org/2012/08/29/carter-center-affirms-venezuelan-elec...>

[5] <http://www.unidadvenezuela.org/2012/09/aveledo-reitero-que-el-voto-es-se...>

[6] VSC study see <http://tinyurl.com/septpolls>

[7] http://laradiodelsur.com/wp-content/uploads/docs/Informe_NOMURA%20Ingles...

[8] Wall Street Journal <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB1000142405270230336050457740842288479604...>

[9] <http://untinternacional.org/2012/09/05/enrique-marquez-el-sai-y-el-secreto-del-voto/>

Ten Things You Should Know about Elections in Venezuela

Author: Press Office of the Venezuelan Embassy to the U.S.

This year, Venezuela will hold presidential elections on October 7 and state elections on December 16. They will be overseen by the independent branch of government known as the National Electoral Council (CNE), which guarantees the efficiency and transparency of electoral processes.

Under Venezuela's new system of participatory democracy, 15 elections and referenda have been conducted in the last 13 years, while in the previous 40 years, just 25 elections were held.

Thanks to efforts by the CNE to increase voter participation, 96.5% of eligible adults in Venezuela are registered to vote. That's over 19.1 million people out of a population of 27.1 million. The rate of unregistered voters has fallen to just 3.5%, compared to 20% in the past.

Venezuelan voters abroad account for an estimated 0.52% of the electorate. According to the CNE, 99,478 citizens living abroad were registered to vote in absentee as of mid-May 2012.



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To encourage voting, the CNE has increased the number of voting centers in Venezuela from 8,278 to 14,025 since the year 2000. It also increased the number of individual polling stations from 7,000 to 38,236.

Venezuela has had some of the region's highest rates of voter turnout in recent years. 75% of voters went to the polls in the 2006 presidential elections, and a record 66% voted in the last legislative elections in 2010.

Venezuela's 2012 elections will feature special voting centers accessible to the handicapped. This is one of several initiatives by the CNE to improve technologies and guarantee all citizens the right to vote.

To prepare for the 2012 elections, the CNE has conducted 17 different audits to the electoral registry, the electronic voting machines, and other tools. The different political parties participated in this process to ensure transparency.

For the last dozen years, all major electoral processes in Venezuela have been audited and declared free and fair by electoral accompaniers such as the Carter Center, the NAACP, the Organization of American States and the European Union. Their findings affirm that Venezuela has one of the best electoral systems in the world.

After observing the primary elections of a group of opposition parties in February of 2012, the President of the U.S.-based National Lawyers Guild said: "All of us were impressed with the enormous strides the CNE has made to insure the right of Venezuelans not just to vote, but to be sure their votes are meaningful."

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Venezuela's Secret Grassroots Democracy

Nov 28th 2006, by Michael Fox – Venezuelanalysis.com

With all international eyes on the December 3rd Venezuelan presidential elections, a totally new and revolutionary experience of Venezuelan grassroots democracy has completely slipped below international radar. An experience that has already formed 12,000 local communal councils, and whose participants and promoters hope will change the way decisions are made in Venezuela and potentially alter the very essence of Venezuela's political system.

13 de Abril Communal Council

The region of *23 de Enero* lies on the southern hillsides in Western Caracas. Since the fall of the decade-long Marcos Perez Jimenez dictatorship in 1958, it has been an area of high community organization, when, on that day—January 23—thousands of poor *Caraqueños* (as Caracas residents are known) came down from the hillsides and occupied the vacant and newly built apartment blocks. It remained a place of revolt and of police repression. A region, according to one community member, that was “blamed for anything that happened.”

Earlier this year, residents again began to lead the way. Citizens living in the apartment building blocks 45, 46, and 47 heard about the new communal councils, which communities were beginning to form around the country.

These new communal councils were being called a new form of grassroots local government, in which the residents of the local community would have the ultimate decision-making power in their neighborhood. It was said that these councils would even receive funds from the government to carry out community and public works projects that previously could only be acquired through a long and protracted struggle with the local mayor's office.

Members of the local health committee took the first steps to create their own council. They held workshops on the idea and elected a Provisional Promoter team in March, to carry out a census of the community's residents and needs.

An electoral commission was soon elected to supervise the upcoming election of community spokespersons. Various community committees (infrastructure, sport, communication and information, energy and gas, and legal) were formed to join those already in the community (health, urban land) and the promoter team did its best to get the word out on the upcoming election.

On children's day, June 16, with the support of the electoral commission, hundreds of residents from the community's 520 apartments showed up for the communal council spokesperson elections.

“It was tremendous; the line didn't end,” said Hector Haraque, describing the scene at blocks 45, 46, & 47 on Election Day. “It lasted all day, till 1 in the morning. It was very impressive.”

The community elected 5 financial spokespersons to manage the council's resources, 5 social controllers to audit the council's dealings, and one spokesperson for each of the community's 9 committees. By the end of the month, the 19 members were sworn in, and the April 13th Communal Council was officially formed- the first in *23 de Enero*.^[1]

There are now 20 communal councils in *23 de Enero*, more than 12,000 in the country, and more on the way. Which begs the questions: Where did this experience come from? Are these communal councils truly empowering residents and building a Venezuelan style of participatory democracy that is changing the fabric of Venezuelan society? Or are they, as the opposition says, just handouts for Chavez supporters during an election year?

History

The communal councils were modeled after experiences in participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and grassroots participatory democracy in Kerala, India. The concept of participatory democracy is not new in Venezuela, and since the election of President Hugo Chavez in 1998, and the subsequent Venezuelan Constitutional Assembly in 1999, the Venezuelan government has been attempting to incorporate more participation in to the decisions of the state.

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In 2001, the Local Public Planning Councils (CLPP) were formed across the country with the intent of electing community representatives to work hand in hand with government officials to agree on municipal budgets. Unfortunately, the CLPP were far from successful. In many cases political parties only gave representation to fellow members, and true community control was hard to find when spokespersons, expected to represent hundreds of thousands of people where elected with almost no input from the community.

“They were captured by the mayors, that manipulated the elections,” said former Venezuelan Planning Minister, Felipe Pérez Martí recently. According to Pérez, the CLPPs, which technically still exist, have become further “debilitated” with the creation of the communal councils because the people have decided to try out the newly formed councils, where they feel they actually may have a say. An addendum to the recent Law of Communal Councils additionally gave the newly formed councils power over the CLPPs.

Communal Council Law

Although government institutions began to promote the communal councils late last year, the official communal council law was passed in the Venezuelan National Assembly on April 10, 2006. It legally recognized the communal councils and, according to Chapter Five of the Law, established the councils’ right to legally receive and administer resources from government institutions.

Article 2 of the Communal Council Law states:

The communal councils, in the constitutional framework of participatory and protagonistic democracy, are instances of participation, articulation and integration between the diverse community organizations, social groups and the citizens, that permit the organized people to directly exercise the administration (management) of public policies and projects oriented to respond to the necessities and aspirations of the communities in the construction of an equal and socially just society.

The Communal Council Law established that the councils generally be composed of between 200 and 400 families in urban areas, 20 in rural areas, and 10 in indigenous areas, and that final decisions be made by the “citizen’s assembly” or total voting-age residents of the community, which “is the primary instance for the exercising of power.” Anyone over the age of 15 is allowed to participate in the citizen’s assembly, and at least 20% of the voting population must be present in order for a decision to be valid.

The law further called for the election of the local community spokespeople, one from each of the community committees, and five each for the financial and controller branches.

The Communal Council Law essentially put all of the neighborhood committees and community organizing experiences under one umbrella: the communal council. A revolutionary idea and a large task, but not everyone was happy.

Community Reaction

With the passage of the law, many members of Venezuela’s Urban Land Committees (CTUs)—one of the most organized and important instances of community organizing—were put off. They saw the communal councils as an attack against the work they had already been doing in the community. After all, they said, the CTUs are the ones writing community charters and pushing for land titles and housing rights for communities that were never before legally recognized.

CTUs viewed the creation of the communal councils as a government attempt to do something good, while inadvertently causing more harm.^[2] Infighting was predicted, as community committees: urban land, health, water, etc. would fight for resources amongst each other that they had previously struggled individually to acquire from the Mayor’s office.

A shift occurred quickly, however, in the months following the passage of the communal council law. The CTUs realized that they would have to join, organize, and promote the communal councils in order to have a say in community decisions. The CTUs now appear to be one of the main pillars of the communal councils, believing that the new proposal is the next step in local democracy.

“The CTU should be one of the fundamental bases of the communal councils. They should not substitute them nor be the councils themselves,” declared CTU activist Hernan Peralta, at the CTU National Meeting earlier this month just outside of Caracas. “They are the crystallization of this project of new construction,” he added.



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Although there continues to be discussion, the predictions that community committees would break out in in-fighting does not appear to have materialized on a large-scale.

Participation

“The communal councils are nothing more than a series of tools that are being given to the people for participation,” said Richard Canaan, President of the Venezuelan Institution, FIDES, that has delivered millions of dollars to the communal councils. “One of the most important changes for us is that the Constitution of 1961 was 100% representative. For everything in life, we named representatives. The assembly, representatives of the neighborhood council, and other instances. Now we are driving the active and protagonistic participation of the community. So from representative to protagonistic, where the people are leading the way.”

For many, the communal councils are the latest in a Venezuelan policy under President Chavez to break from business-as-usual representative society, to a working pro-active participatory approach.

This ideology has not been lost on the members of the April 13th communal council. Meetings are held weekly among the spokespersons and in the various committees. At times discussions turn conflictive and they often drag on or wander in typical Venezuelan style, but fortunately council members appear to be willing to listen to one another.

During one evening meeting on September 26, the April 13th council spent the night meticulously debating how they would divvy up work and decision-making to ensure that all decisions made are responsive to the council and the community at-large.

The larger community is involving itself in the council, as proven by the “tremendous” electoral turnout, but it has been slow going.

“The community at the beginning has been apathetic, but changing the way people think is a process,” said Ennys Guerrero, who is a taxi driver and a social comptroller spokesperson of the April 13th Council. Guerrero been living in the community for 44 years and never thought to participate until now.

“Don’t forget that Venezuela lived for 40 years with paternalism,” said FUNDACOMUN (The Foundation for Municipal and Community Development)[3] Capital District of Caracas Director, Pedro Morales, who believes that the lack of community participation has deep-seated roots in Venezuelan tradition of populism and handouts.

“Now we are passing from representative democracy to participatory democracy. We don’t know how long it will take..., but we are trying to push towards this participatory democracy, because it is the community itself that has to participate,” he added.

Afro-Cuban-Venezuelan April 13th council member, Regina Michel Rollock, is very clear that without true community involvement the council isn’t going to get very far.

“We are not going to achieve anything unless we have the participation and protagonism of the community,” says Rollock, who has seen a somewhat disturbing lack of community involvement since the spokesperson elections. “We can have the best ideas, but unless the community realizes what we are doing nothing happens.”

While April 13th council spokespersons organized preparations for the neighborhood’s October 12th Indigenous People’s Day celebrations and arranged a number of neighborhood clean-up days, most members believe that the community will begin to participate more once they see that the council is solving people’s problems. This is one reason why April 13th spokespersons are now working diligently to acquire funds for the repair of the apartment complex.

Presidential Commission & Organization

The National Presidential Commission of Popular Power was formed under article 30 of the Communal Council Law and set up to work on three levels: National, Regional and Municipal, in order to streamline these initiatives and duties of the



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various institutions. Minister of Participation and Social Development (MINPADES), Jorge Luis García Carneiro presides over the commission, in which FIDES, FUNDACOMUN, BANDES, FONDEMI, the Ministry of Popular Economy (MINEP) and the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum all play distinct but important roles.[4]

FUNDACOMUN works in training and technical assistance for the communal councils, and is also currently the government institution (until the local Presidential Commissions have been formed) where communal councils register their council and receive continued local training and assistance.

FIDES (The Intergovernmental Fund for Decentralization), LAEE (The Law of Special Economic Allotments) and FONDEMI (The Fund for Microfinanced Development) are the primary government institutions in charge of passing resources on to the councils. FIDES, with a billion dollar budget, primarily from sales taxes, now passes 30% of its resources on to the communal councils. FIDES President Richard Canaan declared in mid September that over \$436 million dollars had been passed in to the hands of the communal councils for community infrastructure projects.

“Tell me in what other part of the world are they going to put \$436 million dollars in the hands of the community? And that’s just from FIDES alone,” said Canaan, who estimated at the time that there were 8,000 formed community councils in the country that had or were in the process of receiving funds, and another 4,000 being formed which had not yet received any support from the Venezuelan state. A total of 15,000 councils are hoped to be formed by the end of phase one.

LAEE, whose assets come from dividends of Venezuelan oil revenues, are worth just over \$1 billion. Half of this was designated to the Communal Councils by President Chavez this year.[5]

Meanwhile, FONDEMI works on funding socio-productive projects through the Venezuela’s 250 officially constituted Communal Banks—financial entities managed and administered by the communal councils and legally born with the Communal Council Law. FONDEMI has passed nearly \$70 million on to community banks across the country for the local financial entity to distribute to community cooperative and associative socio-productive projects in the form of loans of less than \$14,000, with 6% interest rate and 36 months to pay them off.[6]

There have been problems of infighting and competition among some of the institutions in an attempt to form the most Communal Councils.

Morales criticized in September that while FUNDACOMUN only had 54 communal councils registered, the Metropolitan Caracas Mayor’s Office was numbering total communal councils in the same region at around 400. The Mayor’s office also had its own list of communal councils, which did not correspond to that of FUNDACOMUN, even though FUNDACOMUN was supposed to be the local registering entity for the country.

According to FUNDACOMUN representatives in mid-November, the situation has calmed somewhat between the organizations, and over the past two months, their Caracas Capital District communal council numbers have increased from 54 to 192. A line of advice-seeking Caracas residents was standing out the door during the morning visit to FUNDACOMUN offices in southwestern Caracas. Case workers confirmed that they receive approximately eight new community council petitions a day.

This is good news for Caracas, which earlier this year appeared to be festering with problems.

When Caracas FUNDACOMUN director, Pedro Morales, arrived in February from his position in Miranda state, he was shocked by the institutional “fist fights” taking place. Because of all the problems, according to Morales, Caracas had formed less than 10% the Communal Councils that had been formed in Miranda over the same period.

The April 13th communal council has also had its fair share of difficulties, as the roadmap of institutions, offices, prerequisites is not always as clear as many would like. In October they applied for a \$230,000 credit from FIDES to fix the elevators in the apartment complex, ranked number one in their survey of community needs.

Unfortunately, according to Pedro Caldera, who is a facilitator with FUNDACOMUN and lives in the apartment complex, the request was denied because of a problem with their financial cooperative paperwork. Caldera acknowledged that the council neglected to get FUNDACOMUN help when they registered their cooperative. He is now working with them to fix the problem.

“Things should be set in the next day or two,” he said this week. “The credit should be delivered soon.”

The Las Delicias communal council, just up the street from blocks 45, 46 & 47, received the first part of their \$150,000 credit this week for housing remodeling. They applied at the same time as April 13th, in October.[7]

Problems with the Law & Citizen Participation

“It’s a new experience in Venezuela,” says Felipe Pérez, describing the communal councils. “It is the leading project of the political transformation of the country because it attempts to put the state in to the hands of the people. It attempts to mold with action the discourse of participatory democracy.”

Unfortunately, though, says Pérez, “Because the communal council’s law wasn’t really consulted by the people... the majority of the communal councils and grassroots movements are not satisfied in the way that the law was written.”

According to Pérez, the largest failure in the law is that it stops short of giving the councils power over municipal, regional and national decisions, and only gives the councils power in their local community, which, he explains, does not change the structure of the state.

That’s the point, says FUNDACOMUN’s Morales, “the communal council is, in no way, a parallel power to the already constituted power. In no case... but rather we need to work hand in hand with the power that is already in place.”

But the debate is strong and many are at odds. The Venezuelan National Assembly (AN) is now discussing the approval of the law of Citizen Participation and Popular Power, out of a necessity to reconcile some of the contradictions of the Communal Council Law. But neither does this new law call for a reformed state structure.

Ulises Castro, Coordinator of the Bolivarian Schools for Grassroots Power, for the Caracas Metropolitan Mayor’s office, agrees that the law should be more radical. He and his office have been in charge of organizing public consultations in Caracas, so that residents can critique the law proposals. He is proud of the work they have done, and knows that their participation made a difference in the final version of the Communal Council Law. But he says that there is much more to be done, and the public meetings on the Law of Citizen Participation began just last month.

“The same political forces still exist,” said Castro in early October. “If we believe that grassroots power is the base to construct a new institutionalism, a new state, then legally you need to reform the state.”

Which is precisely the fear of many of those currently in power. According to Morales, FUNDACOMUN and others promoting the councils have felt resistance from traditional mayors, governors and institutions that have been reluctant to hand over power so easily to the communal councils.

Handout or Grassroots Democracy?

But these issues appear to be much too subtle for many in the Venezuelan opposition, who are focused on December 3rd, and have characterized the communal councils as just another handout to Chavez supporters in an election year.

Looking at the huge amounts of resources now being passed directly into community hands, this is an understandable fear. Especially considering that the overwhelming majority of communal councils are in support of the Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.

In the Metropolitan District of Caracas, for instance, according to FUNDACOMUN’s Morales, about 5 of the 54 officially registered communal councils are in middle-class communities, and are therefore more likely to be with the opposition.

But that doesn’t mean that opposition supporters can’t join their local communal council. “The communal councils are inclusive,” said Artigas community bank representative and spokesperson for the *Bloquecitos* communal council, Jose Lopez. “The idea is to break the old system of exclusion.”

The April 13th communal council categorically denied that Chavez or his political party has any political say or involvement in their council. “We are autonomous and independent,” said one community member. “The political parties do not have strength in the population,” said another. Nevertheless, there is only one self-identified spokesperson who does not support the President.

One middle-class Eastern-Caracas resident, who asked not to be identified, said that the communal councils could turn out to be a great thing for opposition communities. Her community has been organizing a council since March in order to be able to protect their neighborhood against Chavez’s programs and proposals. “If they do not become politicized, they can succeed,” she said, “otherwise, forget about it.”



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There have also been a few extreme cases of two communal councils forming in the same neighborhood, with representatives fighting to be considered valid. But such cases are the exception.

“There is a lot of variety,” says Felipe Pérez Marti, former Planning Minister under Chavez until 2003. “Many places of the opposition try to grab [the communal councils] as a vindication of their position against the government... In others it has been a difficult process of unity. In others, it has been the *Chavistas*, that have tried to exclude the rest.”

Pérez himself, is one of the lone “revolutionaries” or Chavez supporters in his neighborhood’s communal council, made up of a middle-class “rabid opposition.” Nevertheless, he was elected “substitute spokesperson” and plays an active role since the permanent spokesperson never shows up for the meetings.

“It’s been very interesting because as we have participated,” says Pérez, “they have realized that we are normal people. Because the people are realizing that we all want the same thing. We want a better life. We want that there are better economic, social conditions. Better health, better education, a more beautiful environment, better streets, roads. Better living conditions. Employment. So we want the same, we are the same, why are we divided?”

According to Pérez, the divisions come from above, where those in power are using them as a source for increasing their power, which is why he believes the communal councils are so important, regardless, of which side you are on.

“From below there is a natural unity that is, of course, being constructed in the debate, in the exchange of ideas, in the action, in the individual and collective growth, and that is where they are forming a new political and collective consciousness, and a new ethic,” says Pérez, who remarks on the near complete absence of the communal councils in the mainstream media.

According to Pérez, the people know much better than anyone in government what they need and what they want. They know much better how to manage those resources, because they know the community, and when a community feels a sense of ownership, they will take care of the project.

“If they waste resources, if they ask for large salaries, it’s as if they are killing the hen with the golden eggs,” says Pérez. “They have consciousness and they say no, the hen is mine, I have to take care of it and breed other hens of golden eggs.”

And that appears to be the direction of the April 13th council. Following the footsteps of the grassroots mobilization after which they named their communal council, commemorating the day, as Ulises Castro says, the people of Venezuela “went out in the streets with consciousness of the problem of power and went to demonstrate and take the spaces of power and demand the return of their president... without political direction of any traditional party... mobilized, but with a different political consciousness.”

See Also:

- [Citizen Power and Venezuela’s Local Public Planning Councils](#)
- [The Legal and Practical Basis of Citizen Power in Venezuela](#)



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[1] Interview, Pedro Caldera, FUNDACOMUN Representative, September 25, 2006, 23 de Enero, Caracas, Venezuela. The name 13th of April (13 de Abril) was chosen for the council, in commemoration of the day President Chavez was returned to office after a short-lived coup in 2002, and with the help of thousands of Chavez supporters than came down from the hills to call for the return of their President.

[2] One Caracas CTU representative likened the government's communal council proposal to a benevolent good-intentioned giant, that only wants to help, but while bending down to plant a flower, he crushes fifteen instead.

[3] FUNDACOMUN is a 44 year-old Venezuelan state institute, which until last year specialized in community housing issues and according to Caracas FUNDACOMUN director, Pedro Morales, has always worked in "organization and community participation."

[4] Interview, Richard Canaan, FIDES President, September 24, 2006, FIDES, Caracas, Venezuela.

[5] Interview, Pedro Morales, FUNDACOMUN Caracas Capital District Capital Director, September 25, 2006, Artigas, Caracas, Venezuela.

[6] "Bancos comunales satisfacen necesidades de crédito" *Ultimas Noticias*, Nov. 11, 2006 <http://aporrea.org/dameverbo.php?docid=86144>

[7] Interview, Pedro Caldera, FUNDACOMUN Representative, November 17, 2006, 23 de Enero, Caracas, Venezuela

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Comparing Democratic Institutions in Venezuela and Canada

Mar 27th 2010, by Steve Caines - Media Co-op

Recent remarks by Canadian State of Foreign Affairs Minister Peter Kent with regard to the media and “shrinking democratic space” in Venezuela [1] are but a few of a number of disapproving comments expressed by the Canadian government over events in the country in the past few years. But given that the remarks came during a three month prorogation of the Canadian Parliament, it was only to be expected that criticisms would arise over whether the government’s comments actually stem from genuine concerns over democracy [2]. Regardless of what full motivations may be behind Kent’s comments, the Canadian government’s ongoing sweeping claims of faltering democracy in the country are deserving of close examination. Deciding whether democracy is improving or “shrinking” in Venezuela requires a more thoroughgoing and contextualized look at the country’s democratic institutions, rather than short glimpses into single events.

What are some of the formal democratic institutions in Venezuela? And, given recent criticisms by the Canadian government, how might some of Venezuela’s democratic institutions actually compare with those of the country’s northern neighbor? By juxtaposing various aspects of the democratic systems of both Canada and Venezuela we can gain a better understanding of the functionality of each system, evaluate the validity of Canadian representative’s accusations, and dispel some myths. As shown in this analysis, many aspects of Venezuela’s system of democracy are not substantially different than those of Canada, while many other key aspects actually compare favorably when juxtaposed with Canada’s system.

Of course, significant difficulties exist in any attempt to compare two different and complex democratic systems, each of which will invariably have their own unique characteristics and peculiarities. An added difficulty in making any comparison between Canada and Venezuela is that while one country’s system is defined as a representative democracy, the other is purported to be - or purported to be on the way to becoming - a participatory democracy [3]; these characterizations imply differences with regard to the organizational structure of democratic institutions, differences which may be fundamental. Despite such difficulties meaningful comparisons can still be drawn.

Analyses of democratic systems can vary from discussions of overarching political institutions and processes (e.g. laws, and federal elections) to discussions on economics (e.g. the degree of wealth inequality in a country, the ability of a person to make decisions in the workplace, etc) as well as other topics. The objective here has been to make a comparison of the democratic institutions in Venezuela and Canada within the political framework of liberal democracy, but also to make comparisons in terms of aspects of participatory democracy in both countries.

Historical Factors and Organization

Venezuela and Canada have very different histories, however one commonality is that, like much of the rest of the world, both countries have roots in colonialism. Canada, founded in 1867, is a former colony of Britain. The country was originally established as a Federation of four provinces and has grown to include 10 provinces and three territories (the most recent territory – Nunavut - was established in 1999). Through various forms of legislation since Confederation, Canada has increased its independence from Great Britain, although remnants of the country’s colonial past persist to present day; Canadian city names and streets still bear the names of British cities and leaders, and most significantly in this vein, the Queen of Britain formally remains the Head of State in Canada. This has many significant implications for how government functions in Canada.

Canada’s form of government remains a Constitutional Monarchy. Although it has been amended and reformed at various times during the past (such as the creation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982) the 1867 constitution remains the only constitution Canada has ever had in its history.

Venezuela was established as a colony of Spain in 1522. After centuries of social upheaval Venezuelan independence was finally attained in 1811, and following years of military governments, a moderate amount of political stability is said to have gained a foothold in the mid 1900s. However, between the late 1950s and 1990s, Venezuela’s political system was marked by a power sharing deal known as the Punto Fijo Pact, an agreement between political parties that largely restricted popular participation in the democratic process. Of course in 1998, Hugo Chavez’s party the Movement for the Fifth Republic (MVR) was elected to power. Preceding Chavez’s election was a substantial period of economic decline

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and a dramatic increase in poverty rates, which had contributed to much disillusionment with the prevailing political parties. The election of Chavez and the years that followed ushered in a veritable sea change in the political landscape in Venezuela, with the previously entrenched political parties becoming marginalized and replaced with leftist groups such as the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV).

In 1999, by popular referendum, the Venezuelan populace approved a new constitution. The 1999 constitution is the country's 27th to date, and has been described by various observers as one of the most progressive constitutions in the world [4].

Venezuela's government organizational structure is defined as a Federal Presidential Republic. The country is divided into 23 individual states, which are subsequently organized into 9 administrative regions.

Legislatures

Legislatures can be viewed as possessing the highest of political powers in both Canada and Venezuela. Responsible for the formation of law, the legislature establishes the conditions by which all other forms of government adhere to and thus has the most fundamental influence over political direction. Members of the executive and judicial branches of government are subordinate to the legislative branch.

Before the 1999 constitution Venezuela had a bicameral legislature consisting of two houses, i.e. the Senate and the National Assembly. This system was similar to the bicameral legislatures which still exist in Canada and the United States. However, the 1999 constitution reduced the legislature to a single house, the 167 member National Assembly [5]. Members of the National Assembly are elected by popular vote and serve a five year term, with the possibility of indefinite reelection. In 2005, the Venezuelan opposition famously boycotted the National Assembly elections in protest, resulting in every last National Assembly seat being filled with a Chavez supporter [6].

In Canada, the legislature or Parliament is bicameral and consists of the Canadian House of Commons and the Senate. The House of Commons members total 308, who are all popularly elected [7]. Senate members in Canada (a total of 105) are not popularly elected but appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister (appointment powers officially lie with the Governor General, although it is customary for the Governor General to accept the Prime Minister's appointment suggestions) [8].

The stated purpose of a bicameral legislature, as opposed to a unicameral legislature, is to provide checks and balances. With two houses, it is said that each house can work as a check on the other as laws are being passed. An argument can be made however that a unicameral legislature is more democratic. This is because, as is the case in the United States, each state elects the same number of senators regardless of the state's population (9), which can lead to disproportionate representation. Or, as is the case in Canada, senators are not elected by popular vote, but are directly appointed by the governing party (the most recent appointments to the Canadian Senate were made by Stephen Harper's Conservative Party during a period of only 31% popular support for the party across the country). Furthermore, senators in Canada are appointed to their positions permanently, and are able to serve for any period of time until they are 75 years of age [10] [11] [12].

Some political parties in Canada continue to campaign on a promise to abolish the senate and create a unicameral legislature. However, as none of these parties have been elected federally, this has not yet happened.

Executive Branches

Canada's political system has been modeled after the Westminster system of Britain. As such, the executive branch of government consists of "the Crown" (the Queen and her representative the Governor General) the Prime Minister, and a Cabinet of Ministers. The number of cabinet ministers is not fixed and can change from government to government. While the role of the British Monarch and her representatives is now essentially limited to a ceremonial position in Canada, it is notable that the Crown can still play a very significant role in Canadian politics. This was dramatically demonstrated recently with two consecutive shut downs of federal parliament, which sparked outrage for the Canadian public [13] [14]. While only acting on the advice of the Prime Minister and ruling Conservatives on this prorogation of parliament, the existence of the formal powers of the Queen allow the governing party to have significant executive control over other elected officials in the country.

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In Venezuela, significant to the 1999 constitution, presidential term limits were increased from five years to six years and the possibility of immediate re-election was established [15]. Previously, presidents could be re-elected for another term in office, but not immediately following their first term. Following the rejection of a constitutional amendment vote in 2007, which in part would have abolished the maximum two term limit for the Head of State, Chavez did win a second referendum vote in 2009 that effectively abolished term limits for all elected officials. As such, there are now no limits on re-election of the president in Venezuela, and Chavez will be able to run for re-election in 2012 [16]. Also of significance with regard to the executive in Venezuela is that the president now has the ability to dissolve the National Assembly [17].

Although the elimination of limits with regard to presidential reelections has raised eyebrows in and outside of Venezuela, it must be remembered that there are no executive term re-election limits in many other countries in the world, including Canada. In Canada, as long as the political party gains minority or majority support during the election process, it is possible for the party leader to be re-elected as Prime Minister for an indefinite period [18].

Judicial Branches

The courts in Canada are roughly divided into a four tier system. At the federal level are the Supreme Court (which consists of nine justices including a chief justice) and the federal court, and in each province or territory are the “superior courts” and the provincial and territorial courts. Federal level judges in Canada are appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the governing federal party’s cabinet. The judges of the superior courts in the territories and provinces are also selected by the governing federal party. Provincial and territorial court judges are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor, who, as the Queen’s provincial representative, acts on the advice of provincial cabinet. The Supreme Court of Canada is the final court of appeal in the country and its decisions are binding on all other courts at all levels. The courts at the various levels all handle different kinds of cases, as defined in the Constitution of Canada (19).

Judges in Canada are appointed for life terms and can serve until the age of 75 [20]. Judges can be recalled by the Governor General on the advice of Parliament, with just cause. In addition to judges being appointed for life terms, the fact that judges are appointed by the governing party and not elected by one or both houses of the legislature remains a point of contention.

In Venezuela, the court system is one of the most criticized aspects of the government, and upon election the Chavez government undertook efforts to overhaul the system. The new constitution put the entire court system under the control of the Supreme Tribunal of Justice [21]. In addition, in 2000, the executive set up a commission to review the positions of judges currently serving. The commission’s review process resulted in the majority of judges being dismissed due to charges of corruption, who were then replaced with provisional judges [22].

While the 1999 constitution states that the National Assembly is responsible for electing individual judges for single 12 year terms, it appears that most of the once provisional judges have been appointed for permanent terms [23]. While this process alone has no doubt raised accusations of political bias in Venezuela, it is not the only point of contention. Since the election of Chavez, the judiciary has seen an increase of 12 judges [24], which has been criticized as a court packing move. While the overhaul of the court system may have been undertaken with the aim of improving its function and its independence, it appears that the judiciary is still under heavy influence by the executive.

Venezuela’s Two Additional Branches of Government

The principle of separation of powers in democratic countries is usually exemplified by the existence of the above three branches of government. However, in addition to the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government, the 1999 constitution of Venezuela established two additional branches. These include a citizens branch, and an electoral branch [25].

The purpose of the citizens branch is to monitor the actions of the other four branches of government and ensure that these branches adhere to their constitutionally determined functions. The branch consists of an attorney general, the human rights defender, and the comptroller general. The stated responsibilities of these officials are to watch for violations of the law, to monitor the government’s adherence to human rights, and to ensure the proper administration and use of public funds, respectively. Each official in the citizen’s branch is elected for a single seven year term [26].

The electoral branch consists of a National Electoral Council, the principle purpose of which is to oversee the organization of state, regional and municipal elections and referenda, and to ensure proper electoral procedure. The National Electoral Council consists of five principle members, which are elected by majority vote. The National Electoral Council can also oversee the functioning of non governmental civil society elections, upon request [27].

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Members of both the citizen's branch and electoral branch are elected by the National Assembly. In the case of the citizens branch, if a two thirds majority on a candidate cannot be reached then the decision is put to a general public vote [28]. The creation of these two extra branches of government establishes further checks and balances on the other branches of government.

Elections and Electoral Processes

Canada does not follow a set time frame for elections. At either the federal or provincial level, elections can be called at various times, even in consecutive years [29]. Canadian federal elections and referenda are overseen by Elections Canada, an independent body that reports to the Canadian Parliament [30]. It consists of three principle members, which include the chief electoral officer, a commissioner of Canadian elections, and a broadcasting arbitrator. The chief electoral officer is elected by the House of Commons, who then appoints the commissioner and broadcasting arbitrator. The chief electoral officer serves until retirement or resignation, or can be removed by just cause by the Governor General [31].

Individual provincial and territorial elections (and their municipalities) in Canada are organized and overseen by respective provincial elections groups. Similar to the situation for federal elections, the legislature of each province or territory appoints a chief electoral officer, who then appoints other electoral officials. The actual appointment of the chief electoral officer is carried out by the province's Lieutenant Governor, who acts on the advice of the members of the legislature [32]. Provincial and territorial law in Canada prohibits municipal election candidates from campaigning by party stripe [33]. Therefore while candidates may campaign along ideological lines, municipal elections in Canada are non partisan. Also, unlike federal and provincial elections, municipal elections in Canada are held at fixed and regular times.

In Venezuela, presidential elections are held every six years, National Assembly elections are held every five years, and regional elections for governors and mayors are held every four years [34]. As in other presidential systems, it is customary for mayors and other municipal electoral candidates to campaign according to party affiliation. It is notable that prior to 1988, the Venezuelan populace were unable to directly elect mayors and governors. Previous to this time, mayors and governors were appointed by state representatives [35].

Canada has established election financing regulations, both in terms of public financing of political parties (i.e. parties can now be partially reimbursed for their election campaign expenses if they receive a certain amount of the vote), as well as a per-person limit on the amount of money that may be contributed to political parties [36]. Public financing of political parties was commonplace in Venezuela prior to 1999, however due to public discontent with the established parties, the use of public funds for political party support was abolished as part of the new constitution [37].

Referenda

Referenda are one method for the public to voice concerns and to apply their will directly, between elections. The most recent referendum put before the Canadian public was in 1995 where the public voted on the possibility of sovereignty for the province of Quebec. In Canada, at the federal level, referenda can only be triggered by the government in power as no legislation exists to support the ability for citizens to petition for them, or to subsequently recall elected officials. At the provincial and territorial level, one province has created legislation for citizens' petitioning for referenda. Federal referenda are generally rare in Canada, while non-binding plebiscites on contentious issues are at least more frequent [38].

In Venezuela the 1999 constitution established the right of citizens to petition for four different types of referenda, including consultative, recall, approving and rescinding referenda [39]. These referenda can be initiated by citizens, the National Assembly, or the President. Consultative referenda are non-binding and may be used for gauging public opinion on various issues, such as an economic trade agreement. Recall, approving and rescinding referenda are all binding votes. Recall referenda can be applied to any elected official, from the level of mayor up to the Presidency [40]. Approving and rescinding referenda can be used to pass, change or remove laws, or to amend the constitution [41]. For public petitioning of referenda, generally 10%-20% of registered voter signatures are required to trigger a public vote [42]. The most recent referendum in Venezuela was in 2009 and regarded the ending of term limits for elected officials, including the President, National Assembly members, mayors, and state governors.

Participatory Democracy and Constitutions

In addition to the possibility of petitioning for and voting in referenda, there are a number of other ways in which participatory democracy has been enhanced in Venezuela since the 1999 constitution. Some significant examples of this include the increased involvement of civil society in government decision-making processes, social auditing processes, and the creation of communal councils.

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Increased public presence in government decision-making is shown by, for example, the participation of non-governmental groups in the nomination process for national electoral council candidates and citizens volunteering with the various ongoing health missions. With regard to the social auditing process, the law allows citizens to request financial reports and records from government agencies. This increases public oversight on the expenditure of public funds, on public projects and government institutions. Finally, perhaps the most significant example of participatory democracy in the country are the communal councils. Communal councils are composed of groups of people (no more than a few hundred people per council) who join together to plan work projects and/or the expenditure of public funds. Notably, communal council decisions are binding, such that mayors must abide by the decisions of the majority of the councils. Thousands of these councils exist across the country and often they receive direct funding from the federal government for community projects [43].

Grassroots action is common in Canada, and there are many groups of concerned citizens fighting for social causes in their communities. At least when compared to Venezuela, however, this grassroots action would seem to take place to an overall lesser degree. Generally, grassroots political involvement is not unified by an overall political vision or cause, but instead is guided by individual causes and on behalf of certain groups, with the battles being fought usually without any direct political involvement and with lower numbers of active people in general. Civil society groups in Canada do not necessarily enjoy the same consideration as might currently be enjoyed in Venezuela, and while the general public may from time to time be consulted even for the formation of some laws, this consultation is usually not a mandatory requirement. Consultation with civil society groups is usually through the voluntary discretion of elected or appointed officials, or a result of strong pressure from the public.

One would be remiss to discuss the many aspects of participatory democracy in Venezuela without highlighting the significance of the 1999 constitution and the part the constitution has played in solidifying their presence. Venezuela's constitution does actually go as far as describing the country as a participatory democracy; as such, the constitution lays the groundwork for taking Venezuela's democratic system beyond the limitations of representative democracy to a more inclusive and comprehensive level. The constitution is characterized by a thorough description of citizen's rights, the relationship between citizens and governmental institutions, and the role of the government with respect to service to the public. Social rights such as health care, tertiary education, the right to employment and housing are incorporated. Fittingly, even the way the constitution was created involved thorough public involvement; the Venezuelan populace voted on whether to engage in a process to rewrite the constitution, were involved in the formation of the content of the constitution and the direct election of the members of the constitutional assembly, and later voted to approve the final document. These are opportunities never enjoyed by any generation of Canadians.

When juxtaposed against the participatory aspects of Venezuela's constitution, the representative character of Canada's constitution becomes more apparent. While there are without doubt merits to aspects of the constitution, it does not have the same comprehensive character and aside from the 1982 addition of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, there really is virtually no reference to "the citizen" or "the public" in the entirety of the text. The effect of the lack of participatory guarantees in the Canadian constitution is evident when citizen participation is simply blocked from important processes, while justifications are made with appeals to long-standing traditions of representative and parliamentary democracy in the country.

Political Culture

While other parties do run in elections, three political parties generally predominate in Canada: the Conservative Party, Liberal Party, and New Democratic Party. The Conservative Party, although it holds power, does not have active parties in some Canadian provinces. The party is a new creation that formed in 2004 following the merger of the right-wing Progressive Conservative and Reform parties. The Liberal Party is generally accepted as right of center, as are the Conservatives. The New Democratic Party grew from socialist roots before being reformed into a more social democratic party during the 1960s. For virtually all of Canadian history, federal power has been held by the Liberal or Conservative parties, although the federal NDP have made gains over the years. Voter turnout during elections has generally been on the decline since the early 1990s, with the most recent federal election resulting in the lowest voter turnout in Canadian history (59%) [44].

In contrast, and while Venezuela has always had a strong grassroots political culture, the population of Venezuela have become more engaged in political matters since the 1990s. Rallying around the concepts of Bolivarianism and 21st Century Socialism, Venezuelan society has become increasingly involved in the democratic process. This was shown, in but one example, during the 2006 presidential election which resulted in the country's highest voter turnout ever with 74% of voters casting ballots. The demographics of political participation have even changed; whereas previous to 1998 political involvement in Venezuela was generally limited to more affluent groups (even Chavez is said to have been originally elected by the middle class), the past decade has been characterized by a large increase in the participation of the poor and previously excluded [45].

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Along with increased political involvement and the rise of the concepts of Bolivarianism and 21st Century Socialism has come increased political polarization in Venezuela. This confrontation between different groups reached a peak during 2002, in which media groups were shown to have conspired with members of the military in the staging of a coup, temporarily removing Hugo Chavez from the presidency and dissolving the popularly approved 1999 constitution [46]. Although there have been dramatic political clashes in Canada during its history, there really is no parallel for that which occurred in Venezuela in 2002. One must consider the seriousness of such events and the effect that such events have on shaping the political culture and discourse in the Venezuela.

Concluding Remarks

While ongoing debate over the Chavez government's relationship with the country's news media is surely legitimate and important, one can see the folly of the Canadian government's continued claims of faltering democracy in Venezuela when looking at the situation with some attempt at objectivity. As shown in this analysis, many aspects of Venezuela's system of democracy are not substantially different than those in Canada, while other key aspects actually compare favorably when juxtaposed with Canada's system. In terms of the creation of a more inclusive and comprehensive constitution, the establishment of a unicameral and more democratic legislature, the ability of citizens to initiate referenda, recall elected officials, the various forms of participatory democracy, a higher general involvement of citizens in the democratic process, not to mention the basic ability of citizens to elect their head of state, Venezuela would seem a step ahead. While Venezuelans have seen an increased concentration of power in the executive branch of government in recent years this has been offset by the ability of the citizenry to recall elected officials, including the President. Through the popular ratification of the 1999 constitution Venezuelans have allowed for an increased role of democratic government in their country, which must be considered when analyzing specific situations or issues in the country.

On the other hand, while there are undoubtedly many merits to the Canadian system of representative democracy, citizens remain unable to recall elected officials, initiate referenda, or have full democratic control over the Canadian Parliament, among other key deficiencies. Contrary to claims from current representatives in the country, Canada's democracy could actually be improved if practices similar to those that are being taken up in Venezuela were adopted in Canada.

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community choices unit three

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community choices

unit three

U3L3A4 | Poster

overview

You will demonstrate your understanding of democracy by creating a poster that will persuade a citizen to get involved in their political system. The poster must be eye-catching with graphics and bold writing (imagine this poster will be posted on facebook—so it needs succinct text).

learning goal

- To contemplate and then create a poster that would encourage citizens to become involved in the political process.

success criteria

- Completion of a political poster.

Inquiry Question

- What slogan or art can motivate somebody to get involved in politics?

task

You will create a poster on 8 x 10 white paper that will convince a citizen (in a country of your choice) to become engaged in the democratic process.

The poster will contain the following elements:

- Three–five key actions that a citizen could take to get engaged
- Explain how the action works to create change in the democratic system.
- An image that relates/supports the message(s)



community choices unit three

U3L3A5 | Grant funding proposal

overview

You will review and share what you know about the how the democracy in Canada works.

learning goal

- You will go through the planning process of identifying a local issue and preparing a plan of action to create positive change.

success criteria

- Completion of the grant funding proposal.

Inquiry Question

- What need and/or issue in your community would you like to see changed and improved? How?

Step 1: Identify the need

Step 2: Brainstorm an action plan

- What actions or changes will occur
- Who will carry out these changes
- By when will they will take place, and for how long
- What resources (i.e., money, staff) are needed to carry out these changes

Step 3: Complete the below funding proposal

Project name _____

Project applicant(s) _____

Project focus

What community priorities does your project address:

- poverty
- Arts
- Environmental
- Safe community/violence prevention
- Social justice
- Healthy living
- Other _____



community choices
unit three

U3L3A5 | Grant funding proposal

Project activities

Please describe your planned project activities

Project partners

List any schools, groups or organizations that you plan to partner with to implement the project.



community choices
unit three

U3L3A5 | Grant funding proposal

Success indicators

What information will help you determine if your project has been effective?

Budget

What are the costs associated with this project?

Signature of Applicant(s) _____

Date: _____



the sustainable society

A quick definition

- Merriam-Webster defines grassroots as:
 - The very foundation or source
 - The basic level of society or of an organization especially as viewed in relation to higher or more centralized positions of power
- In basic terms, a grass roots movement starts from nothing
- Like actual grass roots, they start from the ground and grow up
- Run by the people

a common threads resource

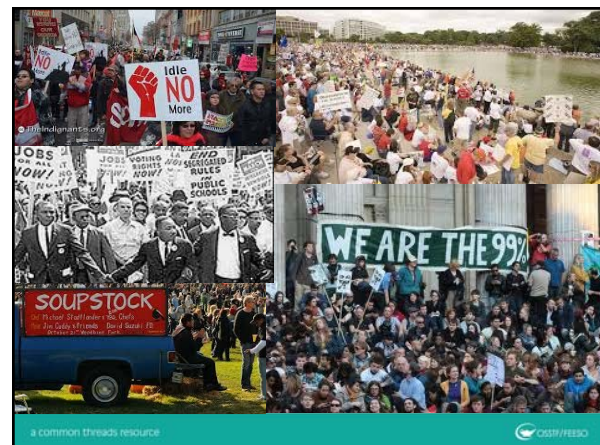
the sustainable society

Bottom up

Grassroots are not controlled or started by the people already holding power

<p>The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Began by a small group of people with a common goal • Used methods like church meetings, sit-ins, letter writing, and marching to get their message across 	<p>The Occupy Wall Street Movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct action by citizens who were upset by the growing inequality • Started with the idea of a few, but that idea resonated with many
---	---

a common threads resource



the sustainable society

More common forms

- Though things like the Civil Rights Marches and Occupy are very popular, they are only a tiny proportion of what makes a grassroots movement
- Most organizations are focused individuals who start with a basic idea and expand from there

a common threads resource

the sustainable society

What can you do?

- Participating in a grassroots movement seems daunting at first
- Just take your time, and think about issues in your community that you feel should be improved/change (ie. Bike lanes, affordable housing, later start to the high school day!)

a common threads resource



Can you make a difference?

- Absolutely.
- Keep in mind, most grassroots organizations are non-profits and need all the help they can get
- Most welcome volunteers and people willing to donate time and energy



Essentials

- Grassroots organizations are generally started by individuals and small groups with a focused idea
- They may broaden or narrow their focus after starting, but always have a specific mission in mind
 - (i.e., bettering education, feeding the hungry, helping the impoverished)
- Built on ideas but kept running by dedicated workers and tons of volunteers



Questions

- What are some major grassroots organizations you can think of?
- What good can these small movements do?
- Are grassroots movements ever effective?
- Do the movements have to be big and popular to effect change or can a small group do just as well?



community choices unit three

ask

How do rising price levels affect the sustainability of a country?

acquire

- Chart paper and markers OR laptops for students to collaborate using Google docs
- Student & teacher handouts
- PowerPoint presentation
- Newspaper articles

explore

- Anticipation guide
- Interactive PowerPoint presentation

analyze

- Collaborative impact analysis
- Video analysis

act

- Editorial piece
- Inflation rate calculation
- News broadcast/radio show



community choices

unit three

U3L4 | Sustainability and inflation

This lesson teaches students why price stability is necessary to maintain a sustainable society. Students will learn how rapid inflation negatively impacts societal, economic, and environmental sustainability. They will learn how to calculate the inflation rate and understand its significance as an indicator of economic health. Students will also compare and contrast inflation rates of two petroleum producing countries (Norway and Venezuela), to identify causes of the disparity.

subjects: Economics, Business, Math, Politics, Social Science, History

timing: **Activity 1**

Complete Anticipation Guide | **45–50 minutes**

Activity 2

Complete ‘Sustainability and Inflation’ collaborative organizer | **25–30 minutes**

Note: follow up with Activity 5

Activity 3

Complete ‘Managing Wealth and Building Trust’ video worksheet | **25–30 minutes**

Activity 4

Write an editorial piece | **150 minutes**

Activity 5

Inflation rate calculations | **75 minutes**

Activity 6

Produce a news broadcast or radio show | **150 minutes**

learning goal

- To begin thinking about inflation and its impact on standard of living.
- To identify and understand the far reaching impacts of inflation on sustainability.
- To understand why Norway limits their spending to four per cent of the forecasted revenue of the oil fund.
- To understand the far-reaching negative impacts of rapid price rise on society, economy, government, and environment.
- To effectively develop and support several comprehensive arguments.
- To calculate the inflation rate.
- To understand that moderate inflation is a healthy part of economic growth.
- To understand factors which cause inflation.
- To understand how government policy tools influence price stability.

success criteria

- Completion of ‘Before’ and ‘After’ columns, with effective justification in ‘Reason’ column, in inflation anticipation guide.
- Complete ‘Sustainability and Inflation’ collaborative organizer and informally share findings with the class.
- Completion of inflation rate calculations using Statistics Canada data tables.
- Completion of ‘Managing Wealth and Building Trust’ video worksheet.
- Completion of price stability newspaper editorial piece.
- Completion of managing inflation news broadcast/radio show.



community choices

unit three

U3L4 | Sustainability and inflation

ask

Inquiry questions

- How does inflation impact sustainability?
- How are citizens, economy/government, and the environment affected when prices rise rapidly?
- Why does Norway limit their spending to four per cent of the forecasted revenue of the oil fund?
- Why should price stability be a top priority for government?
- What causes the inflation rate to fluctuate?
- How do governments maintain inflation rate targets?

acquire

'Sustainability and Inflation' PowerPoint presentation

Activity 1

Anticipation guide student worksheet

Anticipation guide teacher answer key (appended to lesson plan)

Activity 2

'Sustainability and Inflation' collaborative organizer student worksheet

'Sustainability and Inflation' collaborative organizer teacher answer key (appended to lesson plan)

Activity 3

'Managing Wealth and Building Trust' video student worksheet

'Managing Wealth and Building Trust' video teacher answer key (appended to lesson plan)

Activity 4

Editorial piece assignment sheet

Activity 5

Inflation rate calculation worksheet

www.statcan.gc.ca

Activity 6

News broadcast/radio show assignment sheet

- Guardian article 'Street protests loom as shortages, inflation and oil slump hit Venezuela'
- New York Times article 'Oil cash waning, Venezuelan shelves lie bare'
- LA Times article 'Shortages, inflation and long lines have Venezuelans grumbling'
- CBC article "Sovereign wealth funds: What does it take to succeed?"
- CBC article "Norway's sovereign wealth holds lessons for Canada"
- Huffington Post article "The Norwegian government pension fund: a success story"



community choices

unit three

U3L4 | Sustainability and inflation

explore

Activity 1 | Anticipation guide

In this activity students will begin thinking about the issue of inflation and its impact on sustainability. They will choose to agree or disagree with eight inflation related statements in the 'Before' column of the Sustainability and Inflation anticipation guide. Teacher reads each statement and gets a show of hands (agree or disagree) for each question to get a sense of students' prior knowledge.

Teacher presents interactive Sustainability and Inflation PowerPoint.

After participating in the interactive Sustainability and Inflation PowerPoint students will return to this activity and complete the 'After' column. Students informally share 'After' agree or disagree justifications with the class.

analyze

Activity 2 | 'Sustainability and inflation' collaborative organizer

In this activity students will collaborate with their group members to identify the negative impacts of inflation. They will think deeply about how citizens, economy/government, and the environment are affected when prices rise rapidly.

- Form groups of three–four students
- Each group works collaboratively to complete the organizer—identifying the negative impacts of high inflation
- Students can use pen and paper or laptops and Google docs to complete the organizer
- Each group informally shares findings with the class

Note: follow up with Activity 4

Activity 3 | Managing wealth and building trust video (6 min) worksheet

In this activity you students watch a short video and complete a worksheet. The video features several Norwegian policy analysts speaking about the management of Norway's oil fund. Students should incorporate knowledge gained in the previous activities of this lesson to elaborate on their answers.

- Teacher explains 'Dutch disease' which is referenced several times in the video
- Teacher clarifies information students are looking for and plays video
- Each time an answer is stated by the speaker, there is a short break in the video (teacher can manually press pause to allow for longer discussion time)
- Teacher can collect worksheets or take up orally during the breaks in the video

act

Activity 4 | Editorial piece

In this activity students individually write an editorial piece for their local newspaper explaining why price stability is a critical component of a sustainable society and should be the government's top priority. Arguments must be relevant, supported, and compelling. Students can use the ideas recorded in their 'Sustainability and inflation' organizer (Activity 2) to get started.

U3L4 | Sustainability and inflation

Activity 5 | Inflation rate calculation

In this activity students will learn how to calculate the inflation rate. They will practice using real figures from the Statistics Canada website.

- Go to the Statistics Canada website: www.statcan.gc.ca
- Click on 'Browse by key resource' tab and select CANSIM
- Click on subject 'Prices and price indexes'
- Click on 'Consumer Price Indexes' (29 tables)
- Select the table of your choice and have students use the CPI data to calculate the inflation rate

$$\left[\frac{\text{CPI (more recent year/month)} - \text{CPI (older year/month)}}{\text{CPI (older year/month)}} \right] \times 100$$

Activity 6 | News broadcast or radio show

In this activity students will work with a partner to investigate and determine causes for the large discrepancy in inflation rates between Norway and Venezuela. You will provide students with several articles to get started, but additional research is strongly encouraged. Students may present their findings in one of two formats: News broadcast or radio show.

- As of January 2015 Norway's inflation rate was approximately 2 per cent. As of December 2014 Venezuela's inflation rate was approximately 68 per cent (source: www.tradingeconomics.com).
- Both countries are experiencing a natural resource boom in petroleum yet their inflation rates are at opposite ends of the spectrum.
- Students will work in pairs (one student researches Venezuela, and one student researches Norway) to investigate the inflation rates of two uniquely different oil rich countries.
- Students will identify:
 1. Impact of inflation rate on social, economic, and environmental sustainability in each country.
 2. Causes of the large discrepancy in inflation rates between the two countries (effective use and/or absence of monetary and fiscal policy tools contributing to each country's rate).
- Students can submit results in one of two ways:
 1. News broadcast (can be done live in class or pre-recorded and submitted electronically).
 2. Radio show podcast (submitted as an audio file).

*APA bibliography required.

Suggested sources to get started:

Venezuela

- "Street protests loom as shortages, inflation and oil slump hit Venezuela"
- "Oil cash waning, Venezuelan shelves lie bare"
- "Shortages, inflation and long lines have Venezuelans grumbling"

Norway

- *Sovereign wealth funds: What does it take to succeed?* (Excellent 11 minute video: www.cbc.ca/news/business/norway-s-sovereign-wealth-holds-lessons-for-canada-1.3002803)
- "Norway's sovereign wealth holds lessons for Canada"
- "The Norwegian government pension fund: a success story"

U3L4 | Sustainability and Inflation

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community choices

unit three

U3L4 | Sustainability and inflation

U3L4A1 | Sustainability and inflation anticipation guide | TEACHER ANSWER KEY

overview

In this activity you will begin thinking about the issue of inflation and its impact on sustainability. You will choose to agree or disagree with eight inflation related statements in the 'Before' column (you're not expected to know all the answers yet, so guessing is fine).

After participating in the interactive PowerPoint presentation and completing your 'Sustainability and inflation' organizer you are ready to complete the 'after' column of your anticipation guide.

learning goal

- To begin thinking about inflation and its impact on standard of living.

success criteria

- Completion of 'Before' and 'After' columns, with effective justification in 'Reason' column.

Inquiry question

- How does inflation impact sustainability?

Instructions

1. Read the following statements.
2. In the 'before' column, record whether you agree or disagree with each statement.
3. After participating in the 'Sustainability and inflation' lesson, complete the 'After' column.
4. Provide an explanation justifying your position in the 'reason' column.
5. Be prepared to share your reasons with the class.

BEFORE lesson	Statement	AFTER lesson	Reason
Agree/Disagree	Inflation is a sign that the economy is in trouble.	Agree/ Disagree	A certain amount of inflation is healthy and a natural result of economic growth (Canada's inflation target is approx. 2 per cent). However rapid inflation (hyperinflation) is definitely a sign of trouble.
Agree/Disagree	Decreasing taxes slows down inflation.	Agree/ Disagree	No. Lower taxes mean more disposable income and more spending. Increased spending increases aggregate demand which increases inflation.
Agree/Disagree	All countries experience some inflation.	Agree/ Disagree	Many countries experience some inflation, but not all. Japan has experienced deflation (prices falling) for some time, which is very problematic.
Agree/Disagree	The government can't do anything about inflation.	Agree/ Disagree	The government has several fiscal and monetary policy tools at their disposal to manage inflation rates.
Agree/Disagree	If a large percentage of the population goes on a spending spree prices will fall.	Agree/ Disagree	Increased spending increases aggregate demand. Increased aggregate demand increases prices.
Agree/Disagree	Interest rates and inflation have an inverse relationship.	Agree /Disagree	High interest rates discourage borrowing and spending and therefore decrease inflation rates (and vice versa). The relationship is inverse because as one goes up the other goes down.
Agree/Disagree	It is preferable to have a pension indexed to inflation.	Agree /Disagree	Yes. Pensions not indexed to inflation remain the same year after year. As prices increase around them their income never changes, effectively decreasing their purchasing power. It is always preferable to have your pension keep up with inflation, therefore maintaining your purchasing power.
Agree/Disagree	A low unemployment rate can decrease increase inflation rates.	Agree/ Disagree	A low UE rate will increase inflation rates. People working means people spending money, which increases aggregate demand, and therefore inflation.



community choices

unit three

U3L4 | Sustainability and inflation

U3L4A2 | Sustainability and inflation collaborative organizer | TEACHER ANSWER KEY

overview

In this activity you will collaborate with your group members to identify the negative impacts of inflation. You will think deeply about how citizens, economy/government, and the environment are affected when prices rise rapidly.

learning goal

- To identify and understand the far reaching impacts of inflation on sustainability.

success criteria

- Complete organizer and informally share findings with the class.

Inquiry Question

- How are citizens, economy/government, and the environment affected when prices rise rapidly?

Brainstorm with your group members to identify the negative outcomes of rapid inflation. Record below in point form.

Societal sustainability How are citizens lives affected?	Economic sustainability How is the economy/ government affected?	Environmental sustainability How is the natural environment affected?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currency loses value, can't afford goods/services (especially those on fixed incomes) • Decreased standard of living—shortages of goods and services • Citizens hoarding goods • Citizens unable to plan for the future • Increased reliance in food banks, homeless shelters etc... • Inflation psychology • Protests, riots, looting • Instability causes citizens to feel unsafe • Loss of faith in government (emergency election, potential coup) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased exports (Canadian exports appear more expensive relative to countries with lower inflation rates) • Job loss (higher unemployment rate) • Decreased savings (citizens cannot afford to save due to high cost of living) • Increased bankruptcies • Increased reliance on welfare programs (E.I., welfare etc...) • Decreased investment (lower productivity) • Government unable to effectively plan for the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid consumption of natural resources to meet demand (i.e. clear cutting, overfishing etc...) • Increased pollution levels due to increased production levels trying to meet demand (water pollution, air pollution) • Disregard for environmental protection laws (i.e. cutting down trees or hunting in a protected park to meet food/shelter needs) • Inability to plan for the future limits long-term/large scale environmental projects (they often require significant investments, i.e. installing solar panels)



community choices

unit three

U3L4 | Sustainability and inflation

U3L4A3 | Managing wealth and building trust (6 min) | TEACHER ANSWER KEY

overview

In this activity you will watch a short video and complete a worksheet. The video features several Norwegian policy analysts speaking about the management of Norway's oil fund. Incorporate knowledge gained in the previous activities of this lesson to elaborate your answers.

learning goal

- To understand why Norway limits their spending to 4 per cent of the forecasted revenue of the oil fund.

success criteria

- Completion of video worksheet.

Inquiry question

- Why does Norway limit their spending to 4 per cent of the forecasted revenue of the oil fund?

Norway's oil fund is valued at close to \$1 trillion. However, Norway still faces budget deficits and issues of unemployment and poverty. You may ask yourself, 'why don't they just use money from the oil fund to solve these problems?'

Watch the video clip and answer the following question:

Why does Norway limit their spending to 4 per cent of the forecasted revenue of the oil fund? Provide at least five different reasons.

1. It would cause 'Dutch disease' (see explanation below)—Damaging for manufacturing industry which they need in the future. (0:23 sec)
2. More than 4 per cent would increase money supply too much—wages would rise, causing prices to rise (cost-push inflation). (1:42 sec)
3. Citizens would become 'lazy & spoiled'—lose motivation to work hard, negatively impacting Norway's society and culture. (2:40 sec)
4. Deviating from the 4 per cent commitment would cause trade partners/foreign investors to lose confidence in Norway (stability is very important). (3:24 sec)
5. Norwegian currency would appreciate (become too strong) and hurt Norway's export sectors (see 'Dutch disease' explanation below). (3:45 sec)



community choices

unit three

U3L4 | Sustainability and Inflation

U3L4A3 | Managing wealth and building trust (6 min) | TEACHER ANSWER KEY

Terminology

Dutch disease

This term describes what happened in the Netherlands when they discovered natural gas in 1959. The Netherlands experienced a resource boom and shifted their economic focus away from other sectors (i.e. manufacturing and agriculture) to concentrate on the natural gas sector. The booming industry resulted in big profits, increased employment, high wages, and significant government spending—all of which contributed to rapid inflation.

Dutch currency increased in value due to significant natural gas exports. Although having a strong currency sounds like a positive thing, it had some negative results.

1. A strong currency made imports cheaper for the Netherlands, but their domestic manufacturing/agriculture sectors couldn't compete with the cheap imported goods.
2. A strong currency made it more expensive for the Netherlands trade partners to purchase exports from them. Their trade partners chose to purchase from other countries whose currency was weaker (negatively impacting the Netherlands manufacturing/agriculture sectors).

U3L4A1 | Sustainability and Inflation Anticipation Guide

overview

In this activity you will begin thinking about the issue of inflation and its impact on sustainability. You will choose to agree or disagree with eight inflation related statements in the 'Before' column (you're not expected to know all the answers yet, so guessing is fine).

After participating in the interactive PowerPoint presentation and completing your 'Inflation and Sustainability' organizer you are ready to complete the AFTER column of your anticipation guide.

learning goal

- To begin thinking about inflation and its impact on standard of living.

success criteria

- Completion of 'Before' and 'After' columns, with effective justification in 'Reason' column.

Inquiry Question

- How does inflation impact sustainability?

Instructions

1. Read the following statements.
2. In the BEFORE column, record whether you agree or disagree with each statement.
3. After participating in the 'Sustainability and Inflation' lesson, complete the AFTER column.
4. Provide an explanation justifying your position in the REASON column.
5. Be prepared to share your reasons with the class.



community choices
unit three

U3L4A1 | Sustainability and inflation anticipation guide

Before lesson	Statement	After lesson	Reason
Agree/Disagree	Inflation is a sign that the economy is in trouble.	Agree/Disagree	
Agree/Disagree	Decreasing taxes slows down inflation.	Agree/Disagree	
Agree/Disagree	All countries experience some inflation.	Agree/Disagree	
Agree/Disagree	The government can't do anything about inflation.	Agree/Disagree	
Agree/Disagree	If a large percentage of the population goes on a spending spree prices will fall.	Agree/Disagree	
Agree/Disagree	Interest rates and inflation have an inverse relationship.	Agree/Disagree	
Agree/Disagree	It is preferable to have a pension indexed to inflation.	Agree/Disagree	
Agree/Disagree	A low unemployment rate can decrease increase inflation rates.	Agree/Disagree	



community choices unit three

U3L4A2 | Sustainability and inflation anticipation guide

overview

In this activity you will collaborate with your group members to identify the negative impacts of inflation. You will think deeply about how citizens, economy/government, and the environment are affected when prices rise rapidly.

learning goal

- To identify and understand the far reaching impacts of inflation on sustainability.

success criteria

- Complete organizer and informally share findings with the class.

Inquiry question

- How are citizens, economy/government, and the environment affected when prices rise rapidly?

Brainstorm with your group members to identify the negative outcomes of rapid inflation. Record below in point form.

Societal sustainability How are citizens lives affected?	Economic sustainability How is the economy/ government affected?	Environmental sustainability How is the natural environment affected?



community choices

unit three

U3L4A3 | Managing wealth and building trust (6 min)

overview

In this activity you will watch a short video and complete a worksheet. The video features several Norwegian policy analysts speaking about the management of Norway's Oil Fund. Incorporate knowledge gained in the previous activities of this lesson to elaborate your answers.

learning goal

- To understand why Norway limits their spending to 4 per cent of the forecasted revenue of the Oil Fund.

success criteria

- Completion of video worksheet.

Inquiry question

- Why does Norway limit their spending to 4 per cent of the forecasted revenue of the oil fund?

Norway's oil fund is valued at close to \$1 trillion. However, Norway still faces budget deficits and issues of unemployment and poverty. You may ask yourself, 'why don't they just use money from the oil fund to solve these problems?'

Watch the video clip and answer the following question:

Why does Norway limit their spending to 4 per cent of the forecasted revenue of the oil fund? Provide at least five different reasons.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____



community choices

unit three

U3L4A3 | Managing wealth and building trust (6 min)

Terminology

Dutch disease

This term describes what happened in the Netherlands when they discovered natural gas in 1959. The Netherlands experienced a resource boom and shifted their economic focus away from other sectors (i.e. manufacturing and agriculture) to concentrate on the natural gas sector. The booming industry resulted in big profits, increased employment, high wages, and significant government spending—all of which contributed to rapid inflation.

Dutch currency increased in value due to significant natural gas exports. Although having a strong currency sounds like a positive thing, it had some negative results.

- 1.** A strong currency made imports cheaper for the Netherlands, but their domestic manufacturing/agriculture sectors couldn't compete with the cheap imported goods.
- 2.** A strong currency made it more expensive for the Netherlands trade partners to purchase exports from them. Their trade partners chose to purchase from other countries whose currency was weaker (negatively impacting the Netherlands manufacturing/agriculture sectors).



community choices unit three

U3L4A4 | Editorial piece

overview

In this activity you will individually write an editorial piece for your local newspaper. Your piece must be persuasive and justify why price stability should be a top priority for government. Arguments must be relevant, supported, and compelling. Use the ideas recorded in your 'Sustainability and inflation' organizer (Activity 2) to get started.

learning goal

- To understand the far-reaching negative impacts of rapid price rise on society, economy, government, and environment.
- To effectively develop and support several comprehensive arguments.

success criteria

- Completion of editorial piece.

Inquiry question

- Why should price stability should be a top priority for government?

Writing an editorial piece

An editorial piece is an article presenting the writer's opinion (an opinionated news story). Your task is to individually write an editorial piece for your local newspaper justifying why price stability is a critical component of a sustainable society and should be the government's top priority.

Requirements

- Clearly state your thesis.
- Ensure that your position is supported by a minimum of three strong arguments (use your 'Sustainability and Inflation' organizer).
- Support your arguments; without reliable sources your arguments will be weak. Include a minimum of three academic sources. In-text citations and full APA bibliography required.
- Submit to turnitin.com (approximate length: 500 words)



community choices

unit three

U3L4A5 | Inflation rate calculation

overview

In this activity you will learn how to calculate the inflation rate. You will practice using real figures from the Statistics Canada website.

learning goal

- To be able to calculate the inflation rate.
- To understand that moderate inflation is a healthy part of economic growth.

success criteria

- Completion of inflation rate calculations.

Inquiry Question

- What causes the inflation rate to fluctuate?

Inflation rate calculation

1. Go to the Statistics Canada website: www.statcan.gc.ca
2. Click on 'Browse by key resource' tab and select CANSIM
3. Click on subject 'Prices and price indexes'
4. Click on 'Consumer Price Indexes' (29 tables)
5. Select the table of your choice and use the CPI data to calculate the inflation rate (use the below formula)

$$\left[\frac{\text{CPI (more recent year/month)} - \text{CPI (older year/month)}}{\text{CPI (older year/month)}} \right] \times 100$$



community choices

unit three

U3L4A6 | News broadcast or radio show

overview

In this activity you will work with a partner to investigate and determine causes for the large discrepancy in inflation rates between Norway and Venezuela. Your teacher will provide you with several articles to get started, but additional research is strongly encouraged. You may present your findings in one of two formats: news broadcast or radio show.

learning goal

- To understand factors which cause inflation.
- To understand how government policy tools influence price stability.

success criteria

- Completion of news broadcast or radio show.

Inquiry Question

- How do governments maintain inflation rate targets?

Assignment

As of January 2015 Norway's inflation rate was approximately two per cent. As of December 2014 Venezuela's inflation rate was approximately 68 per cent (source: www.tradingeconomics.com). Both countries are experiencing a natural resource boom in petroleum yet their inflation rates are at opposite ends of the spectrum.

- a You will work in pairs (one student researches Venezuela, and one student researches Norway) to investigate the inflation rates of two uniquely different oil rich countries.
- b You must identify:
 1. The impact of the inflation rate on social, economic, and environmental sustainability in each country.
 2. The causes for this large discrepancy in inflation rates between the two countries (effective use and/or absence of monetary and fiscal policy tools contributing to each country's rate).

You can submit results in one of two ways:

1. News broadcast (can be done live in class or pre-recorded and submitted electronically).
2. Radio show podcast (submitted as an audio file).
*APA bibliography required.

Suggested sources to get started:

Venezuela

- "Street protests loom as shortages, inflation and oil slump hit Venezuela"
- "Oil cash waning, Venezuelan shelves lie bare"
- "Shortages, inflation and long lines have Venezuelans grumbling"

Norway

- *Sovereign wealth funds: What does it take to succeed?* (Excellent 11 minute video: www.cbc.ca/news/business/norway-s-sovereign-wealth-holds-lessons-for-canada-1.3002803)
- "Norway's sovereign wealth holds lessons for Canada"
- "The Norwegian government pension fund: a success story"



theguardian

Street protests loom as shortages, inflation and oil slump hit Venezuela

As President Nicolás Maduro tours the world in search of financing, the most conciliatory opposition leader says the time has come to mobilise on the streets

Sybilla Brodzinsky (January 16, 2015)

Even Venezuela's most conciliatory opposition leader has had enough.

Amid sky-high inflation, an absent president, snaking queues outside supermarkets, and plummeting oil prices, Henrique Capriles said this week that the time was ripe to try to force a change.

“We are in a state of emergency,” he said on Monday. “This is the time to mobilise in the streets.”

The call to protest was significant because Capriles, a state governor, disavowed last year's violent protests demanding the resignation of Nicolás Maduro, Venezuela's president. Instead, Capriles had advocated regime change through the ballot box.

But the situation on the ground has changed since then. Venezuela's economy is estimated to have shrunk by 4% in 2014, with inflation hitting 64%. The price of oil, which accounts for more than 95% of Venezuela's hard-currency income, continues to fall. According to the latest opinion poll, Maduro enjoys the support of just 22% of the population, and he has come under fire on social media and editorial pages for spending nearly two weeks outside the country – with his extended family in tow – while the crisis deepens.

Most worrying for Venezuelans are food shortages. Standing in line for hours to buy basic subsidised goods such as milk, soap and diapers has become an exhausting reality of everyday life, but tensions have grown since stocks are running lower than usual after the holidays and police began enforcing a policy that limits patrons to two shopping days a week at government-run supermarkets. In three states, authorities have banned overnight queues.



community choices unit three

U3L4A6 | News broadcast or radio show | Article 1

Capriles, who narrowly lost the presidency to Maduro in 2013, met with other opposition leaders throughout the week to define their protest strategy.

But in the western city of San Cristóbal, the flashpoint of last year's protests, a small group of students have already begun to set up roadblocks and burn tyres, according to Reuters. Flashes of protest at supermarkets in Caracas have landed a handful of people in jail.

"Venezuela is living in a state of perpetual crisis," says Carlos Romero, a Caracas-based political analyst. "But it's been a stable crisis," he says, adding that despite rumours of a possible coup or an impending debt default, Maduro still holds the political reins.

In December, Maduro confirmed that the country was in recession, but blamed an "economic war" orchestrated by political foes.

"The strategy that they are carrying out aims to disrupt civilians and cause extreme situations, that is the key part of their efforts to destabilise the country," Maduro told reporters. "An economic coup is also under way in Venezuela," he said.

The president, who succeeded the father of Venezuela's socialist revolution, Hugo Chávez, two years ago, set off on 4 January on a whirlwind tour of China, Russia and several Opec nations to seek fresh money to shore up the Venezuelan economy and try to convince other oil producers to curtail production.

In Beijing, Maduro announced that China had agreed to invest more than \$20bn (£13.2bn) in Venezuela, but it remains unclear whether the sum represented a fresh arrangement or was part of pre-existing oil-for-loans deals. Even if the investments are new, it is far from certain that this is money that the Venezuelan government can use for imports or debt repayments.

Oil prices continued to drop during his tour but after meeting Vladimir Putin on Thursday, Maduro said he secured enough pledges of money to buttress Venezuela's economy.



community choices
unit three

U3L4A6 | News broadcast or radio show | Article 1

“I have got the funds needed so that the country can maintain its rhythm of investment, of imports and economic stability,” he announced from Moscow. There was speculation in Caracas about whether he might fly next to Mexico, another major oil producer, for a meeting with President Enrique Peña Nieto.

Maduro is due to address the National Assembly – Venezuela’s unicameral legislature – on 20 January.

The New York Times

Oil Cash Waning, Venezuelan Shelves Lie Bare

WILLIAM NEUMAN, JAN. 29, 2015

CARACAS, Venezuela — Mary Noriega heard there would be chicken.

She hated being herded “like cattle,” she said, standing for hours in a line of more than 1,500 people hoping to buy food, as soldiers with side arms checked identification cards to make sure no one tried to buy basic items more than once or twice a week.

But Ms. Noriega, a laboratory assistant with three children, said she had no choice, ticking off the inventory in her depleted refrigerator: coffee and corn flour. Things had gotten so bad, she said, that she had begun bartering with neighbors to put food on the table.

“We always knew that this year would start badly, but I think this is super bad,” Ms. Noriega said.

Venezuelans have put up with shortages and long lines for years. But as the price of oil, the country’s main export, has plunged, the situation has grown so dire that the government has sent troops to patrol huge lines snaking for blocks. Some states have barred people from waiting outside stores overnight, and government officials are posted near entrances, ready to arrest shoppers who cheat the rationing system.

Because Venezuela is so dependent on oil sales to buy imports of food, medicine and many other basics, the drop in oil prices means that there is even less hard currency to buy what the country needs.

Even before oil prices tumbled, Venezuela was in the throes of a deep recession, with one of the world’s highest inflation rates and chronic shortages of basic items.

One of the nation’s most prestigious public hospitals shut down its heart surgery unit for weeks because of shortages of medical supplies. Some drugs have been out of stock for months, and at least one clinic performed heart operations only by smuggling in a vital drug from the United States. Diapers are so coveted that some shoppers carry the birth certificates of their children in case stores demand them.

Now economists predict that shortages will get even more acute and inflation, already 64 percent, will climb further. The price of Venezuelan oil dropped this month to \$38 a barrel, down from \$96 in September.



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U3L4A6 | News broadcast or radio show | Article 2

“Things are going to be even worse because oil keeps Venezuela going,” said Luis Castro, 42, a nurse, standing in line with hundreds of others at a grocery store. He had arrived with his wife and 6-year-old son at 6 a.m., but by 11:30 a.m., they had still not entered. “We’re getting used to standing on line,” he said, “and when you get used to something, they give you only crumbs.”

The shortages and inflation present another round of political challenges for President Nicolás Maduro, who has vowed to continue the Socialist-inspired revolution begun by his predecessor, the charismatic leftist Hugo Chávez.

“I’ve always been a Chavista,” said Ms. Noriega, using a term for a loyal Chávez supporter. But “the other day, I found a Chávez T-shirt I’d kept, and I threw it on the ground and stamped on it, and then I used it to clean the floor. I was so angry. I don’t know if this is his fault or not, but he died and left us here, and things have been going from bad to worse.”



Thousands waited last week to buy basic goods at subsidized prices in Caracas. Those who cheat on rationing risk arrest. (Meridith Kohut for The New York Times)

Venezuela has the world’s largest estimated petroleum reserves, and when oil prices were high, oil exports made up more than 95 percent of its hard currency income. Mr. Chávez used the oil riches to fund social spending, like increased pensions and subsidized grocery stores. Now that income has been slashed.

“If things are so bad now, I really cannot imagine how they will be in February or March” when some of the lowest oil prices “materialize in terms of cash flow,” said Francisco J. Monaldi, a professor of energy policy at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

Mr. Maduro spent 14 straight days in January traveling the globe in an effort to court investment and persuade other oil-producing nations to cut production and push the price back up.

“We have serious economic difficulties regarding the country’s revenue,” Mr. Maduro said to the legislature during his annual address, which had to be pushed back because of the trip. “But God will always be with us. God will provide. And we will get, and we have gotten, the resources to maintain the country’s rhythm.”



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After months of toying with the politically taboo idea of raising the price of gasoline sold at pumps here, the cheapest in the world, he said that the time had finally come to do so.

And he reiterated his position that the country's economic ills are the fault of an economic war being waged against his government by right-wing enemies.

Many economists argue that government policies are a big part of the problem, including a highly overvalued currency, price controls that dissuade manufacturers and farmers, and government restrictions on access to dollars that have led to a steep drop in imports.

Some investors fear Venezuela will default on billions of dollars in bonds, but Mr. Maduro has said the country will pay its debts.

Typically, in an election year like this one, when voters will choose a new legislature, the government showers supporters with goods, like refrigerators and washing machines, or other benefits, like free housing. But now there may not be enough foreign currency to import appliances and construction materials.

In interviews, shoppers did not say they were going hungry. Rather, many said the economic crisis meant eating canned sardines instead of chicken, or boiled food instead of fried because vegetable oil is so hard to get. Many said they ate meat less frequently because it is out of stock or too expensive. Fresh fish can be harder to find, in part, fishermen said, because they find it more profitable to use their boats to sell subsidized Venezuelan diesel on the black market in a high-seas rendezvous instead of hauling in a catch.

But social media in Venezuela is full of urgent pleas from patients trying to find prescription medicine.

Dr. Gastón Silva, the head of cardiovascular surgery at the University Hospital of Caracas, said that because of medical shortages, only about 100 heart operations were performed there last year, down from 300 or more in previous years.

Some patients who had been hospitalized awaiting surgery for a month or more were sent home in November because there were not enough supplies, and the operating rooms remained shut for more than eight weeks, Dr. Silva said, despite a list of hundreds of people awaiting heart operations.

He said the shortages stemmed from the government's foreign exchange controls, which have kept medical importers from getting access to the money they need to make purchases abroad. Now with the low price of oil further restricting the government's supply of hard currency, he worried the crisis would get worse.

"We are getting to a breaking point," Dr. Silva said. "If one thing is lacking, O.K. If there are no automobile parts, we'll see. Food, that's problematic. But health care, that's more problematic. Where will it end?"



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Mr. Silva said that a private clinic where he also works had sharply scaled back heart surgeries in the last four months of 2014 because of limited supplies.

A heart surgeon at another private clinic said that a colleague had smuggled an essential drug from the United States to keep the operating room functioning.

Ana Guanipa, 75, a retired government office worker, said that she had searched numerous pharmacies for her hypertension medicine.

“I’ve been looking all month, and I can’t find it,” she said, adding that a neighbor who takes the same drug gave her some. “I take it one day on and one day off so that it will last longer.”

On a recent morning, hundreds of people stood in line outside a big-box store, similar to Costco. Inside, many shelves were stripped clean. The large appliance and electronics section was empty. One aisle displayed hundreds of boxes of a single brand of toothpaste. There was no fresh meat; a cooler was filled with frozen pigs feet.

Most people came to buy only three items sold at government-mandated prices: laundry detergent, vegetable oil and corn flour.

Every purchase was entered into a database, ensuring that shoppers did not try to buy the same regulated staples at the chain for at least seven days.

Soldiers patrolled the line outside, police officers were stationed inside and government officials checked identification cards, looking for fake ones that could be used to cheat the rationing system — or for immigrants with expired visas. An official from the immigration and identification service said that offenders would be arrested.

“This is pathetic,” said Yenerly Niño, 18, adding that she had waited more than five hours to buy the three subsidized products because she could not afford to buy them at the higher prices charged by street vendors.

“You do what you have to,” she said. “If you don’t do it, you don’t eat.”



Shortages, inflation and long lines have Venezuelans grumbling

By MERY MOGOLLON AND CHRIS KRAUL (January 24, 2015)

Waiting in line for hours to buy groceries at a supermarket in eastern Caracas, Helena Siso didn't know or care who was to blame for the acute shortages of consumer goods plaguing Venezuela. She just wanted the government to do something about it.

"This is very frustrating," said Siso, a 54-year-old doctor's secretary. "Here I am on my lunch hour and I have to spend three hours in line to buy toilet paper. Tomorrow, I'll have to come back to get corn flour. I don't want the government to give me anything, just save me from submitting to these lines and this desperation."

"It's the government's fault. There are scarcities in everything, especially in children's things, like milk, vitamins, shampoo and diapers."- Zulay Gutierrez, 30-year-old hotel concierge

Siso's comments were typical of the exasperation many Venezuelans' expressed after President Nicolas Maduro's state of the nation address this week in which he defended the socialist model of government but offered no immediate solutions for the country's deepening economic crisis.

In addition to shortages that have consumers waiting in long lines for sugar, cooking oil, soaps, rice and other items, Venezuela is also in the grips of a sputtering economy and rising inflation that last year averaged 63%, the highest rate in Latin America.

Times are likely to get even tougher this year. After the economy shrank by 3% in 2014, the International Monetary Fund issued a forecast on Wednesday saying the total Venezuelan output of goods and services will shrink by a further 7% this year.

Although the economy here has been in disarray for several years, the main reason the IMF cited for the poor 2015 outlook is the 50% drop in the price of Venezuelan oil, on which the country depends for 95% of all export sales.

As he waited in line at a supermarket in the Mercedes barrio in eastern Caracas, construction worker Ramon Diaz said what bothered him was that many subsidized goods such as milk meant to be available at the government chain of grocery stores end up in the hands of black market sellers who charge three times the official prices.

“The government has to stop that,” said Diaz, 45. “As long as the contraband continues, there is no solution, and we will have to continue standing in line.”

The lines are not only growing longer but more violent, a sign of rising frustration, Siso said. She avoids shopping in the Valles del Tuy barrio where she lives because the “law of the jungle” is what prevails there. “Those who push, shove and punch take everything and leave nothing for the rest of us.”

Among the few defenders of the government encountered in Thursday’s lines was Jose Delgado, a 42-year-old shopping center janitor, who blamed scarcities on hoarding wholesalers. Delgado is among the still considerable supporters of the late Hugo Chavez who said tougher times have not turned them against Maduro, Chavez’ successor.

“I am with my comandante,” Delgado said, referring to Maduro. “The people in these lines buy more than they need and so that’s why everything runs out so fast.”

In his televised speech before the National Assembly on Wednesday night, Maduro defended the socialist system, saying it “guarantees the just distribution of Venezuela’s wealth” and enables the country to confront the “assaults of economic warfare that reappeared in the second half of 2014.”



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Maduro has repeatedly blamed the United States for his country's economic woes, saying that the rise of U.S. shale oil production and its effects on world oil prices is a tactic designed to destabilize Venezuela.

Zulay Gutierrez, a 30-year-old hotel concierge, who was interviewed as she stood in line to buy disposable diapers at a drug store in the Candelaria section of eastern Caracas, said the blame lies closer to home.

"It's the government's fault," Gutierrez said. "There are scarcities in everything, especially in children's things, like milk, vitamins, shampoo and diapers. There is no soap to wash dishes or clothes. When there is chicken or meat to buy, you have to fight your way through the line to buy it."



CBC news

Sovereign wealth funds: What does it take to succeed?

Transparency, governance considered critical to saving resource income for future generations

By Janet Davison, Mar 23, 2015



Off-shore oil revenues and fiscal discipline gave Norway the chance to build the world's largest sovereign wealth fund. (Statoil/Associated Press)

Norway's sovereign wealth fund, the country's collective bank account now valued at \$1 trillion and built from off-shore oil reserves, is often held up as a prime example of how such funds can succeed.

The usual rule: make prudent investments, stick to them, be transparent and watch the money grow exponentially.

But Norway's Government Pension Fund, as it is formally called, is only one of an estimated 80 or so sovereign wealth funds worldwide that collectively hold \$7 trillion US.

These others probably also hold lessons for how governments can save wisely for future generations. Lessons that might apply to Alberta's Heritage Savings Trust Fund, which began in 1976 with the best of intentions, but seems to have stalled out at roughly \$17.2 billion.

But rating these sovereign wealth funds, it turns out, is a subjective affair.

"How do you define success?" asks Michael Maduell, president of the U.S.-based Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute, a research organization. "Is it investment returns? Is it their goals?"

By most measures, Norway's 25-year-old fund — easily the largest in the world and considered very well-run — comes out a top performer.

"For sure, it's the most successful," says Greg Poelzer, a University of Saskatchewan professor who has delved into the "global lessons from Norway" in a recent report published by the Macdonald-Laurier Institute.

One of the keys, he says, was Norway's decision to move all its oil revenues out of general revenues, a strategy that set the stage for greater economic stability.

"You don't have this overheating," says Poelzer. "You don't have a super-high inflation and you also avoid, especially with government budgets, the roller-coasters which we're seeing in Alberta right now."

Other measures

Beyond size, though, there are other measures of success for sovereign wealth funds, says Pat Schena, an adjunct professor of international business at the Fletcher School at Tufts University in Massachusetts.

"Another measure might be in the quality of the management of the fund," he says, pointing to funds in Australia and New Zealand, and to some degree, he says, AIMCo, which manages the Alberta fund.

“People view them ... very positively because of their transparency and good governance.”

Poelzer sees other successful funds closer to home, in places such as Alaska and North Dakota.

The \$52.8-billion Alaska Permanent Fund, he says, has “done very well.”

“One of the things they did commit to was putting 25 per cent of their oil reserves into the fund and that again has showed a lot of foresight.

“Right now where they’re going through economic difficulties, because of the downturn in the price of oil, they’re in better shape than they would have been otherwise.”

Happy residents

The investment strategy for the Alaska fund is more aggressive than Norway’s.

“They’ll invest in hedge funds, they’ll invest in private equity vehicles. They’ll even allow and buy large stakes in companies,” says Maduell.

But Alaskans seem happy with the results, he says. “Every year everyone there gets a dividend.”



After oil started booming from the Bakken Formation in North Dakota, state legislators established a sovereign wealth fund in 2010. (Matthew Staver/Bloomberg)

Poelzer also sees a good investment strategy in North Dakota, where oil started booming from the Bakken formation and state legislators set up the North Dakota Legacy Fund in 2010. It is now worth an estimated \$2.4 billion.

“What’s interesting from a Canadian perspective,” Poelzer says, is “we often like to think of ourselves as the more progressive, gentler, kinder, forward-thinking country, and in the middle of the western part of the United States, their legislators have had the foresight to put at least 30 per cent of their resource revenues into a permanent fund.”

Alberta, by contrast, didn’t stick with its original plan of setting aside 30 per cent of its non-renewable resource income when the fund was set up in 1976. By 1987, all that resource revenue went straight to general revenues and the fund has “stagnated” ever since, Poelzer notes in a report.

Poelzer also sees echoes of Norway in the North Dakota approach, as Norway, too, was a poor jurisdiction before its oil boom.

“You understand why it’s important to save for the future because bad times can return, and I think that’s the perspective North Dakota took as well,” he says.



... have gone through tough times ... so they know they have

... way’s, but some of them have their own strengths, which

Two sovereign wealth funds admired for their structure and fiscal discipline have been set up in Chile, a country heavily reliant on exports from copper mining. (Jorge Saenz/Associated Press)

In Chile, a country heavily reliant on copper exports, two mineral funds have been established. The admirable qualities there are the structure and fiscal discipline exercised around the funds.

“They had some withdrawals a few years ago, and then they were able to put that money back,” says Maduell.

That doesn’t always happen. Observers point to Ireland as an example of a country where the sovereign wealth fund moved off its original path.

The Irish National Pensions Reserve Fund had been “very well run,” says Schena.

But when two big Irish banks ran into trouble, the fund was used to bail them out. Not unlike Alberta, where the government’s own figures show that \$36.5 billion in investment income from the Heritage Fund has been transferred into general revenues in recent decades, to look after everything from health care and education to roads and social programs.

Two years ago, when oil prices were rocketing up, Alberta announced it would change tack and begin keeping the investment income in the fund, starting in 2016. Premier Jim Prentice is now saying that by 2019/20, 25 per cent of energy revenues will go to the fund. Over time, he says, that will rise to 50 per cent.

“I truly believe that one of the great mistakes we have made has been to let our commitment to the Heritage Fund lapse, and that is something I will change,” he told Albertans in a televised address this week.

The Irish case is “an example of a fund where...it was used to save the country, but that wiped out the wealth fund pretty much,” says Schena.

However sovereign wealth funds grow, they seem poised to be a bigger global investment player.

“They’re becoming an investor class that’s being taken seriously,” says Maduell.

“It’s another large investor class that’s going to be on par competing ... with the big players doing deals.”



Norway's sovereign wealth holds lessons for Canada

Established in 1990, Norway's heritage fund is now worth \$1 trillion

By Susan Ormiston, Mar 20, 2015

In Stavanger, a quaint, seaside city on Norway's coast, a local newspaper publishes a series called "The Oil Kids" that reports on the lifestyles of wealthy second-generation beneficiaries of Norway's offshore oil riches.

"If you compare to our parents or grandparents which built this country, I think we're a little bit spoiled," admits Bjorn Knudsen, whose father worked for a large North Sea oil company.

Fifty years ago, Stavanger's biggest industry was canning herring. Now, this city is the country's de facto oil capital.

"We are extremely lucky," says Bjorn's wife, Kristin Alne, a production engineer for Det Norske Olie-selskap, an offshore oil company. "There are only five million of us [in Norway], and someone several decades ago was really smart to deal with the income from the oil industry to generate the welfare of this country as a whole."

'Someone several decades ago was really smart to deal with the income from the oil industry to generate the welfare of this country as a whole.' - Kristin Alne, Norwegian engineer

They are lucky and Norway was smart. So smart that decisions made decades ago to bank the taxes from rich oil fields are now paying for their future at a time when oil-rich Alberta faces a multibillion-dollar deficit.

In the middle of Stavanger, a hulking oil museum charts oil's legacy and how it turned Norway from poor to prosperous. A real-time ticker counts up the Krone in the oil fund.

Norway today sits on top of a \$1-trillion Cdn pension fund established in 1990 to invest the returns of oil and gas. The capital has been invested in over 9,000 companies worldwide, including over 200 in Canada. It is now the largest sovereign wealth fund in the world.

By contrast, Alberta's Heritage Savings Fund, established in 1976 by premier Peter Lougheed, sits at only \$17 billion Cdn and has been raided by governments and starved of contributions for years.

"For the last 10 years, when nothing went into the Alberta fund, and we put a lot of money aside, the profit went out of Canada," says Rolf Wiborg, a petroleum engineer who recently retired from Norway's public service.

Norway's ethos

Kristin Alne, an engineer with the oil company Det Norske Oljeselskap, admits that Norwegians have been 'extremely lucky' to reap the rewards of their oil resources. (Kristin Alne)

Wiborg, who studied at the University of Alberta and worked for a Norwegian oil company before joining Norway's Petroleum Directorate, says the key to success has been Norway's ethos of sharing and a commitment to never waver from that goal.

"We don't change our policies in Norway, with changes in the oil price – you can't do that," he says. "Lougheed's government in Alberta knew that, they made policies and then they left them behind."

Oil and gas make up 25 per cent of Norway's GDP, so the recent plunge in oil prices should have set off alarm bells in Oslo. Thousands of workers have indeed been laid off, but parliament is not painting a dire forecast for 2015.



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“We all agree we’re not facing a crisis,” says Siv Jensen, Norway’s finance minister.

Twenty-five years ago, when Norway set up its oil fund, it demanded high taxes from oil companies – 78 per cent after profits and the costs of research and exploration. One hundred per cent of those taxes were banked.

The government is allowed to tap into the fund, but only up to four per cent. That leaves the principal untouched.

“We have low unemployment, we have growth, we have a huge surplus – that’s a very robust start in the face of declining oil prices”, she says confidently.

The Canadian story

Norway did well by those rules. In contrast, Alberta and Saskatchewan – both endowed with oil and other mineral resources – took different routes with vastly different results.

Alberta and Saskatchewan both set up heritage funds (in 1976 and 1978, respectively), but Alberta, for example, only put in 30 per cent of royalties. The funds were consistently raided by governments of the day, and in Alberta, contributions petered out altogether by 1987. The Saskatchewan fund was terminated in 1992.

Once a city built on herring canning industry, Stavanger has more recently become Norway’s de facto oil capital. (Corinne Seminoff CBC News)

Those two provinces reveal important failures in the Canadian experience, says Greg Poelzer, a professor at the University of Saskatchewan and author of a recent paper on lessons from Norway.

“First, the failure to contribute annually means the fund will not grow and one-time earnings from non-renewable resources are lost forever,” he says.



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“Second, governments should only use the interest, otherwise governments will overspend, putting programs at risk when the prices fall, as they always do.”

Norway is not immune to oil’s fluctuations. Statoil, a Norwegian company that is 67 per cent owned by Norwegians (another fiscally wise decision, according to Rolf Wiborg), has shed eight per cent of its workforce, with more to come.

“This is the lean approach, fundamentally,” says Statoil CEO Eldar Saetre, explaining that the big oil companies have to bring down the costs of production, and automate more of it.

Saetre says the industry is in a phase of permanent reduction and downsizing. “This is not about taking down activity and then thinking it will come back,” he says.

Diminishing resources

Norway’s conventional oil reserves – like those in most of the world – are diminishing. Bente Nyland, head of Norway’s Petroleum Directorate, says development will continue on a large, promising new find, Johan Sverdrup, but many of the North Sea fields are maturing.

“The main impact we see is that exploration is put on hold,” she says. All the more reason to be vigilant about what comes out of existing fields. “Our goal is to ensure the benefit from the oil activity goes into the Norwegian pension fund.”

Like petro-economies around the world, Norway is facing a future where oil is not the golden goose it once was.

Geologist Farouk al Kasim helped mastermind Norway’s management of its oil reserves. For that, he was knighted by the Norwegian king in 2012. (Corinne Seminoff CBC News)



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“We are facing a turning point where oil and gas will no longer be the engine of growth,” warns Finance Minister Jensen. “We need to make sure that we are able to transform our economy towards broader markets.”

But for now, the country’s smart planning is a significant hedge against an uncertain future, says Farouk al Kasim, an Iraqi geologist who emigrated to Norway in 1968.

The Norwegians asked the former senior executive with Iraq’s Petroleum Company to evaluate some early seismic data. Convinced Norway would soon become a major oil player, Al Kasim helped design the management of the resource.

‘It is nice to have the fund behind us, because without it we would have been a very worried nation.’ - Farouk al Kasim, geologist

“They were very determined that the major share of the profit would have to be to the citizens of the country, and that’s how it is today,” says al Kasim, who was knighted in 2012 by the Norwegian king for his expertise managing Norway’s resource.

But what about today, with the price of oil half of what it was six months ago?

“It is nice to have the fund behind us, because without it, we would have been a very worried nation.”



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HUFF
POST POLITICS

The Norwegian Government Pension Fund -- A Success Story

Mona Elisabeth Brother, 01/19/2015



The history of the oil and gas industry in Norway is a saga of bold political decisions, rapid world-class industrial development, and investing oil income for future generations. We Norwegians might be boring -- but with that comes a love for saving and long-term thinking.

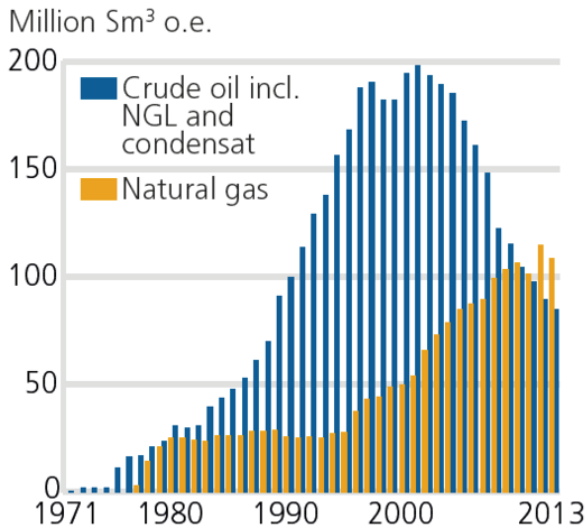
Norway is Europe's largest oil producer, the world's third-largest natural gas exporter after Qatar and Russia, and an important supplier of both oil and natural gas to other European countries.



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Production of oil and natural gas



source: Statistics Norway 2014

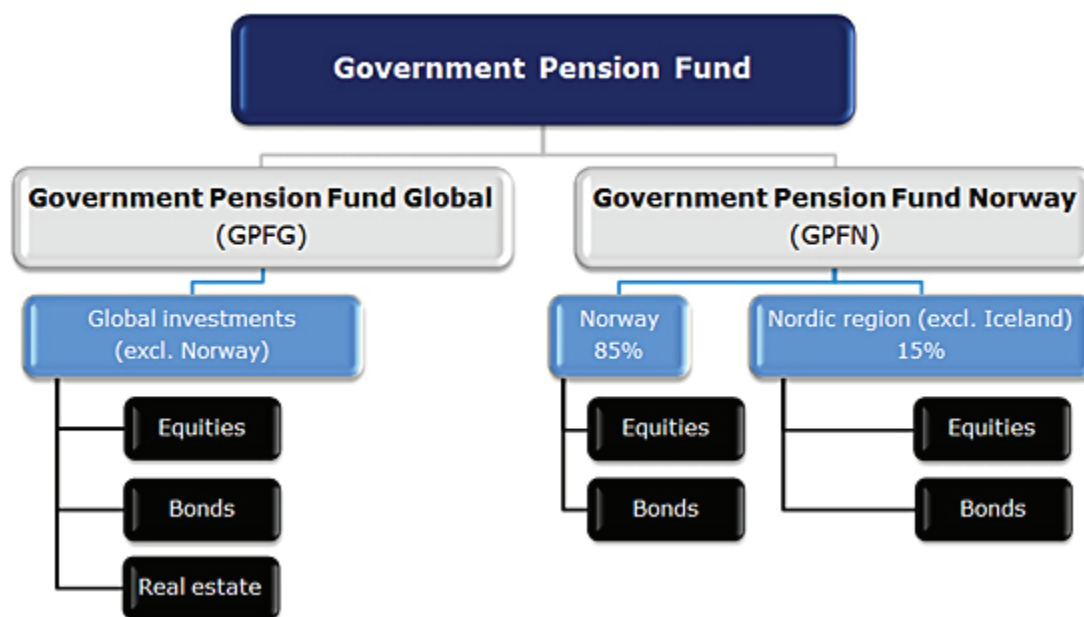
According to the Oil & Gas Journal (OGJ), Norway had 5.83 billion barrels of proven crude oil reserves as of January 1, 2014, the largest oil reserves in Western Europe. The enormous income to the state from the industry made it possible to create a global pension fund that now owns more than one per cent of global share value.

During the last generation, Norway's economy has been based on large revenues from oil and gas exports, deriving from the early exploration in the 1960s and 70s. The production in the Norwegian sector of the North Sea, and later moving northwards towards the Barents Sea, gave grounds for a surplus in the national economy. The Norwegian parliament, Stortinget, concluded that the surplus was not to be used in the national economy.

Stortinget established the Government Pension Fund in 1990. The political consensus has only broadened over time amongst all political parties. The reason for the creation of the fund was to counter the effects of the possible forthcoming decline in income, and to smooth out the disruptive effects of highly fluctuating oil prizes. The purpose of the fund is to invest parts of the large surplus generated by the Norwegian petroleum sector in different investment choices abroad. The main part of the surplus is comprised of taxes collected from companies, but also payments for licenses to explore and the State's direct financial interest contributes to the fund.

Investments for Norwegians in the future: Long-term, spread of risk, full transparency.

The fund has a long-term perspective, and its primary objective is security for Norwegians in the future. In 2006, the Fund got its current name: “the Government Pension Fund Global (GPFG)”. This was part of a broader pension reform, highlighting also the Fund’s role in supporting government savings necessary to meet the rapid rise in public pension expenditures in coming years. A sound long-term management of the Fund contributes to intergenerational equity, by allowing both current and future generations to benefit from the petroleum revenues. However, the Fund is not earmarked for pension expenditures. 100 percent of the government’s petroleum revenues goes directly into the GPFG.



source: Norwegian Ministry of Finance 2014

The government has set a limit on annual withdrawals from the fund of 4 per cent of the fund’s assets, regardless of whether the fund actually earned more or less than that in a given year. The average tax percentage for the companies in question is 78 per cent of the surplus.

Managing the Fund: Challenges and Opportunities

The numerous challenges in managing the fund have been resolved in different ways. First ,investments are long-term. Good financial return over time hinges on sustainable development in economic, environmental and social terms. It also hinges on well-functioning, efficient and legitimate financial markets.

Second, the strategy is to purchase relatively small blocks of shares in many companies; on average, the GPFG owns 2 per cent of a company's shares and never more than 10 per cent. This is a policy in order to both spread the risk and to avoid creating a perception of Norway as a threatening investor. The capital of the GPFG is in its entirety invested abroad in foreign currency. The fund holds 60 per cent of its assets in equities, 35 per cent to 40 per cent in fixed income and as much as 5 per cent in real estate abroad.

The management of petroleum revenues in general and the GPFG in particular is characterised by a high degree of transparency and disclosure of information. This helps build public support for a sound management of petroleum revenues, and reduces the risk of poor governance. Transparency is also important in order to gain trust from the global community. Internationally, it can often be a perception that funds managed by states think in political terms when constructing an investment strategy. Norway has by being open and transparent managed to create trust from the global market.

The size of the GPFG and setting a golden standard in ethics

In 2014, the GPFG passed the 6000 billion NOK milestone. The GPFG market value has grown substantially the last year, from 5,038 billion NOK at end of 2013 to more than 6,000 billion NOK today. The market value equals about 1000 billion Canadian dollars.

An important political guideline is the agreed budgetary rule that states that no more than 4 per cent of the capital value should be spent each year for national purposes. The total value will under this conservative management rule reach 7140 billion NOK by January 2019.

As one of the biggest national investments funds in the world, the GPFG has the potential to make a huge impact on corporate governance markets such as Europe, and China. With huge impact comes huge responsibility, and Norway has acknowledged this responsibility by establishing an ethical council and creating ethical guidelines for the Fund. Stortinget established these guidelines in 2004, and they receive broad political support. The fund cannot invest money in companies that directly or indirectly contribute to killing, torture, deprivation of freedom, or other violations of human rights in conflict situations or war.

Contrary to belief, the Fund can make investments in a number of arms-producing companies. However, there are restrictions and the Fund cannot invest in weapons such as nuclear arms. Child labour, forced labour, gross environmental degradation and corruption would mean exclusion from the fund's portfolio.

Internationally this way of managing a financial fund has raised questions. Should the Fund make such decisions at all? In Norway, the perception is different and the debate often includes the question whether or not to exclude more companies. The Ministry of Finance decides on whether companies are to be excluded from the investment universe, based on recommendations from the Council on Ethics. The guidelines contain the exclusion mechanism for companies that produce specific products or that are responsible for or contribute to grossly unethical behaviour. Walmart was, for example, screened out some years back based on its violations of employment and human rights. In 2010, 17 tobacco companies were banned from the Fund's portfolio.

The fund will make its investments in international equity and fixed-income markets and real estate worldwide. Risk diversification and sound financial return shall still shelter the domestic non-oil economy from unsound fluctuations in inter alia oil prices. In Canada, the GPFG has made investments in close to 300 companies with approximately 11 billion Canadian dollars.

Looking Ahead: environmental responsibility

Early this December the Minister of Finance of Norway, Siv Jensen from the Progress Party, received recommendations from an expert panel on how the government should address the issue of climate gas emissions from coal and petroleum companies and the investments in such companies. The panel believe that active ownership and engagement are appropriate tools for the Fund to use to address climate-related issues. They recommend ways of enhancing the Fund's efforts in this area, and propose that the Fund continues to support relevant climate change research. They also propose a mechanism, which excludes the worst cases of climate offenders from the Fund on a case-by-case basis.

The Fund will continue to be a well-diversified, global financial investor and not a policy tool for the government, says Finance Minister Siv Jensen.



community choices unit three

U3L4A6 | News broadcast or radio show | Article 6

Proud of its savings for the future.

The Norwegian people, across party lines, are generally proud of the Fund. Even when Norway voted in a new government last year, the rules for the fund stayed intact. Discussion around the fund is a daily exercise wherein Norwegians engage easily. Should more petroleum revenues be spent in Norway, and in that case, would really inflation grow? Is the fund financially safe, given the abrupt and unforeseen changes we have seen in the international stock markets during the last years? What ethical, if any, guidelines should be in place? In addition, can we still invest in non-renewable energy, like coal? As we engage in the discussions around the fund, it is clear that Norway's Government Pension Fund is *more* than a national instrument for savings - it represents a nation-wide philosophy to safeguard and build financial wealth for future generations.

As oil prices are deeply plunging, the effect on Norwegian economy is not as devastating as in other oil economies. Still, income from the oil companies, designated to furnish the Pension Fund in 2015, could easily not reach 4 per cent. This could, in the long run, diminish the government's possibility to spend up to 4 per cent of its value in the state's yearly budget.

a common threads resource 

the sustainable society

Sustainability and inflation


Why do prices rise?
How do rising prices affect sustainability?



the sustainable society

What is inflation?

A sustained general rise in prices.

a common threads resource 

the sustainable society

Guesstimate:

How much did prices rise over just four years?

	Nov. 2010	Nov. 2014
Toothpaste (100ml)	\$1.95	?
Peanut butter (500g)	\$2.97	?
Apples (1 kg)	\$3.07	?
Bread (675g)	\$2.60	?
Eggs (dozen)	\$2.64	?
Chicken (1 kg)	\$6.53	?
Toilet Paper (4 rolls)	\$2.33	?
Milk (1 L)	\$2.14	?

Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM, table 326-0012


a common threads resource 

the sustainable society

More or less than you thought?

	Nov. 2010	Nov. 2014
Toothpaste (100ml)	\$1.95	\$2.45
Peanut butter (500g)	\$2.97	\$3.48
Apples (1 kg)	\$3.07	\$3.74
Bread (675g)	\$2.60	\$2.86
Eggs (dozen)	\$2.64	\$3.22
Chicken (1 kg)	\$6.53	\$7.30
Toilet Paper (4 rolls)	\$2.33	\$2.61
Milk (1 L)	\$2.14	\$2.34

Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM, table 326-0012


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How do we know prices are changing?

The CPI (consumer price index) tracks changes in retail prices over time.

- Statistics Canada surveys citizens to find out which goods/services they regularly purchase.
- Approx. 600 of these regularly purchased items are put in a 'basket of goods'.
- Each month Statistics Canada checks prices of the items in the basket of goods and updates the CPI.

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the sustainable society

Nobody likes paying higher prices, but are rising prices always a bad thing?

No. A certain level of inflation is considered economically healthy – a natural result of economic growth.

The Bank of Canada's target inflation rate is approximately 2%.

If Canada's inflation rate is much higher or lower than 2% the Bank of Canada will intervene.

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Why do prices rise?

There are two causes of inflation:

1. Demand-Pull Inflation
2. Cost-Push Inflation

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Demand-Pull Inflation

Aggregate Demand > Aggregate Supply

*Aggregate demand = total demand for all goods and services produced in the economy.

*Aggregate supply = total supply of all goods and services produced in the economy.

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Demand-pull inflation occurs when there is too much money in the economy and not enough goods/services, “too many dollars chasing too few goods”.

Increased money supply could be a result of: increased employment levels, low tax rates, low interest rates, increased exports, etc...

a common threads resource 

Empty shelves in a Venezuelan store



Source: Forbes, CPE (2015)


a common threads resource 

Cost-Push inflation

Results from the passing down of increased production costs from producer to consumer.

Increased production costs could include: Higher wages for workers, increased cost of raw materials, increased taxes etc...

When production costs rise, producers will increase the retail price paid by consumers to maintain their profits.

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Hellesøy General Store, Norway




Source: www.visitnorway.com

a common threads resource 

the sustainable society

Item	Canada	Norway
Coke/Pepsi (0.33L)	\$1.92	\$4.29
Water (0.33L)	\$1.68	\$3.79
12 Eggs	\$3.28	\$5.07
Chicken breast (1kg)	\$12.64	\$17.38
Tomatoes (1kg)	\$3.51	\$4.40
McDonalds combo meal	\$8.50	\$15.50
Movie (in theatre)	\$12.00	\$17.05
1 month rent (city, 1 bdrm)	\$1,018	\$1,493
1 month salary (after tax)	\$2,987	\$4,019

Source: numbeo.com (2015)


a common threads resource 

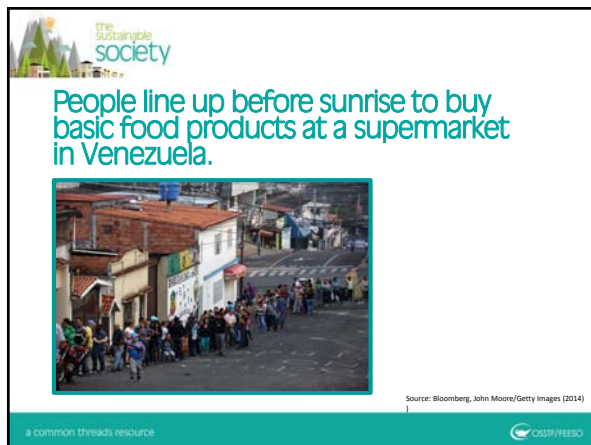
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Inflation psychology

People's expectations of future inflation that leads them to seek larger wage increases and to make purchases of some big-ticket items quickly, before prices rise further.

When many people behave in this way, they actually make inflation more severe.

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Think/pair/share

In your own words, explain the two types of inflation to your seat partner (take turns).

1. Demand-pull inflation
2. Cost-push inflation

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How can governments control inflation?

A country's government and its central bank have tools they can use to influence the inflation rate.

1. Monetary Policy Tools
2. Fiscal Policy Tools


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the sustainable society

Monetary policy

Tight monetary policy
If prices are rising too quickly, the central bank can increase the interest rate.

Easy monetary policy
If prices are falling too quickly, the central bank can decrease the interest rate.


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The inflation rate rises when there is a lot of money in circulation—a large money supply (a lot of borrowing and spending by consumers and businesses).

Increasing the interest rate discourages borrowing and spending because interest is the cost of borrowing. Consumers and businesses do not like high interest rates because it means they have to pay back more money.


*Vice versa for lowered interest rates.


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High interest rates decrease aggregate demand and therefore decrease the inflation rate.


Low interest rates increase aggregate demand and therefore increase the inflation rate.

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Think/pair/share

Why is the relationship between the interest rate and the inflation rate described as inverse (when one goes up, the other goes down)?

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Fiscal policy

Contractionary fiscal policy
If prices are rising too quickly, the government can decrease spending and increase taxation.

Expansionary fiscal policy
If prices are falling too quickly, the government can increase spending and decrease taxation.


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If the government decreases spending there will be budget cuts and fewer projects initiated (resulting in job loss and decreased business profits), as well as a decrease in transfer payments (i.e. reduced welfare rates).

Increased unemployment, lowered business profits, and smaller transfer payments, decrease aggregate demand because they result in less spending by consumers and businesses. Decreased aggregate demand lowers the inflation rate.

*Vice versa for expansionary fiscal policy.

a common threads resource 



Think/pair/share

Why would a contractionary policy decrease the inflation rate and expansionary policy increase it?

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Why should YOU care?

Why is it important that prices remain stable?

How does price stability impact the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of a country?



community choices unit three

ask

What is a sustainable food system?

acquire

- chart paper and markers OR laptops for students to collaborate using Google docs
- student & teacher handouts
- PowerPoint presentation
- videos
- articles

explore

- interactive PowerPoint presentation on sustainable food systems

analyze

- complete the PowerPoint Worksheet on Sustainable Food Systems
- worksheet on 5 Ws and how

act

- create a sustainable food systems awareness campaign on one particular aspect of the food system



community choices

unit three

U3L5 | Sustainable food systems

This lesson builds on the concepts in sustainable food choice (Unit 2: Individual Choices). It begins with a series of slides by Peter Menzel and Faith D'Alusio called the *Hungry Planet: What the World Eats*. The slides show what different families around the world eat and the cost of feeding their family for a week. The images will allow students to compare and contrast diets, costs, and cultures. Continuing with the PowerPoint, students will become aware of the many facets that are important in the making of a sustainable food system. Students can fill in the PowerPoint worksheet that follows the presentation. The wrap up activity for this unit is for the student to explore one aspect of sustainable food production and complete the five elements of who, what, where, when, why and how in regards to one topic. From this worksheet the group presents some type of awareness campaign such as posters, billboards, announcements, newspaper articles etc.

subjects: Geography, Civics, Environmental Science, Economics, Food and Nutrition, Green Industries
Technology, Travel and Tourism, Hospitality

timing: **Activity 1**

What the world eats | **75 minutes**

Activity 2

Student PowerPoint worksheets on sustainable food system

- Topic 1: Food Sustainability is defined and broken down | **10 minutes**
- Topic 2: Carbon footprint of food | **30 minutes**
- Topic 3: Food miles and food calculator | **30 minutes**
- Topic 4: Genetic diversity | **40 minutes**
- Topic 5: Food security and comparison of Canada and Venezuela | **30 minutes**
- Topic 6: Food wastage | **20 minutes**
- Topic 7: Organic methods of food production | **20 minutes**
- Topic 8: Environmental factors | **20 minutes**
- Topic 9: Ethical factors | **20 minutes**
- Topic 10: Food security in a climatic perspective in Norway | **20 minutes**
- Topic 11: Venezuela's national policy on food sovereignty | **20 minutes**
- Topic 12: Canadian food policy | **30 minutes**

Activity 3

Consolidation of Sustainable Food Production

5Ws and H and production of awareness campaign | **75 minutes**

Activity 4

Sustainable food systems awareness campaign | **150 minutes**

learning goals

- Participation in discussion about the quantity, types and costs of food around the world.
- To explore the various parts involved with a sustainable food system.
- To be able to identify some examples of grassroots movements.
- To research in depth, one factor in creating a sustainable food system.
- To create an awareness campaign on one aspect of a sustainable food system.

success criteria

- Participation in discussion about the quantity, types and costs of food around the world.
- Completion of the worksheets that connects to sustainable food systems PowerPoint.
- Completion of the 5 Ws and H worksheet on one aspect of a sustainable food system.
- Creation of an awareness campaign on one aspect of a sustainable food system.



community choices

unit three

U3L5 | Sustainable Food Systems

ask

Inquiry questions

- What do you notice about how much other countries eat and how much they pay for their food?
- What are the various components making up a sustainable food system?
- Who, what, where, when, why and how does one specific factor (such as food miles) make up a sustainable food system?
- How do you make our food system, sustainable?

acquire

Activity 1

Sustainable food systems PowerPoint U3L5P1

Hungry Planet: What the World Eats in One Week By Peter Menzel and Faith D'Alusio Time.com—
time.com/8515/hungry-planet-what-the-world-eats

Activity 2

Sustainable food systems PowerPoint U3L5P1

Sustainable food systems worksheet U3L5P2 (4 pages)

Internet access

Activity 3

Worksheet The 5 Ws and H U3L5A

Internet sites and articles:

- Bain, Jennifer. (2011, Jan. 14). "Food waste: An unappetizing, \$27B problem." Thestar.com Retrieved from www.thestar.com/life/food_wine/2011/01/14/food_waste_an_unappetizing_27b_problem.html
- Carus, Felicity. (2010, June 2). UN urges global move to meat and dairy-free diet. The Guardian. Retrieved from www.theguardian.com/environment/2010/jun/02/un-report-meat-free-diet
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- Morgan, Jeremy (2009, June 22) "Low-Cost Subsidized Venezuela State Food Markets Under Spotlight over Price Rises." Latin American Herald Tribune: Caracas, Venezuela. Retrieved from laht.com/article.asp?CategoryId=10717&ArticleId=344198
- Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2013, January) "Food Security in a Climate Perspective: A strategy developed in cooperation with Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs, Ministry of the Environment." - English Summary. Retrieved from www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/summary/id727012
- Schiavoni, Christina. (2015, March 10) "The Venezuelan Food Sovereignty Experiment" Solutions. Vol 6, No. 5. pp. 46-52 – Retrieved From www.thesolutionsjournal.com/node/237281

Activity 4

Computers, paper, poster making supplies



community choices

unit three

U3L5 | Sustainable food systems

explore

Activity 1 | What the world eats

In this activity the PowerPoint created by Peter Menzel and Faith D'Alusio from Time.com. This PowerPoint looks at what a typical family eats in a week and the cost of the food per week in American funds.

Activity 2 | Sustainable food systems

What is a sustainable food system? In order to answer this question, an awareness of the various aspects of sustainable food system is helpful. The four page worksheet that accompanies the PowerPoint will assist as you work through the slides. The answer for Canadian Food Policy by Diana Bronson Coming Up with a Canadian Food Policy is at the end of this lesson plan.

analyze

Activity 3 | 5Ws and How

Provide time and access to computers to explore one aspect of sustainable food system. The goal is to research one aspect using the worksheet 5Ws and How. This worksheet can be found in the student worksheet on sustainable food systems. Print off articles that relate to Sustainable Food System to assist groups. Access to the Internet will help students go beyond the PowerPoint presentation.

Be sure to share with the rest of the class on what you have discovered on each aspect of a sustainable food system. This may be done through presentations, small group discussions or through Google docs.

act

Activity 4 | Awareness campaign

Ask the students to create an awareness campaign on one of the issues in sustainable food system. An awareness campaign could include posters, billboards, newspaper articles, Ad jingle, radio announcement etc.

Possible extension videos:

- Locally Abundant: Eating Sustainable is a documentary that was created by Jay and George as they travelled across Canada exploring sustainable food. The video is 1:14:13 minutes in length. A voluntary donation is welcomed. www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7-JpVCLnZk
- Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret is a documentary on animal agriculture and its impact on the environment. The video is 1:30:00 minutes long. Warning there is a scene where an animal is killed and cleaned in preparation for eating. www.cowspiracy.com/
- Growing Change: A Journey Inside Venezuela's Food Revolution. May be purchased by Green Planet Films. Directed by Simon Cunich in 2011. The video is 60 minutes long. www.greenplanetfilms.org/product/growing-change-a-journey-inside-venezuelas-food-revolution/



community choices unit three

U3L5 | Sustainable food systems

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Diana Bronson| TEDxConcordia (2012). "Coming Up with a Canadian Food Policy "Canadian Food Policy. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmSpD862bgw

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2014, Sept. 9). "Food Wastage Footprint 2. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=Md3ddmtja6s

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community choices unit three

U3L5 | Sustainable Food Systems

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USC Canada How we Grow our Food Matters. (2014, June 29.) Banking Diversity. USC Canada Videos: Ottawa. Retrieved from usc-canada.org/resources/videos

websites

Amcglasson. National 5/4 Hospitality – Food Sustainability. (2015. Oct 15.) www.tes.com/us/teacher-lessons/national-5-4-hospitality-food-sustainability-7513897

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The Economist Group. (2015)"Global Food Security Index". The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited: foodsecurityindex.eiu.com/Country

Foodmiles.com (2013) "The Food Miles Calculator": www.foodmiles.com



community choices

unit three

U3L5 | Sustainable food systems

U3L5A2 | Canadian food policy by Diana Bronson | TEACHER ANSWER KEY Coming up with a Canadian food policy

overview

In this activity, you will watch the video *Coming Up with a Canadian Food Policy* and complete the worksheet.

learning goal

- To become aware of the Canadian position in regards to food policy from the viewpoint of Diana Bronson.

success criteria

- Completion of the handout.

Inquiry question

- Do you think that Canada should have a national food policy? Why or why not?

What are the three criteria for changing the Canada's food system for the well being of the planet?

- Be healthier
- Be fairer
- Be more sustainable

1. On the planet

- a There are more over feed people than under feed people.**
- b** There are less over feed people than under feed people.
- c** There is the same over feed people as under feed people.
- d** The number of over feed people is the same as under feed people.

2. The UN defines food security: when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food, to maintain an active and healthy life.

a What is one location in Canada with high food insecurity?

Nunavut

b What is one reason that this location has high food insecurity?

Distance food must travel



community choices

unit three

U3L5 | Sustainable Food Systems

U3L5A2 | Canadian food policy by Diana Bronson | TEACHER ANSWER KEY Coming up with a Canadian food policy

Fill in some of the changes in how we grow, process, transport, store, sell and eat our food?

1. The number of farms has **declined** and there is an **increase** in the size of the farm.
2. The number of stores has **declined** and there is an **increase** in the surface area.
3. 4 or 5 retailers sell **85%** of our food.
4. 96% of our meat supply is controlled by **four** companies.
5. 75% of the world seed supply is controlled by **10** companies.
6. There is an exploding growth of **local, organic** and **sustainable** food.
7. Roughly **half** of our greenhouse gas emissions are connected to our food system.
8. Canada wastes more than **27 billion dollars** each year. 1/3 of all food is wasted.
9. Canada does not have a **food** policy.

Fill in some of the changes in how we grow, process, transport, store, sell and eat our food?

What are six things you can do:

- think about where your food comes from, grow some yourself
- get to know a farmer
- don't only shop at big stores
- cook and eat good meals with other people
- eat less, mostly vegetables, less sugar, fat and salt
- get engaged in the discussion



community choices

unit three

U3L5A1 | What the world eats

overview

In this activity, you will explore the PowerPoint by Peter Menzel and Faith D'Alusio called the *Hungry Planet: What the World Eats*. The slides show what different families around the world eat and the cost of feeding their family for a week. The images will allow you to compare and contrast diets, costs, and cultures.

learning goal

- Participation in discussion about the quantity, types and costs of food around the world.

success criteria

- Participation in discussion about the quantity, types and costs of food around the world.

Inquiry question

- What do you notice about how much other countries eat and how much they pay for their food?

Step 1

Using the Sustainable Food Systems PowerPoint U3L5P1 in slide one there is a link to this website: Hungry Planet: What the World Eats in One Week By Peter Menzel and Faith D'Alusio Time.com—
time.com/8515/hungry-planet-what-the-world-eats/

Take your time to show the class the various countries and what a typical family eats in one week. Notice the number of people in each family. Compare the various costs of feeding a family around the globe. Notice the different types of foods and what the favourite foods are. Consider how different countries compare to Canada in the types of foods and costs of food. Why is it important to look at other countries in regards to what they eat and the cost of the food?

What do you notice about how much other countries eat and how much they pay for their food?



community choices

unit three

U3L5A2 | Sustainable food system

overview

In this activity, you will explore the many facets that make up a sustainable food system. As you proceed through the topics there is a student worksheet to complete.

learning goal

- To explore the various parts up a sustainable food system.

success criteria

- Completion of the worksheets that connects to sustainable food systems PowerPoint.

Inquiry Question

- What are the various components making up a sustainable food system?

To become aware of what makes up a sustainable food system, obtain the PowerPoint U3L5P1 on Sustainable Food System. This PowerPoint goes through a number of topics on food systems such as Carbon Footprint, Food Miles, Genetic Diversity, Food Security, Food Wastage, Organic Methods of Food Production, Environmental Factors, Ethical Factors, Food Security, and Food Policy. To assist you in exploring all these topics there are worksheets to accompany the PowerPoint U3L5P2.



community choices unit three

U3L5A3 | 5 Ws and How

overview

In this activity you will research in greater depth one aspect of a sustainable food system. By completing the worksheet 5Ws and How you will look beyond the PowerPoint on a specific topic. Using the PowerPoint U3L5P1 as a starting point and the reference provided to assist you as you fill in the worksheet.

learning goal

- To research in depth, one factor in creating a sustainable food system.

success criteria

- Completion of the 5 Ws and H worksheet on one aspect of a sustainable food system.

Inquiry Question

- Who, what, where, when, why and how does one specific factor (such as food miles) make up a sustainable food system?

Provide time and access to computers to explore one aspect of sustainable food system. The goal is to research one aspect using the worksheet 5Ws and How. This worksheet can be found in the PowerPoint U3L5P2 student worksheet on sustainable food systems. Print off articles that relate to the sustainable food system to assist groups. Access to the Internet will help students go beyond the PowerPoint presentation. Be sure to share with the rest of the class on what you have discovered on each aspect of a sustainable food system. This may be done through presentations, small group discussions or through Google docs.

UN urges global move to meat and dairy-free diet

Lesser consumption of animal products is necessary to save the world from the worst impacts of climate change, UN report says

Felicity Carus

Wednesday 2 June 2010 18.09 BST

A global shift towards a vegan diet is vital to save the world from hunger, fuel poverty and the worst impacts of climate change, a UN report said today.

As the global population surges towards a predicted 9.1 billion people by 2050, western tastes for diets rich in meat and dairy products are unsustainable, says the report from United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) international panel of sustainable resource management.

It says: "Impacts from agriculture are expected to increase substantially due to population growth increasing consumption of animal products. Unlike fossil fuels, it is difficult to look for alternatives: people have to eat. A substantial reduction of impacts would only be possible with a substantial worldwide diet change, away from animal products."

Professor Edgar Hertwich, the lead author of the report, said: "Animal products cause more damage than [producing] construction minerals such as sand or cement, plastics or metals. Biomass and crops for animals are as damaging as [burning] fossil fuels."

The recommendation follows advice last year that a vegetarian diet was better for the planet from Lord Nicholas Stern, former adviser to the Labour government on the economics of climate change. Dr Rajendra Pachauri, chair of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), has also urged people to observe one meat-free day a week to curb carbon emissions.

The panel of experts ranked products, resources, economic activities and transport according to their environmental impacts. Agriculture was on a par with fossil fuel consumption because both rise rapidly with increased economic growth, they said.

Ernst von Weizsaecker, an environmental scientist who co-chaired the panel, said: "Rising affluence is triggering a shift in diets towards meat and dairy products - livestock

U3L5A3 | 5 Ws and How | Article 1

now consumes much of the world's crops and by inference a great deal of freshwater, fertilisers and pesticides."

Both energy and agriculture need to be "decoupled" from economic growth because environmental impacts rise roughly 80% with a doubling of income, the report found.

Achim Steiner, the UN under-secretary general and executive director of the UNEP, said: "Decoupling growth from environmental degradation is the number one challenge facing governments in a world of rising numbers of people, rising incomes, rising consumption demands and the persistent challenge of poverty alleviation."

The panel, which drew on numerous studies including the Millennium ecosystem assessment, cites the following pressures on the environment as priorities for governments around the world: climate change, habitat change, wasteful use of nitrogen and phosphorus in fertilisers, over-exploitation of fisheries, forests and other resources, invasive species, unsafe drinking water and sanitation, lead exposure, urban air pollution and occupational exposure to particulate matter.

Agriculture, particularly meat and dairy products, accounts for 70% of global freshwater consumption, 38% of the total land use and 19% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, says the report, which has been launched to coincide with UN World Environment day on Saturday.

Last year the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation said that food production would have to increase globally by 70% by 2050 to feed the world's surging population. The panel says that efficiency gains in agriculture will be overwhelmed by the expected population growth.

Prof Hertwich, who is also the director of the industrial ecology programme at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, said that developing countries - where much of this population growth will take place - must not follow the western world's pattern of increasing consumption: "Developing countries should not follow our model. But it's up to us to develop the technologies in, say, renewable energy or irrigation methods."



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ABOUT FOOD BANKS CANADA

Food Banks Canada supports a unique network of over 3,000 food-related organizations in every province and territory, assisting more than 800,000 Canadians each month. Together our network shares over 200 million pounds of essential, safe, quality food annually, provides social programs that help to foster self-sufficiency, and advocates for policy change that will help create a Canada where no one goes hungry. Visit foodbankscanada.ca for more information.

RELIEVING HUNGER TODAY. PREVENTING HUNGER TOMORROW.

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To obtain more information from the *HungerCount* survey, including multi-year tables and data not included in this report, please visit www.foodbankscanada.ca/HungerCount.



841,191 CANADIANS turn to food banks every month

In a country as wealthy as Canada, close to a million people need food banks just to make ends meet each month. Why have we not seen any significant change to this situation after so many years, and after so much has been written about hunger? *HungerCount 2014* uncovers the hard data on food bank use, tells the story behind the numbers, and digs deep to explore the root causes of hunger in our country. It then provides our recommendations to bring about real and lasting change.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2014, 841,191 people received food from a food bank in Canada. Food bank use increased by 1% compared to the same period in 2013. It is dismaying that the number of people utilizing this service remains 25% higher than in 2008. This means that each and every month, 170,000 more people walk through the door of a food bank than was the case before the economic downturn.

WHO IS BEING HELPED?

Food banks come to the aid of a wide segment of the population, including:

Children and families. More than one-third of those helped by food banks are children. Nearly half of households helped are families with children, and close to half of these are two-parent families.

Single people. Forty-three percent of households receiving food are composed of single unattached individuals – essentially, people who live alone, without a spouse or children. This group has grown from 30% of households assisted in 2001 to almost half in 2014, increasing from 80,000 to 157,000 households every month.

Workers. One in every six households helped by food banks have income from current or recent employment.

For a more complete picture, turn to Results, page 5, or National & Provincial Findings, page 22.

WHY DO WE NEED FOOD BANKS IN A COUNTRY AS RICH AS CANADA?

Without poverty, food banks would not need to exist. Whether because of a sudden illness, the loss of a job, family breakup, or other unexpected circumstance, every year hundreds of thousands of Canadians face a major loss of income and are unable to get the help they need to offset it.

Once one has fallen on hard times, it can be very difficult to climb back up. This is true for any person in Canada, and particularly for people managing long-term physical or mental health issues, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, immigrants, and refugees. The systems we have put in place to ensure individuals and families do not fall into destitution often fail to do the job, with people struggling without the necessities of life for too long. (See our case study, page 13.)

This year's *HungerCount* takes a deep look at the "why" of food banks (see Analysis, page 9), and the picture is not a positive one. Though the causes of food bank use are well known – the massive loss of well-paying blue collar jobs, too many people without the skills for

today's labour market, inadequate social programs for people facing hard times – we have largely not taken the steps necessary to address these problems head-on.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

HungerCount 2014 offers five areas for action (explored in greater depth starting on page 17) that we believe will significantly reduce the need for food banks in Canada. They are:

- 1 Invest in affordable housing at the federal level.
- 2 Address the extremely high levels of food insecurity in Canada's North.
- 3 Replace the stigmatizing and ineffective social assistance bureaucracy at the provincial level with a basic income administered through the tax system.
- 4 Provide more effective support to low income families with children by replacing the current alphabet soup of federal child benefits (CCTB, UCCB, etc.) with a strengthened Child Well-Being Benefit.
- 5 Help Canadians with low levels of literacy to upgrade their skills for the jobs of today.



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While the level of food bank use clearly evolves in response to larger economic factors like unemployment, the number of people receiving food assistance in Canada has not dropped below 700,000 per month for the better part of the past 15 years.

RESULTS

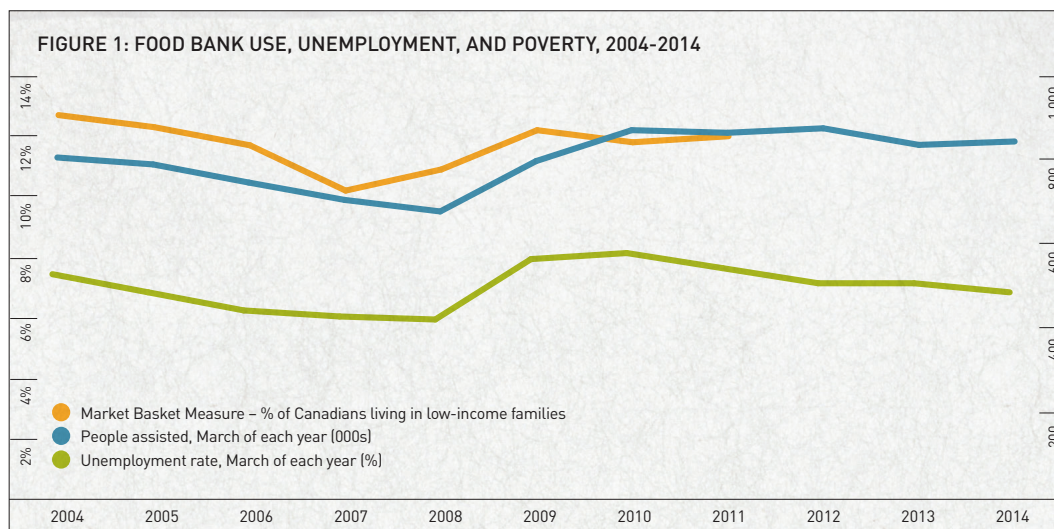
This year's *HungerCount* survey results show some disturbing trends, with food bank use increasing slightly but steadily across most of Canada.¹ Furthermore, the number of people utilizing this service remains 25% higher than in 2008, just prior to the last major recession. Some of the key findings about food bank use from this year's study include:

- In March 2014, **841,191** people received food from a food bank in Canada.

- Food bank use increased by **1%** compared to the same period in 2013.
- **Thirty-seven percent** of those helped by food banks are children.
- Food bank use increased in **six of 10** provinces this year. If access to food banks in the Maritimes had not been restricted due to severe storms and consequent power outages and transportation difficulties in late March,² we believe that usage would have increased in at least eight of 10 provinces.

Though we are now five years past the 2008-09 recession, food bank statistics – and the people behind them – continue to be shaped by its influence. After reaching its lowest point in many years in 2008, food bank use shot up by 20% in 2009, and by another 10% the year after. It reached its highest recorded point in 2012, and continues to hover at very high levels.

Over and above the 841,191 people helped by food banks in March 2014, soup kitchens, shelters, school breakfast initiatives, and other programs also





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841,191

people received food from
a food bank in March

310,461

of those receiving food
were children

87,533

people asked for help from a
food bank for the first time in March

served 4,308,140 meals and snacks to a broad population of Canadians.

FIRST-TIME VISITS AND YEAR-LONG STATISTICS

In March, 87,533 people asked for help from a food bank for the first time – more than one out of every 10 who received food. By the time March 2015 rolls around, this group of people will have used a food bank eight times on average. Some will ask for help only once; some will request assistance five times, or seven, or 12. Many will have gotten back on their feet and won't be seen at the

food bank again – and other new entrants needing food assistance will take their place.

The 841,191 people who were helped in March made 1,181,521 visits to food banks that month (i.e., a portion of those helped made multiple visits). Given that March is an average month for food bank use, Canadians will make more than 14 million visits to food banks over the course of 2014.

We estimate that food banks will provide food to 1.8 million unique individuals in Canada this year.

INCOME AND FOOD BANK USE

As Figure 1 shows, recent changes in food bank use have closely followed the national unemployment rate³ – which suggests that as food insecure people find work, they are less likely to access food banks. At the same time, 12% of those helped by food banks are working, and an additional 5% are receiving Employment Insurance – showing that a job does not always lead one away from the food bank.

While the level of food bank use clearly evolves in response to larger economic

TABLE 1: FOOD BANK USE IN CANADA, BY PROVINCE

Province/Territory	Total Assisted, March 2014	Percent Children, March 2014	Total Assisted, March 2013	Total Assisted, March 2008	Change, 2008-2014	% Change, 2008-2014	Change, 2013-2014	% Change, 2013-2014
British Columbia	97,369	30.8%	94,002	78,101	19,268	24.7%	3,367	3.6%
Alberta	49,766	42.9%	48,653	33,580	16,186	48.2%	1,113	2.3%
Saskatchewan	26,820	45.8%	22,465	17,751	9,069	51.1%	4,355	19.4%
Manitoba	61,691	44.3%	60,229	40,464	21,227	52.5%	1,462	2.4%
Ontario	374,698	35.0%	375,814	314,258	60,440	19.2%	-1,116	-0.3%
Quebec	156,895	37.3%	156,750	127,536	29,359	23.0%	145	0.1%
New Brunswick	19,590	33.9%	19,989	15,638	3,952	25.3%	-399	-2.0%
Nova Scotia	19,664	29.2%	21,760	16,915	2,749	16.3%	-2,096	-9.6%
Prince Edward Island	3,432	38.0%	3,502	2,892	540	18.7%	-70	-2.0%
Newfoundland & Labrador	26,617	37.7%	26,412	27,260	-643	-2.4%	205	0.8%
Territories	4,649	47.0%	3,522	1,340	3,309	246.9%	1,127	32.0%
Canada	841,191	36.9%	833,098	675,735	165,456	24.5%	8,093	1.0%



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RESULTS

110,754

people received food from rural food banks in March

14,178,252

visits will be made to Canadian food banks in 2014

4,308,140

meals and snacks were served by soup kitchens, shelters, school breakfast initiatives, and other programs

factors like unemployment, the number of people receiving food assistance in Canada has not dropped below 700,000 per month for the better part of the past 15 years. A quick glance at the primary sources of income of a large portion of those walking through the doors suggests a clear reason for this:

- 48% of households accessing food receive provincial social assistance (welfare).
- 18% of households helped live primarily on provincial disability-related social assistance benefits.
- 7% of those helped report that a pension is their main source of income.⁴

There is an obvious connection between government-controlled income supports – particularly social assistance – and food bank use. Later sections of the report will address this connection in more detail.

WHO IS BEING HELPED: A SNAPSHOT

The households that ask food banks for assistance are almost evenly divided between those that have children and those that do not:

- 45% are families with children; nearly half of these are two-parent families.
- 55% are households without children; the grand majority of these are single unattached individuals, which

have grown from 29% of households helped in 2001, to 43% of the total in 2014 (see page 9 for more detail on this phenomenon).⁵

The majority of those receiving food live in rental housing:

- 64% pay market rent.
- 20% live in social or otherwise subsidized rental housing.
- 7% own their home.
- 4% are virtually homeless, i.e. living temporarily with family or friends.⁶

One in seven individuals receiving food self-identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit (up from 11% in 2012 to 14% in 2014).⁷ Twelve percent of those helped are immigrants or refugees – rising to 20% in cities with populations greater than 100,000.⁸

SMALL TOWNS AND RURAL AREAS

Food banks located in towns with populations of less than 10,000 provided food to 110,754 individuals in March 2014 – 13% of the national total. This is 1.6% higher than the number helped one year earlier.

As with food bank use in Canada as a whole, 37% of those assisted in small towns and rural areas are children. However, the population utilizing food banks outside Canada's larger cities differs in several important ways:

- Those accessing food are older:
 - 5.4% are seniors (compared to 4.3% overall).⁹
 - 9.2% report that their primary income is from a pension (7% overall).¹⁰
 - 14% are couples without children living in the home (12% overall).¹¹
- They are much more likely to self-identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit (26% compared to 14% overall).
- They are more likely to own their home (17% compared to 7% overall).¹²
- They are less likely to be living in subsidized/social housing (12% compared to 20% overall).¹³

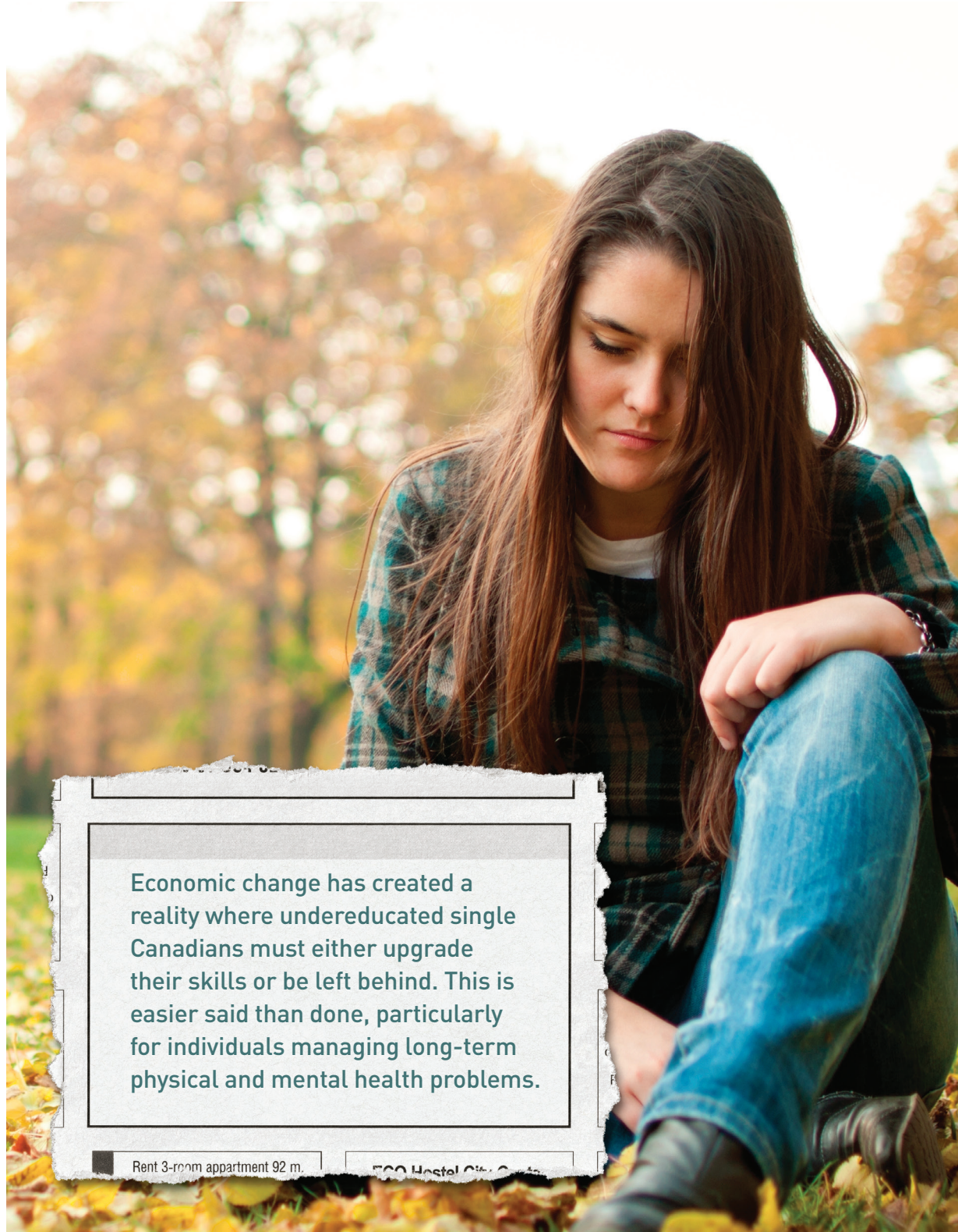
More than 600 rural food banks, in every province and territory, participated in the *HungerCount* study. This fact alone attests to the incredibly broad reality of household food insecurity in Canada.

For more in-depth information on the people helped by food banks, please see Table 1 to the left, and the national and provincial data tables beginning on page 22.



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Economic change has created a reality where undereducated single Canadians must either upgrade their skills or be left behind. This is easier said than done, particularly for individuals managing long-term physical and mental health problems.

Rent 3-room apartment 92 m.

500 Hostel City: C...

ANALYSIS

Numbers are integral to the *HungerCount* survey, which is the only comprehensive study of food bank use in Canada. Just as important as collecting data is making connections between facts. This kind of analysis helps us understand the stories that the numbers tell, which can then lead us towards identifying the changes that will reduce the need for food banks.

FOOD BANKS AND SINGLE CANADIANS

Single adults who live alone, without a spouse or children, have been gradually increasing as a share of Canadian households. Since 2001, this type of living arrangement has grown from 26% to 28% of the population.¹⁴

This household type has also grown as a proportion of households helped by food banks – from 29% in 2001 to 43% in 2014. Whereas food bank use is currently 19% higher than it was in 2001, food bank use among single person households has effectively doubled – from 80,000 households per month in 2001 to 158,000 in 2014.

Social assistance benefits have not increased with the cost of living for about 20 years

The overall growth of single person households in Canada cannot fully explain the explosive growth of food

bank use among this population – other factors are clearly involved. Given that 50% of households helped by food banks live primarily on social assistance benefits, and that these benefits have largely *not* increased with the cost of living for about 20 years, the state of social assistance would seem to account for a large piece of the explanation.¹⁵

John Stapleton, a noted Canadian expert in this area, has explored the links between being single and living in poverty, with particular attention to single people on welfare. His research highlights some important facts:

- If welfare incomes had increased with inflation over the past 20 years, single people on social assistance in Ontario (as one representative example) would be provided with \$944 per month to live on. Instead, welfare incomes for singles currently stand at a little more than \$600 per month, or \$7,200 per year – nearly \$10,000 below the Market Basket Measure of low income in a mid-sized city.¹⁶
- Over the past 15 years, social programs for *lone parents* have had significant

success, and have helped many people find their way out of poverty. In contrast, during the same period social policy has succeeded in forcing *single people* into extreme poverty. In particular, single people on welfare “receive basic incomes that are close to destitution levels – much less than in other developed countries.”¹⁷

The extremely low benefit levels provided by provincial welfare programs sit in an uneasy relationship with a job market that has been, to say the least, unkind to people with low levels of education – particularly for Canadian males. There is a notable connection between being male, undereducated, unemployed and receiving welfare.^{18,19} The key shift has been the drastic loss over the past two decades of blue-collar jobs that were accessible to this population.²⁰

Finally, single Canadians who are employed yet still have low incomes do not have access to the types of government programs made available to families with children. While families can count on the Canada Child Tax

Benefit, the Universal Child Care Benefit, and several child-related tax credits, unattached employed individuals have access to very few government supports, with the notable exception of the valuable but small Working Income Tax Benefit.

In short, economic change has created a reality where undereducated single Canadians must either upgrade their skills or be left behind. This is easier said than done, particularly for individuals managing long-term

physical and mental health problems. The current state of federal, provincial, and municipal policy is simply not up to the task of effectively assisting this population.

FOOD BANK USE AND FOOD INSECURITY

“Income-related household food insecurity” describes a situation where an individual or family worries that they won’t be able to afford enough food, eats suboptimal food because they can’t afford better, or skips meals because they are unable to purchase enough.

Household food insecurity and food bank use are unique concepts, and not everyone who is food insecure will access a food bank.²¹ However, they are clearly linked.

Each year, 1.8 million Canadians receive food from food banks. In 2012, nearly four million Canadians lived in food insecure households, of which approximately 800,000 lived in households that were severely food insecure.²² This simple comparison shows that food banks do not provide assistance to all those who are food insecure. The limited research assessing the reasons for this gap suggests that three overlapping factors are involved:

1 Some people who are food insecure make the choice to not use a food bank. Reasons for this include a belief that circumstances are not bad enough to warrant asking for help, the stigma associated with food bank use, and the feeling that the food that would be received would not meet personal needs and preferences.

2 Some people who are food insecure face barriers to access. These barriers may be related to distance or lack of transportation, food bank policies (e.g., hours of service, intake procedures), or lack of information about the existence of food banks, where they are located, how they work, and hours of service.²³

3 Households that experience moderate levels of food insecurity are less likely to access food banks. On the other side of the coin, individuals and families who are forced to skip meals or eat less than they think they should – i.e. those in more desperate circumstances – are more likely to ask for help.²⁴

62% of food insecure households earn the majority of their income from employment

One of the most notable distinctions between people who are food insecure and those accessing food banks concerns source of income: while 62% of food insecure households earn the majority of their income from employment,²⁵ this is true of about 20%

of those helped by food banks. The key factor here is almost certainly the extremely low levels of income provided by social assistance (also known as “welfare”), which forces households into severe levels of food insecurity: 70% of households that receive social assistance are food insecure, and 30% of these are severely food insecure. Among households whose main source of income is employment, only 1.5% are severely food insecure.²⁶

There are two takeaways from these facts. First, it is a mistake to think that food banks or other charitable food programs are able to adequately address household food insecurity over the long term. There are simply too many food insecure people who do not use them, even though they might benefit from the help. Second, the very low levels of income provided by provincial social assistance programs take away people’s choice of whether or not to access a food bank, making it nearly impossible to avoid it.

WHY DO WE NEED FOOD BANKS IN A COUNTRY AS RICH AS CANADA?

Canada currently ranks 11th out of 186 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index.²⁷ In the first three months of 2014, two trillion dollars' worth of goods and services were produced in the country.²⁸ How, in the midst of such wealth, do so many people need to access food banks just to have enough to eat?

The following section attempts to provide an answer to this question in two parts:

- **Part 1** offers information on just how little income several million Canadians live on, forcing them to make extremely difficult choices – choices like, do I pay the rent or buy food? Do I cancel my phone service or go to the food bank?

- **Part 2** takes an anecdotal approach, looking at two years in the life of an individual accessing a food bank, in order to describe the twists and turns that lead a person to this situation.



At any point in time, there is a sizeable population of Canadians with extremely low levels of income – far too low to afford even the most elemental needs of adequate shelter, nutrition, transportation, and communication. The following examples, building on information from the HungerCount study, show just how little some of our neighbours have to work with.

Nearly one-fifth of households helped by food banks are working or are receiving Employment Insurance (EI) and have worked recently.

- Canada has a booming low-wage economy, thanks in part to a confounding, ongoing loss of well-paying blue collar jobs. For example, the well-paying manufacturing sector accounted for less than 10% of Canadian jobs in March 2014, compared to 14% in 2004 – a loss of 400,000 jobs during a time of steady population growth. Meanwhile, lower-wage retail, accommodation, and food service jobs continue to grow at

a rate equal to or greater than the population, consistently accounting for one in every five jobs in the country.²⁹

- For Canadians who find themselves unemployed, EI provides a maximum income of \$514 per week before taxes, for a maximum of 45 weeks. The benefit is lower for those who earn less than \$49,000 per year; for example, a person with a gross income of \$35,000 receives only \$370 per week.³⁰

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Half of the households accessing food banks report that welfare is their primary source of income.

- Depending on their province of residence, the annual welfare income for a single person considered “employable” is drastically low – ranging from \$6,801 to \$10,813 per year.³¹ Even in the most generous province (i.e. Newfoundland & Labrador), this level of income is 40% below the lowest poverty line.³²

One in five households helped by food banks rely on disability-related benefits as their main source of income; in the majority

of cases this income is provided through provincial benefits linked to a long-term disability or health issue.

- Depending on their province of residence, the annual disability-related income for a single person ranges from \$8,838 to \$13,772.³³ The most generous provincial disability benefit for an individual is still more than 10% below the lowest poverty line. In the worst case (New Brunswick), it is nearly 50% below the poverty line.

A small but significant percentage (7%) of those helped live primarily on income from a pension.

- Seniors who live alone have a highly elevated risk of living in poverty, with nearly 15% of this population reporting incomes below the poverty line.³⁴
- A single person who depends on a public pension as their only source of income receives a meagre \$15,800 per year through Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement.³⁵

The chart on pages 14-15 provides a graphic representation of the income disparities that help to explain the presence of household food insecurity in the midst of prosperity.



Low income is just one part of the equation that leads to food insecurity and the need for food banks. Just as important are the systems, led and managed by our federal, provincial, and municipal governments, that exist to ensure Canadians do not fall into destitution. These overlapping yet under-coordinated and sometimes conflicting systems are failing too many.

One in every eight Canadians lives in a family without enough money to afford the goods and services that most take for granted.³⁶ While it is true that hundreds of thousands of Canadians climb out of poverty, it is also the case that hundreds of thousands fall under the poverty line each and every year. While public policy and government programs help many out of low income, the system is far from optimal.

Modern social policy for working-age adults in Canada begins with the assumption that the more government

gives, the more people will take.³⁷ Because of this over-generalized and pessimistic assumption, benefits provided by government programs like social assistance, Employment Insurance, and Old Age Security are set at extremely low levels to discourage use as much as possible.

Individuals who find themselves in a situation of severe food insecurity are at the beginning of a long and difficult path. They may already have been forced to move themselves and their families to cheaper, lower quality housing. They may



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have been forced to sell or pawn some of their possessions. They are eating lower quality food and skipping meals because they can't afford enough.

NO WAY UP: JOHANNA'S STORY

Here is a hypothetical – but realistic – example illustrating the difficulties faced by someone in this situation. Let's say "Johanna" is a woman in her late 20s who had to quit her job for health reasons last year, and has been surviving on social assistance for 12 months or so. She has used her local food bank for eight of those months. With social assistance and various federal and provincial tax credits, she will have access to about \$8,000 in net income over the course of 12 months³⁸ – an amount of money that is basically impossible to live on without considerable sacrifice.

Let's say her health improves, and Johanna finds a part-time job while on social assistance. Her provincial government will deduct about 75% of her work income from her social assistance benefits. Suppose she earns \$500 per month after taxes, for a total of \$6,000 in annual employment income. Her net income will increase from \$8,000 to only \$9,500 – which is still nearly \$6,000 below the poverty line. If Johanna is accessing multiple social programs (such as subsidized housing or child care), which reduce support as her income increases, she could actually

reach the end of each month with less money than she had before she started working.³⁹

If after a few months Johanna is able to find a job that pays \$14 per hour for 30 hours per week (which is a realistic reflection of the lower end of today's job market)⁴⁰ she will be earning \$420 per week, or \$21,840 for the year. At this point she will be earning too much to receive welfare benefits. She will have access to more than twice the amount of income she received while on welfare; however she will also lose certain non-cash benefits and therefore see her expenses grow. Two of the largest of these are subsidized housing and prescription drug and dental benefits.

If Johanna has a long-term mental health issue that is managed with medication, the loss of prescription drug benefits will have a significant impact. With respect to housing, Johanna will face paying \$600 to \$800 (at least 33% of her income)⁴¹ for a decent bachelor apartment or \$400 to \$600 (at least 22% of her income) for a small, substandard room with few amenities.

Let's go a bit further and say that after a year, Johanna loses her job through no fault of her own, and applies for Employment Insurance. The highest weekly benefit she will receive is \$231. Realistically, she can expect to receive a payment for 28 to 38 weeks, for a maximum possible total of \$8,778 over

ANALYSIS

a period of about nine months. In other words, slightly better than a welfare-level income, but without any of the non-income benefits of welfare, which Johanna would not be able access while she is eligible for Employment Insurance.

While this is a worst-case scenario, these are the stories that food banks hear every day. It is the worst-case scenario that leads people to the door of their local food bank.

The drawbacks inherent in the supports that exist for vulnerable people are written into the histories of tens of thousands of non-profit and charitable organizations – food banks, homeless shelters, children's aid societies, mental health organizations, hospital emergency rooms, and many others. For the most part, these organizations reach individuals after the worst has happened, after they have lost so much.

The next section offers recommendations on how we can reach the people helped by these organizations, *before* the worst has happened.

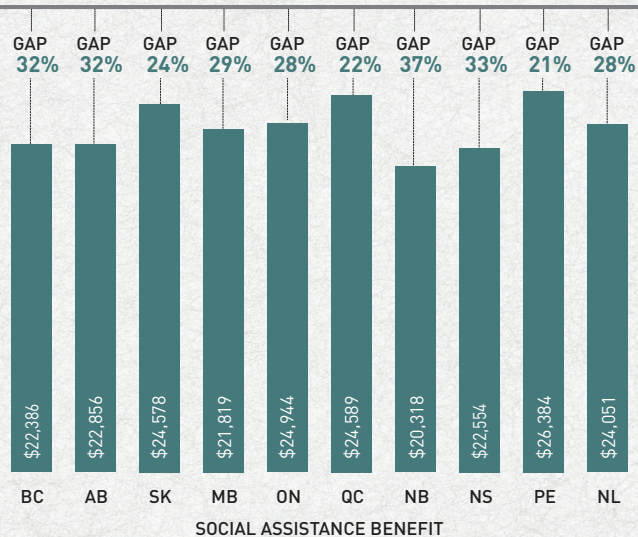
THE INCOME GAP

With hundreds of thousands of well-paying blue-collar jobs lost over the past two decades, too many Canadians are stuck in part-time, temporary, low-paying jobs. Those who can't work are forced to depend on meagre government benefits.

Canadians go to food banks when their basic expenses outgrow income – when they run out of breathing room. This infographic examines how incomes from various sources stack up against the Market Basket Measure of low income. It illustrates how much breathing room Canadians in various situations are living with, and how close they are to needing help from the food bank.

BASIC STANDARD OF LIVING¹²

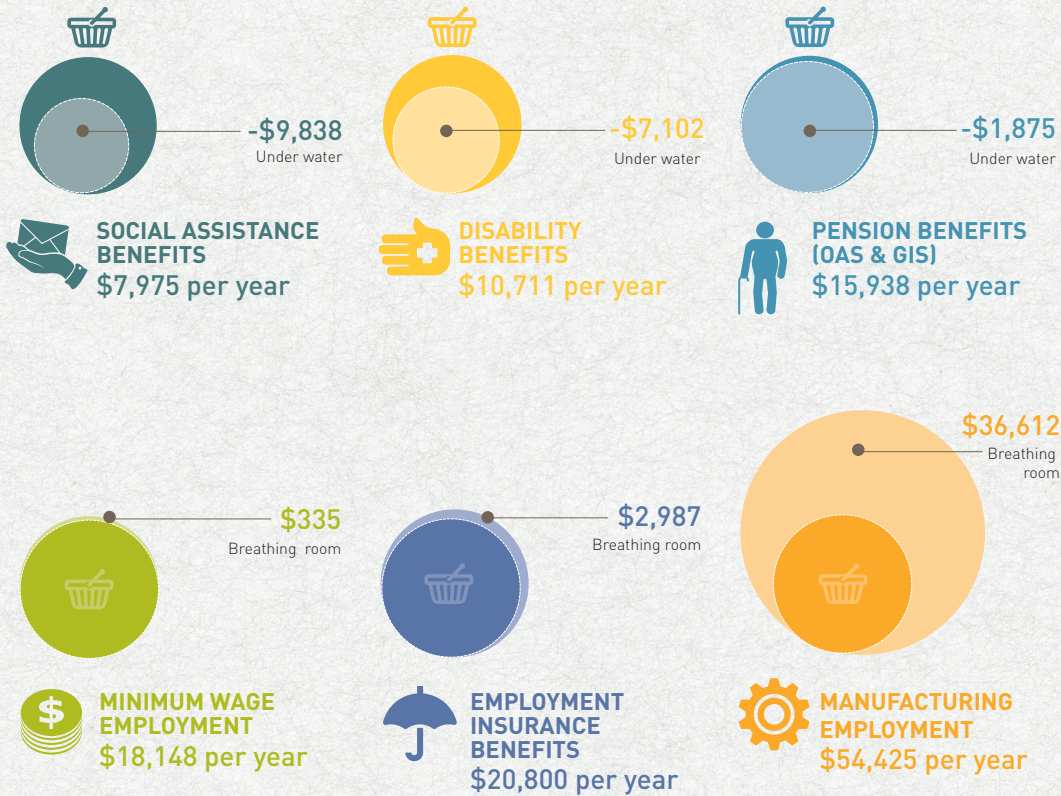
48% of households that visit food banks are on social assistance. This graphic compares the gap between the social assistance benefit provided in each province to a couple with two children and what it costs to achieve a modest, basic standard of living. Far from having *breathing room*, these families are *under water*.





\$17,813 per year
MARKET BASKET MEASURE
(COST OF A BASIC STANDARD OF LIVING FOR A SINGLE ADULT)

How do incomes measure up?⁶³





RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 More affordable housing
- 2 Help for the North
- 3 Revolutionize welfare
- 4 Investment in child well-being
- 5 Better training

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Highest standard 121 cm 50 near



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RECOMMENDATIONS

1 MAINTAIN FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Food banks across the country report year after year that the high cost of housing is one of the key factors that drive the need for their services.

More than four million Canadian households live in rental housing; almost half of them pay more than 30% of their income on rent (a widely-accepted benchmark of unaffordability).⁴⁴

- Only 10% of new housing developed over the past 15 years has been purpose-built to rent, despite the fact that nearly one-third of households are renters.⁴⁵
- The demand for rental housing is far outpacing supply, with vacancy levels below 3% in major centres such as Quebec City, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Regina, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, and Victoria.⁴⁶

To add to this growing crisis, the federal social housing operating agreements that have been in place since the 1960s and 1970s are beginning to expire, and there is nothing planned to replace them.

- Federal funding for housing through these agreements is scheduled to decrease, from \$1.6 billion a year in 2014, to \$1.2 billion in 2020, to \$604 million in 2025, and so on until 2040, at which point the annual federal investment will decline to zero.
- The agreements provide support for 544,000 households, a significant number of which are forecast to lose their homes if nothing is found to replace federal support.⁴⁷

While provincial-territorial and municipal governments are increasing their investments in affordable housing, they do not have the fiscal capacity to maintain current social housing levels, much less increase the number of available units.⁴⁸



OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Create a federal Social Housing Operating Fund, in agreement with the provinces and territories, that would be made available to social housing providers to cover costs related to capital repairs, maintenance, and retrofits.
- ▶ Implement targeted federal tax reforms to support the development of rental housing to increase the number of units and make housing more affordable. Options include allowing the rollover of capital gains that are re-invested in new, purpose-built rental housing, or a social housing tax credit for the creation of subsidized rental units.
- ▶ Undertake an assessment of the forward-thinking, government-led “Housing First” approach to determine the consequences this federal policy change may have on affordable housing. We recommend that the federal government convene key stakeholders between all levels of government, as well as local charities, social workers, and civil society groups to identify, discuss, and remedy any unintended negative consequences of the Housing First approach introduced by the federal government in 2013.



community choices unit three

U3L5A3 | 5 Ws and How | Article 2



2 TAKE STRONG ACTION TO REDUCE FOOD INSECURITY IN THE NORTH

Households in Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut experience extremely high levels of food insecurity, ranging from 17% of households in Yukon, to 45% of households in Nunavut. The territories also experience the highest rates of severe food insecurity, where adults and/or children go completely without food for a meal, or for a day.⁴⁹

The three territorial governments have each introduced poverty reduction and/or food security strategies. These plans are open and honest about the challenges facing the territories:

“Seven in ten Inuit preschoolers in Nunavut live in food insecure households. Access to healthy and affordable food has been a challenge for Nunavummiut for many years, and this issue has emerged as a major political and public concern.”⁵⁰

“Across the [Northwest Territories], there is a widening gap between those who are prospering and those who are struggling. Poverty disproportionately affects vulnerable members of society, including single-parent families, people with low education levels, elders, people with disabilities, and those with addictions or mental health issues. Children in poverty are especially vulnerable when their basic needs are not met.”⁵¹

“Food insecurity and material deprivation indicators... [show] large disparities among Yukon populations. Low income households and people who receive social assistance are most likely to experience difficulties buying the things they need.”⁵²

Each territorial strategy sets out areas for action that are specific and relevant to these unique and different jurisdictions. There are, however, several additional practical actions that can be taken at the territorial and federal levels to decrease poverty and household food insecurity in the territories.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Create a federal Northern Food Security Fund, which would provide resources to jumpstart and support community-developed, community-led food initiatives across the North.
- ▶ Enshrine poverty reduction and food security strategies within territorial legislation, to help ensure that these remain priorities for future administrations.
- ▶ Allow parents in receipt of social assistance to keep the National Child Benefit Supplement, rather than having it clawed back from their welfare benefits. This simple action would add up to \$2,241 per child each year for some of the most vulnerable families in the territories.⁵³
- ▶ Replace the current territorial welfare bureaucracy with a basic income administered through the tax system (see recommendation 3 for more detail).



community choices unit three

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RECOMMENDATIONS

3 REVOLUTIONIZE PROVINCIAL-TERRITORIAL WELFARE SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT INDEPENDENCE

It has been clear for many years that welfare is a broken system. Individuals and families must be at the brink of destitution to qualify for the program, and it can be very difficult to climb out of poverty once you are in the system. Benefit levels are unreasonably low, the administrative bureaucracy is nearly impossible to navigate, and stigmatization of those in need is widespread. The system seems nearly beyond repair.

The time has come for the provinces and territories to seriously consider dismantling what has become an understaffed and stressed bureaucratic system that assesses the needs of applicants on a case-by-case, month-by-month basis. There exist several viable models for a *basic income*, administered through the tax system, that would eliminate the bureaucracy, the intrusiveness, and the stigma associated with welfare. Our recommendations include this significant, forward-thinking plan, as well as several other common-sense actions.



OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Dismantle existing welfare bureaucracies and create a basic income system, administered through the tax system. Ensure that the basic income has a logical relationship to the level of earnings offered through work, and that it is indexed to inflation.
- ▶ Remove non-cash benefits from welfare, and make these benefits available to all low income households, regardless of their eligibility or participation in other government programs. Such benefits include, but are not limited to, child care subsidies, affordable housing supplements, and drug and dental insurance.
- ▶ Release clear and detailed information on the number of people receiving social assistance, entry and exit from the program, length of time in receipt of benefits, household characteristics of program participants, and program expenditures.



4 REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF CHILD POVERTY AND ADDRESS POVERTY'S HARMFUL EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

Nearly one million Canadian children live in families with below poverty-level incomes.⁵⁴ Several decades of research has shown that childhood poverty, particularly in the early years (i.e. prenatal to age 5), has a profound effect on the physical, mental, and economic outcomes of those who experience it once they reach adulthood. Further, the lower the family income, and the longer poverty persists, the more severe is the effect on adult outcomes.⁵⁵

For the most part, low income in Canada is transitory, with hundreds of thousands of people moving above and below the poverty line each year. However, low income is long-lasting for a significant minority of Canadians, including children. Between 2002 and 2007, more than 20% of Canadian children experienced at least one year of low income; nearly 6% lived in families with incomes below the poverty line for four or more years in this period.⁵⁶

While low income is not the only factor that shapes child health and achievement,⁵⁷ it can have a profound influence on a child's environment.⁵⁸ In this sense, every recommendation in this report has a bearing on child health and well-being – children do better when their families do better. Appropriate housing, improved benefits for parents on welfare, and more effective adult education programs will all contribute to a better environment in which to raise a child. There are also several child-specific policy changes governments can make that will improve child outcomes, each of which have the added benefit of supporting parents of young children to enter and remain in the labour force.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Support the most vulnerable families with young children by rationalizing the current alphabet soup of federal child benefits – including the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB), the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB) and the Children's Fitness Tax Credit – into a new Child Well-Being Benefit.
- ▶ Invest in predictable, stable funding at the federal and provincial levels for professional, affordable, flexible, regulated child care, to contribute to child development and enable parents to enter and remain in the labour force.
- ▶ Help vulnerable parents with young children as soon as they need it, at the federal and provincial levels. This has implications for prenatal and postnatal care, early childhood development, child welfare agencies, and child care programs. The current systems that work to support families with young children are underfunded and disjointed, with quality and access varying widely between regions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5 ENSURE CANADIANS HAVE THE SKILLS TO ATTAIN WELL-PAYING JOBS

There has been a lot of talk about the “skills mismatch” in Canada, a “misalignment between the skills of the unemployed and those required by employers.”⁵⁹ The idea of “misalignment” suggests that Canadians have skills, just not the ones needed to fill the jobs that are available – the “too many English majors, not enough welders” problem.

This important discussion needs to be broadened to include the fact that 49% of Canadians between the ages of 16 and 65 do not have the literacy capacity necessary to effectively learn new job skills.⁶⁰ Nearly half of Canadians operate at Level 1 or Level 2 literacy:

- At **Level 1**, an individual has very poor literacy skills; they may be unable to read instructions well enough to be able to give the correct amount of medicine to a child (17% of Canadian adults are at Level 1 or lower).
- At **Level 2**, people are able to develop everyday coping skills, however it will be difficult to understand and master the complex tasks and concepts required in the modern workforce (32% of Canadian adults are at Level 2).⁶¹

There is a need for immediate action on adult basic education, which is something of a threatened species in Canada. Recent evaluations of training programs supported through federal–provincial funding agreements have offered lukewarm findings;⁶² these findings may have contributed to a range of related federal government actions, including the reallocation of \$300 million from training for people ineligible for Employment Insurance to the new Canada Job Grant.

The federal government has vowed to “transform skills training in Canada through the introduction of the Canada Job Grant,” in consultation with employers and employer groups.⁶³ While this may help employers fill the need for particular skills, it is unlikely to address very low basic skill levels among the unemployed and underemployed – employers are unlikely to take the risk of investing in very low-skilled individuals.⁶⁴

People with low literacy levels are more likely to be out of work and have low incomes;⁶⁵ this means that they are less able to pay for educational upgrading. If this sizable group is to play a larger role in the modern economy, there is no choice but for governments to invest. The literature around adult basic education makes clear the need for specialized interventions, intensive program evaluation and a willingness to experiment and change.



OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

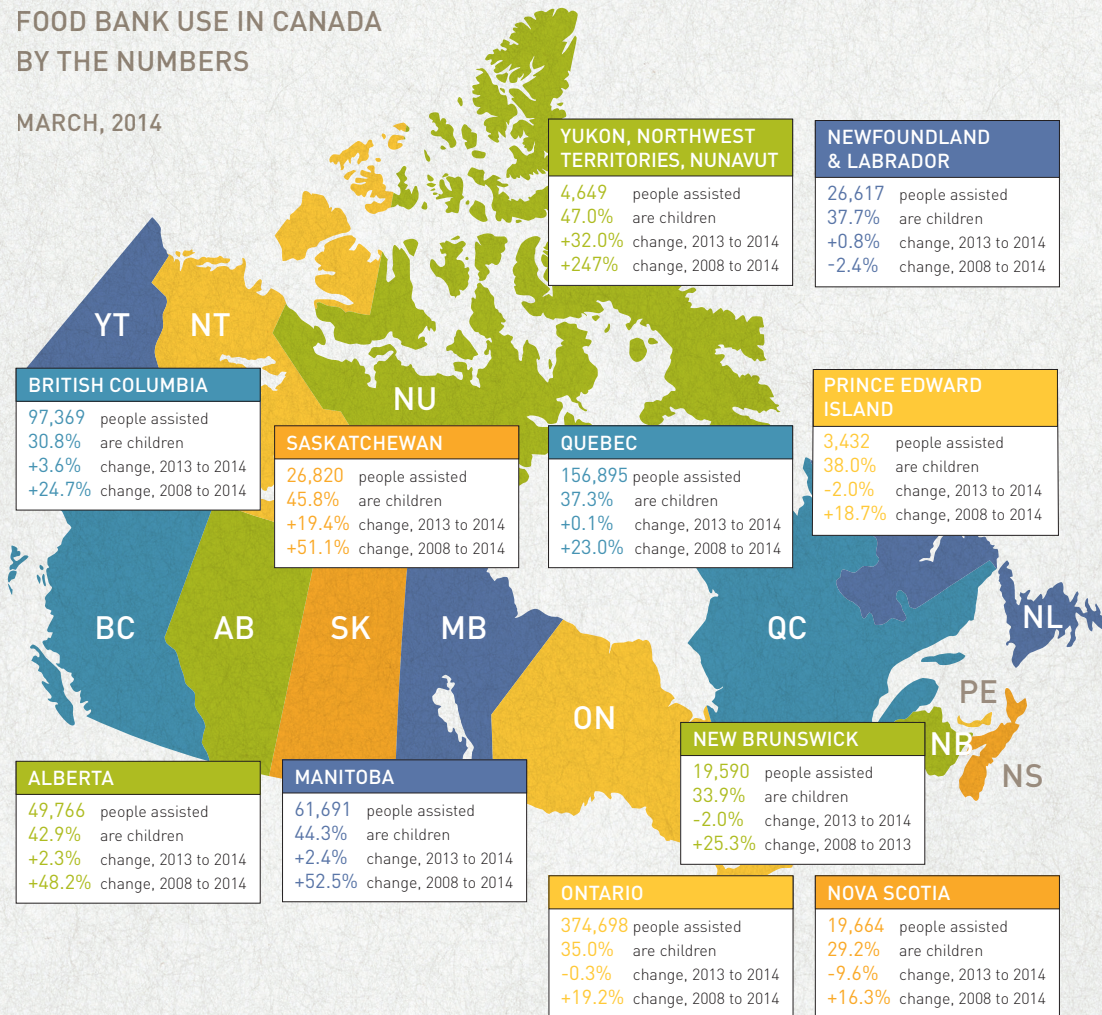
- ▶ Expand eligibility for education and training programs offered through Employment Insurance Part II benefits to include all unemployed Canadians, rather than only those eligible for EI.
- ▶ Create a federal framework for adult basic education that emphasizes the need for individualized training programs that prepare Canadians for the specific labour needs of regional labour markets.
- ▶ Eliminate barriers at the provincial level that prevent social assistance recipients from accessing education and training.⁶⁶ Increase connections between provincial welfare bureaucracies and adult education and training providers.



DETAILED NATIONAL & PROVINCIAL FINDINGS

FOOD BANK USE IN CANADA BY THE NUMBERS

MARCH, 2014





DETAILED NATIONAL & PROVINCIAL FINDINGS

CANADA

841,191
people helped by
food banks
in March

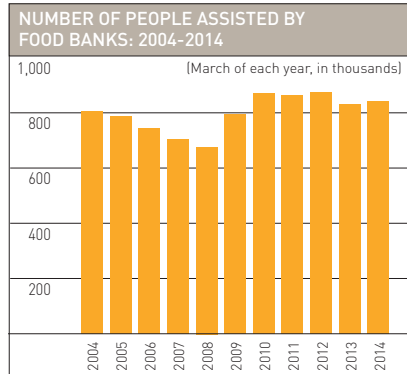
+24.5%
change
since 2008

36.9%
are children

KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Individuals assisted by food banks	841,191	833,098	872,379	861,775	867,948	794,738	675,735
% Change, 2008-2014	24.5%						
% Change, 2013-2014	1.0%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	53.5%	49.3%	47.9%	48.8%	70.7%	78.4%	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	36.9%	36.4%	38.4%	37.9%	37.8%	37.2%	37.1%
Households assisted by food banks	363,728	346,626	368,619	354,265	369,818	347,043	304,394
% Households assisted for the first time	10.4%	9.4%	10.5%	10.9%	9.2%	-	-
% National population assisted	2.38%	2.38%	2.54%	2.48%	2.56%	2.37%	2.04%

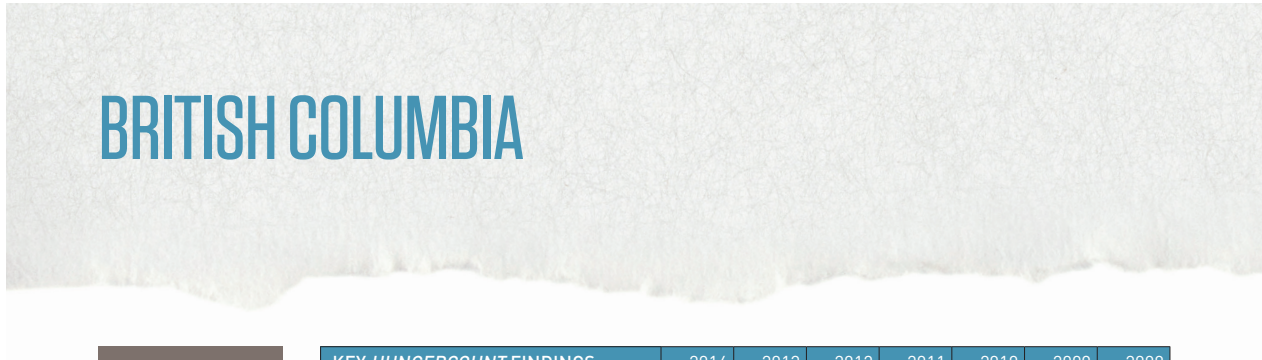
DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	48.1	48.5
% Post-secondary students	3.2	1.7
% Age 65+	4.3	5.4
% Aboriginal persons	13.6	25.9
% Immigrants or refugees	12.3	2.3

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	23.4	21.2
% Two-parent families	21.6	21.9
% Couples with no children	11.7	13.8
% Single people	43.3	43.1
Number of food banks reporting	1,374	469



PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	11.7	11.3
% Employment Insurance	4.4	6.2
% Social assistance	47.8	49.1
% Disability-related income support	17.5	15.1
% Pension	7.0	9.2
% Student loans/scholarships	1.8	1.1
% No income	5.4	3.7
% Other	4.5	4.2
Number of food banks reporting	1,217	404

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	7.3	16.5
% Rental market tenants	64.1	56.3
% Social housing tenants	20.3	12.1
% Band-owned housing	2.0	8.5
% Shelter or group home	1.2	0.7
% Living on the street	0.9	0.6
% Living with family or friends	4.2	5.3
Number of food banks reporting	1,207	416



97,369
people helped by
food banks
in March

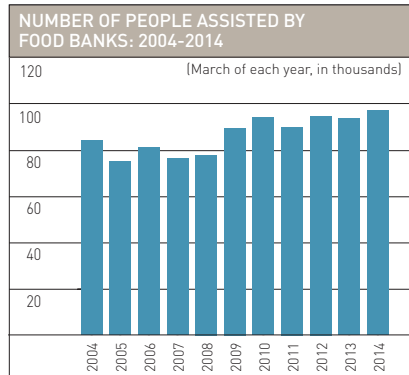
+24.7%
change
since 2008

30.8%
are children

KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Individuals assisted by food banks	97,369	94,002	94,966	90,193	94,359	89,866	78,101
% Change, 2008-2014	24.7%						
% Change, 2013-2014	3.6%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	51.6%	45.8%	44.4%	52.9%	60.2%	80.8%	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	30.8%	29.5%	29.5%	31.9%	29.7%	31.4%	31.2%
Households assisted by food banks	45,440	44,750	43,282	42,465	45,196	44,206	35,005
% Households assisted for the first time	7.1%	6.6%	6.9%	6.9%	6.5%	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	2.11%	2.03%	2.07%	1.98%	2.10%	2.03%	1.77%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	47.2	48.0
% Post-secondary students	1.8	2.3
% Age 65+	5.1	6.6
% Aboriginal persons	26.9	36.6
% Immigrants or refugees	n/a	0.4

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	20.1	19.0
% Two-parent families	16.0	17.6
% Couples with no children	11.9	13.9
% Single people	52.0	49.5
Number of food banks reporting	79	49



PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	11.5	9.8
% Employment Insurance	3.8	5.1
% Social assistance	35.4	42.7
% Disability-related income support	30.3	23.2
% Pension	7.6	9.3
% Student loans/scholarships	0.5	0.4
% No income	7.2	5.3
% Other	3.7	4.1
Number of food banks reporting	71	42

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	6.4	11.7
% Rental market tenants	76.4	63.3
% Social housing tenants	7.7	6.2
% Band-owned housing	4.5	11.2
% Shelter or group home	0.9	0.7
% Living on the street	1.1	1.0
% Living with family or friends	3.1	5.9
Number of food banks reporting	63	43



community choices unit three

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DETAILED NATIONAL & PROVINCIAL FINDINGS

ALBERTA

49,766
people helped by
food banks
in March

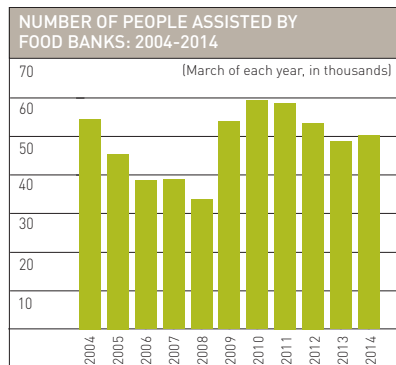
+48.2%
change
since 2008

42.9%
are children

KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Individuals assisted by food banks	49,766	48,653	53,512	58,735	59,311	53,976	33,580
% Change, 2008-2014	48.2%						
% Change, 2013-2014	2.3%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	48.7%	38.9%	40.8%	35.6%	72.5%	78.4%	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	42.9%	44.1%	44.1%	43.7%	43.1%	43.1%	42.0%
Households assisted by food banks	19,441	19,374	21,309	21,556	20,078	20,815	12,031
% Households assisted for the first time	9.7%	11.6%	11.0%	17.7%	10.0%	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	1.22%	1.24%	1.40%	1.57%	1.60%	1.40%	0.96%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	56.2	53.9
% Post-secondary students	3.1	1.9
% Age 65+	4.3	5.2
% Aboriginal persons	42.2	59.2
% Immigrants or refugees	6.6	2.0

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	36.5	29.7
% Two-parent families	25.1	26.3
% Couples with no children	8.6	9.8
% Single people	29.8	34.2
Number of food banks reporting	60	40



PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	21.9	19.7
% Employment Insurance	6.5	7.9
% Social assistance	32.2	28.2
% Disability-related income support	15.5	16.9
% Pension	6.6	13.1
% Student loans/scholarships	2.1	1.2
% No income	9.1	7.2
% Other	6.6	5.8
Number of food banks reporting	55	41

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	7.8	12.8
% Rental market tenants	69.9	38.9
% Social housing tenants	9.4	4.1
% Band-owned housing	5.9	22.7
% Shelter or group home	1.2	1.4
% Living on the street	0.5	1.5
% Living with family or friends	5.3	18.5
Number of food banks reporting	51	34



SASKATCHEWAN

26,820
people helped by
food banks
in March

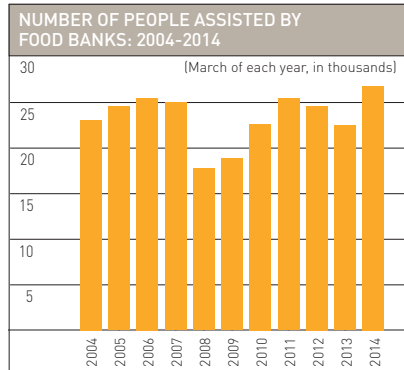
+51.1%
change
since 2008

45.8%
are children

KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Individuals assisted by food banks	26,820	22,465	24,621	25,432	22,662	18,875	17,751
% Change, 2008-2014	51.1%						
% Change, 2013-2014	19.4%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	63.6%	48.1%	17.6%	52.0%	52.0%	78.0%	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	45.8%	43.8%	47.5%	46.3%	44.1%	44.4%	45.6%
Households assisted by food banks	10,701	9,043	10,180	7,734	8,355	7,063	5,819
% Households assisted for the first time	3.9%	4.7%	5.8%	8.6%	7.8%	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	2.40%	2.06%	2.30%	2.42%	2.18%	1.80%	1.73%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	54.1	50.2
% Post-secondary students	2.7	1.2
% Age 65+	2.7	4.9
% Aboriginal persons	64.1	67.2
% Immigrants or refugees	3.0	0.6

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	27.5	29.5
% Two-parent families	21.9	30.9
% Couples with no children	10.3	7.1
% Single people	40.4	32.6
Number of food banks reporting	32	22



PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	14.8	9.4
% Employment Insurance	2.9	3.6
% Social assistance	52.7	59.8
% Disability-related income support	5.7	5.2
% Pension	6.2	11.6
% Student loans/scholarships	3.2	0.5
% No income	7.8	6.3
% Other	6.7	3.6
Number of food banks reporting	30	21

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	6.8	12.1
% Rental market tenants	61.0	31.0
% Social housing tenants	19.3	17.5
% Band-owned housing	6.6	33.8
% Shelter or group home	0.7	0.0
% Living on the street	0.3	0.7
% Living with family or friends	5.2	4.8
Number of food banks reporting	31	23



DETAILED NATIONAL & PROVINCIAL FINDINGS

MANITOBA

61,691
people helped by
food banks
in March

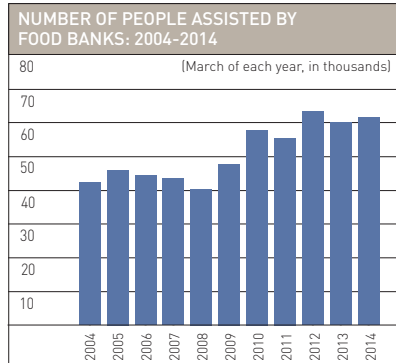
+52.5%
change
since 2008

44.3%
are children

KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Individuals assisted by food banks	61,691	60,229	63,482	55,575	57,966	47,925	40,464
% Change, 2008-2014	52.5%						
% Change, 2013-2014	2.4%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	51.1%	60.0%	59.1%	42.4%	73.0%	66.0%	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	44.3%	44.7%	47.6%	50.4%	50.5%	48.7%	45.7%
Households assisted by food banks	23,790	23,074	21,261	18,620	-	-	-
% Households assisted for the first time	10.1%	17.8%	13.3%	12.4%	12.5%	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	4.85%	4.72%	5.05%	4.47%	4.72%	3.89%	3.30%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	50.5	50.9
% Post-secondary students	1.4	2.0
% Age 65+	3.6	6.1
% Aboriginal persons	n/a	56.5
% Immigrants or refugees	n/a	4.0

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	21.1	23.9
% Two-parent families	27.1	28.6
% Couples with no children	14.6	12.7
% Single people	37.2	34.9
Number of food banks reporting	41	31



PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	16.4	15.9
% Employment Insurance	4.0	4.4
% Social assistance	51.5	55.1
% Disability-related income support	11.3	6.6
% Pension	10.6	12.5
% Student loans/scholarships	0.4	0.2
% No income	3.0	2.2
% Other	2.9	3.0
Number of food banks reporting	30	23

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	12.9	14.6
% Rental market tenants	32.1	21.2
% Social housing tenants	18.4	12.3
% Band-owned housing	31.4	46.8
% Shelter or group home	0.4	0.2
% Living on the street	0.6	0.7
% Living with family or friends	4.1	4.3
Number of food banks reporting	29	22



ONTARIO

374,698
people helped by
food banks
in March

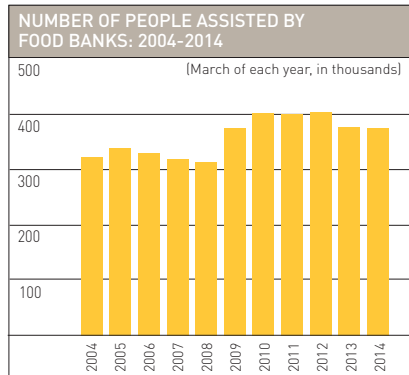
+19.2%
change
since 2008

35.0%
are children

KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Individuals assisted by food banks	374,698	375,814	404,373	400,360	402,056	374,230	314,258
% Change, 2008-2014	19.2%						
% Change, 2013-2014	-0.3%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	54.2%	47.2%	48.1%	46.4%	73.6%	76.2%	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	35.0%	35.0%	38.7%	37.0%	37.1%	37.6%	37.6%
Households assisted by food banks	175,954	162,568	174,618	160,275	160,402	148,660	137,491
% Households assisted for the first time	9.8%	8.7%	9.8%	10.0%	6.9%	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	2.76%	2.77%	3.01%	2.97%	3.06%	2.90%	2.40%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	45.3	44.9
% Post-secondary students	3.4	1.4
% Age 65+	4.0	5.2
% Aboriginal persons	6.3	15.6
% Immigrants or refugees	9.6	5.8

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	23.8	20.4
% Two-parent families	18.9	22.4
% Couples with no children	11.2	15.1
% Single people	46.1	42.1
Number of food banks reporting	377	78



PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	9.3	9.4
% Employment Insurance	2.6	3.4
% Social assistance	40.3	32.0
% Disability-related income support	29.4	38.4
% Pension	6.8	8.6
% Student loans/scholarships	1.0	0.5
% No income	5.4	3.3
% Other	5.1	4.5
Number of food banks reporting	324	69

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	5.7	15.9
% Rental market tenants	64.0	63.4
% Social housing tenants	22.3	14.3
% Band-owned housing	0.4	1.9
% Shelter or group home	1.0	0.6
% Living on the street	0.8	0.3
% Living with family or friends	5.7	3.7
Number of food banks reporting	350	79



DETAILED NATIONAL & PROVINCIAL FINDINGS

QUEBEC

156,895
people helped by
food banks
in March

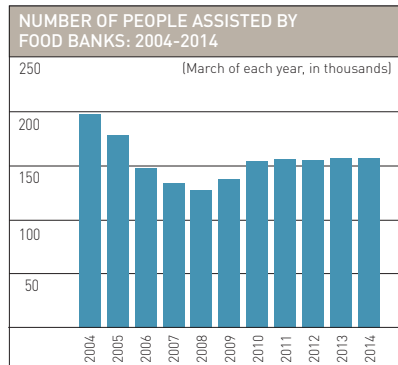
+23.0%
change
since 2008

37.3%
are children

KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Individuals assisted by food banks	156,895	156,750	155,574	156,279	154,364	137,464	127,536
% Change, 2008-2014	23.0%						
% Change, 2013-2014	0.1%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	56.0%	50.0%	47.1%	51.9%	-	-	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	37.3%	37.1%	37.2%	36.0%	37.9%	33.9%	37.1%
Households assisted by food banks	68,138	67,544	70,510	69,385	-	-	-
% Households assisted for the first time	15.5%	12.6%	14.6%	15.6%	-	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	1.92%	1.95%	1.94%	1.97%	1.96%	1.77%	1.97%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	47.4	48.3
% Post-secondary students	4.6	2.1
% Age 65+	5.1	5.9
% Aboriginal persons	1.2	2.5
% Immigrants or refugees	23.0	3.2

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	21.6	20.1
% Two-parent families	24.9	21.3
% Couples with no children	11.4	13.3
% Single people	42.1	45.3
Number of food banks reporting	633	151



PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	10.8	11.7
% Employment Insurance	5.6	8.3
% Social assistance	61.5	57.8
% Disability-related income support	3.4	4.4
% Pension	7.0	9.1
% Student loans/scholarships	3.3	2.5
% No income	4.7	2.9
% Other	3.6	3.2
Number of food banks reporting	615	148

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	7.0	17.9
% Rental market tenants	68.4	62.7
% Social housing tenants	17.8	11.9
% Band-owned housing	0.5	2.4
% Shelter or group home	2.0	1.0
% Living on the street	1.4	0.2
% Living with family or friends	2.8	4.0
Number of food banks reporting	589	145



NEW BRUNSWICK

19,590
people helped by
food banks
in March

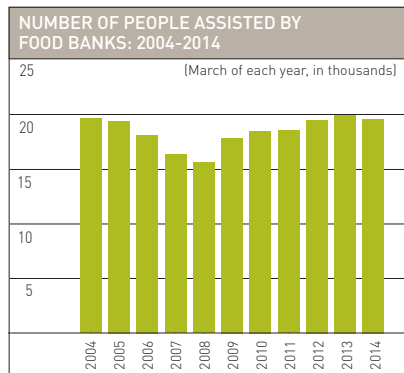
+25.3%
change
since 2008

33.9%
are children

KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Individuals assisted by food banks	19,590	19,989	19,524	18,539	18,517	17,889	15,638
% Change, 2008-2014	25.3%						
% Change, 2013-2014	-2.0%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	54.0%	59.6%	51.9%	54.2%	66.0%	70.6%	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	33.9%	33.2%	32.0%	34.4%	34.3%	33.8%	33.2%
Households assisted by food banks	9,076	9,376	8,975	8,160	8,440	7,710	7,060
% Households assisted for the first time	5.8%	7.4%	9.0%	7.7%	9.4%	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	2.59%	2.64%	2.58%	2.46%	2.46%	2.39%	2.09%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	49.1	48.4
% Post-secondary students	1.0	1.2
% Age 65+	3.5	3.6
% Aboriginal persons	3.4	3.2
% Immigrants or refugees	2.8	0.9

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	23.0	21.8
% Two-parent families	19.0	21.2
% Couples with no children	12.4	13.9
% Single people	45.6	43.1
Number of food banks reporting	39	26



PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	9.6	9.0
% Employment Insurance	5.5	6.9
% Social assistance	63.2	62.8
% Disability-related income support	5.9	5.3
% Pension	6.0	6.2
% Student loans/scholarships	0.7	0.4
% No income	3.7	2.3
% Other	5.5	6.9
Number of food banks reporting	35	25

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	20.4	24.7
% Rental market tenants	57.2	53.0
% Social housing tenants	14.4	12.5
% Band-owned housing	3.0	3.0
% Shelter or group home	0.1	0.0
% Living on the street	1.1	1.5
% Living with family or friends	3.8	5.2
Number of food banks reporting	32	27



DETAILED NATIONAL & PROVINCIAL FINDINGS

NOVA SCOTIA

19,664
people helped by
food banks
in March

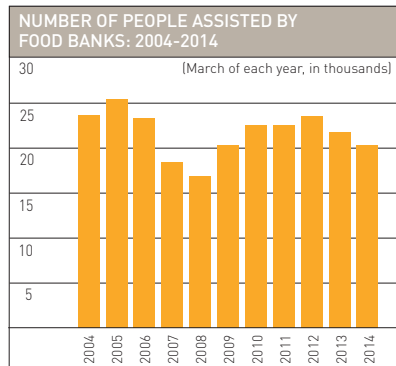
+16.3%
change
since 2008

29.2%
are children

KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Individuals assisted by food banks	19,664	21,760	23,561	22,505	22,573	20,344	16,915
% Change, 2008-2014	16.3%						
% Change, 2013-2014	-9.6%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	32.5%	37.0%	55.6%	41.5%	68.1%	57.4%	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	29.2%	32.0%	32.6%	31.5%	33.0%	34.1%	35.0%
Households assisted by food banks	9,405	9,789	10,626	10,814	10,840	9,605	7,926
% Households assisted for the first time	9.6%	5.6%	5.1%	6.9%	7.3%	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	2.09%	2.30%	2.49%	2.39%	2.40%	2.17%	1.81%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	45.6	44.7
% Post-secondary students	0.8	0.8
% Age 65+	4.8	5.1
% Aboriginal persons	2.7	2.7
% Immigrants or refugees	0.7	0.0

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	16.6	17.1
% Two-parent families	18.2	19.5
% Couples with no children	18.5	19.9
% Single people	46.7	43.6
Number of food banks reporting	72	42



PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	13.5	7.8
% Employment Insurance	5.1	3.8
% Social assistance	44.2	59.2
% Disability-related income support	17.9	10.7
% Pension	11.0	10.3
% Student loans/scholarships	0.7	0.3
% No income	4.1	3.2
% Other	3.4	4.9
Number of food banks reporting	22	14

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	18.3	19.9
% Rental market tenants	67.8	61.5
% Social housing tenants	9.6	13.8
% Band-owned housing	2.5	1.5
% Shelter or group home	0.5	1.3
% Living on the street	0.0	0.0
% Living with family or friends	1.2	2.1
Number of food banks reporting	26	16



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

3,432
people helped by
food banks
in March

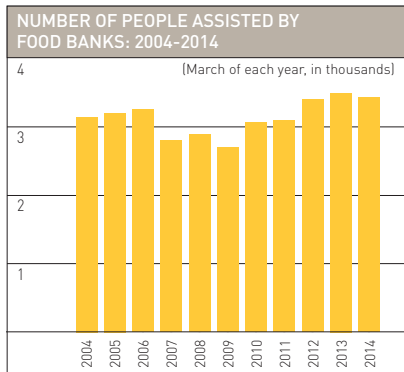
+18.7%
change
since 2008

38.0%
are children

KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Individuals assisted by food banks	3,432	3,502	3,406	3,095	3,068	2,706	2,892
% Change, 2008-2014	18.7%						
% Change, 2013-2014	-2.0%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	40.0%	66.7%	66.7%	66.7%	100.0%	50.0%	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	38.0%	35.8%	34.1%	35.3%	35.5%	35.8%	35.4%
Households assisted by food banks	1,249	1,278	1,413	1,231	1,198	1,083	1,155
% Households assisted for the first time	3.3%	3.4%	4.9%	7.0%	6.9%	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	2.36%	2.40%	2.33%	2.16%	2.17%	1.93%	1.95%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	51.0	46.0
% Post-secondary students	0.4	0.2
% Age 65+	4.5	4.3
% Aboriginal persons	2.8	0.3
% Immigrants or refugees	3.0	0.0

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	22.4	21.4
% Two-parent families	25.8	31.3
% Couples with no children	12.7	8.5
% Single people	39.1	38.8
Number of food banks reporting	5	2



PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	19.9	21.3
% Employment Insurance	17.3	24.8
% Social assistance	36.4	24.8
% Disability-related income support	8.9	13.4
% Pension	10.8	9.9
% Student loans/scholarships	0.4	0.0
% No income	2.3	2.5
% Other	3.9	3.5
Number of food banks reporting	5	2

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	13.5	31.2
% Rental market tenants	69.7	44.6
% Social housing tenants	11.3	22.3
% Band-owned housing	2.3	0.0
% Shelter or group home	0.4	0.0
% Living on the street	0.0	0.0
% Living with family or friends	2.8	2.0
Number of food banks reporting	5	2



DETAILED NATIONAL & PROVINCIAL FINDINGS

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

26,617
people helped by
food banks
in March

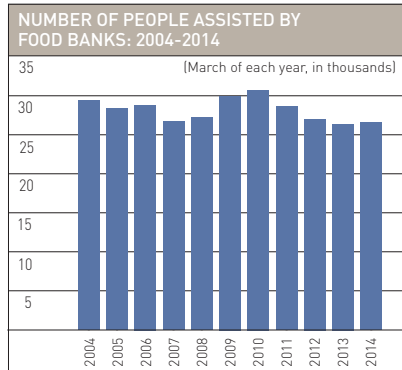
-2.4%
change
since 2008

37.7%
are children

KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Individuals assisted by food banks	26,617	26,412	27,044	28,642	30,800	30,014	27,260
% Change, 2008-2014	-2.4%						
% Change, 2013-2014	0.8%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	60.6%	37.9%	51.9%	40.7%	67.9%	70.4%	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	37.7%	37.9%	38.8%	37.3%	37.3%	37.4%	38.4%
Households assisted by food banks	8,977	8,923	8,950	9,090	9,003	9,235	8,037
% Households assisted for the first time	4.5%	4.4%	4.7%	4.8%	5.4%	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	5.05%	5.14%	5.29%	5.63%	6.03%	5.90%	5.36%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	57.8	48.8
% Post-secondary students	1.6	1.2
% Age 65+	3.9	5.8
% Aboriginal persons	9.7	16.7
% Immigrants or refugees	0.0	0.0

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	35.5	26.0
% Two-parent families	24.8	18.5
% Couples with no children	10.7	13.2
% Single people	29.0	42.3
Number of food banks reporting	25	18



PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	9.2	5.0
% Employment Insurance	12.5	5.5
% Social assistance	71.4	77.4
% Disability-related income support	0.5	2.6
% Pension	5.8	5.2
% Student loans/scholarships	0.1	1.1
% No income	0.2	2.0
% Other	0.3	1.0
Number of food banks reporting	22	17

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	12.1	19.2
% Rental market tenants	22.7	60.6
% Social housing tenants	64.5	17.6
% Band-owned housing	0.0	0.1
% Shelter or group home	0.0	0.0
% Living on the street	0.1	0.1
% Living with family or friends	0.6	2.4
Number of food banks reporting	22	16



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METHODOLOGY

The primary purpose of the annual *HungerCount* survey is to provide a national and provincial snapshot of food bank and meal program use in Canada. This is accomplished by counting the number of individuals who receive groceries from food banks and their affiliated agencies during the month of March, and by counting the number of meals and snacks prepared and served by a variety of organizations. Information is collected on the number of unique individuals that receive food from food banks, the total number of visits to food banks, and the total number of meals and snacks prepared and served by meal programs. March has been chosen as the study period because it is an unexceptional month, without predictable high or low use patterns. Since March is used consistently, we are

able to make relevant comparisons in use patterns over time.

The survey also records information on several characteristics of those assisted by food banks, including age category, gender, Aboriginal identity, immigration/refugee status, and student status at the individual level, and primary source of income, household composition, and housing type at the household level. As well, the survey collects information on various operational aspects relevant to food banks and meal programs.

Surveys were sent to all known Canadian food banks and meal programs in February 2014. When necessary, *HungerCount* Provincial Coordinators contacted organizations prior to the submission deadline to ensure a high response rate and to clarify survey

questions. Completed surveys were returned to Provincial Coordinators, who checked responses for accuracy and completeness before forwarding paper or electronic copies to Food Banks Canada.

Throughout the summer, Food Banks Canada staff and volunteers worked with *HungerCount* Provincial Coordinators to collect outstanding surveys and resolve any inconsistencies in responses. Survey data were entered into a database, checked for accuracy, and analyzed by Food Banks Canada staff. In cases where surveys were not completed by operating food banks, conservative estimates were produced in consultation with Provincial Coordinators, using 2013 figures as a guide.

TABLE 2: HUNGERCOUNT SURVEY PARTICIPATION, 2014

Province/Territory	Number of Known Food Programs	Number of Participating Food Programs	% of Food Programs Participating	Number of Food Programs with Estimated Information	Number of Agencies Included	Total Organizations Included
British Columbia	93	93	100%	0	328	421
Alberta	113	79	70%	30	413	526
Saskatchewan	36	36	100%	0	63	99
Manitoba	54	54	100%	0	320	374
Ontario	503	426	85%	51	1,270	1,773
Quebec	994	946	95%	0	0	994
New Brunswick	61	59	97%	0	25	86
Nova Scotia	169	149	88%	20	25	194
Prince Edward Island	6	5	83%	1	7	13
Newfoundland & Labrador	37	35	95%	0	64	101
Territories	12	11	92%	1	0	12
Canada	2,078	1,893	91%	103	2,515	4,593

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Food Banks Canada thanks the hundreds of thousands of people accessing food programs, and the thousands of staff and volunteers who, every year, contribute information to the *HungerCount* report. Without their efforts and participation this research would not be possible.

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Low-Cost Subsidized Venezuela State Food Markets Under Spotlight over Price Rises



By Jeremy Morgan
Latin American Herald Tribune staff

CARACAS – Critics of the government – and there appears to be no shortage of them when it comes to the relentless rise in Venezuela's cost of living – claim that inflationary pressures are building up just where they're not supposed to be doing so.

The latest bad news from the inflation front is that prices are said to be shooting through the roof at Mercal – President Hugo Chávez's network of low-cost subsidized government outlets of household and food essentials, above all food, a system intended to leaven the load on the poorer sectors of the population.

In theory at least, food and other goods are sold through Mercal on the basis of state subsidies and the lower costs that are supposed to come with the economies of bulk purchasing.

Chávez devised Mercal so that ordinary people didn't have to depend for basic necessities on private sector suppliers and vendors, which he accused of exploiting the people in a classic case of the "neoliberal" and "savage" free market capitalism he frequently rails against in public speeches.

William Ojeda, a senior figure in Un Nuevo Tiempo (UNT), an Opposition party, suggested that the president might look to the mote in his own eye – that is, Mercal. There, he claimed, "savage capitalism" had arrived with a vengeance.

UNT, he said, had carried out a survey of prices at Mercal, and these had given the lie to presidential assertions to the effect that it was the private sector that was chiefly to blame for inflation.

Not so, said, Ojeda. The annualized rate of inflation at Mercal was running at an average 67%, he claimed. This was hitting hardest at the poorest people in the country, many of whom had to survive on the minimum basic wage of a little under BsF1,000 a month, he pointed out.

Ojeda went on to say that 14 subsidized products were sold through Mercal – and he claimed that prices there for no less than 11 of these had been rising "in a silent way" this year. Then he produced a string of examples to back up his point, which was that the rate of price rises was even higher at Mercal than in the private sector.



At Mercal, he claimed, the price of chicken had leapt by 174.7% since the turn of the



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year, pasta 78.1%, lentils 68.3%, powdered milk 67.8%, peas 63.4%, beef 61.7%, sugar 57.6%, prepared flour 39.3%, rice 32.3%, and margarine 27.66%.

Only the last -- margarine -- is just about in the middle of

Finance Minister Alí Rodríguez Araque's forecast for overall inflation for the whole of this year, which he has most recently pitched at between 26 and 28%.

At best, the minister's prognosis, if it pans out, would represent scant improvement on last year's officially estimated increase in consumer prices of 30.9%, which sceptics say seriously under-estimated the real trend after (equally official) increases of 27.1% in 2007 and 17.5% in 2006.

Ojeda was out to show that the government was practicing precisely the sort of cruel and crude exploitative capitalism for which it lambasts others. "We're in the presence of the application of neoliberal policies of the most savage kind, and which affect the neediest families in our country," he said.

Several reports have spoken of a suspicion that supplies provided by the government at low cost to Mercal distributors and retailers are finding their way to other vendors -- at, of course, a suitably sharp mark-up.

The government's response to this, at least in the public domain, has been to stage a series of high-profile raids on supermarkets and large food producers, not least of them some of the biggest such companies in the country, including internationally-known foreign names.

At the same time, there's been a flurry of official claims of widespread smuggling of low-priced Venezuelan food across the border to Colombia, where presumably it fetches higher prices.

Chávez has used this at least partly to justify his outright blockade on cross-border trade with the neighboring country. While the government points the finger at Colombia, elsewhere it's suggested that at quite a lot of food is trickling out of Mercal, some of which might be finding its way across the border.

However, it would appear that Mercal food is not only being sneaked over the frontier but also moved around inside the country in search of greater profits. On Monday, the scientific and investigative police, CICPC, announced that two large refrigerated container trucks had been caught loaded with 250 cases of beef the day before.

A statement released by CICPC said six individuals had been arrested in connection with this. It then emerged that four of the detainees were allegedly employees of Corporación de Abastacimeinto y Servicios Agrícolas, more commonly known as CASA. This is the company which supplies produce to Mercal.



The two truckloads of beef had apparently been travelling under false transit permits issued by somebody at CASA. The beef had arrived at La Guaira port north of Caracas, supposedly destined for the capital.

Instead, the police say, the beef went on its way to Barquisimeto in Lara state. There, it was expected to fetch at least BsF300 a kilo

under the counter. That made for a 600% profit margin for those behind the scam, the cops said, adding that more arrests were on the way.



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Whether Ojeda knew about this particular case when he spoke out about his suspicions of what was going on at Mercal wasn't clear. Be that as it may, he was out to hoist the government on its own petard, and take a swipe at Chávez's penchant for multi-billion dollar arms purchases on the way.

"We're in the presence of the application of neoliberal policies of the most savage kind, which affect the neediest families in the country," he declared. It is precisely among the poor that the president has the basis of his populist political power base.

Noting that the government was supposedly poised to unveil a batch of economic measures (which had yet to see the light of day as he spoke), Ojeda said it also had to "resolve the situation of the Venezuelans who only possess the minimum wage to survive, instead of spending \$5 billion on buying arms, it should resolve the food problems of our people."



**NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Food Security in a Climate Perspective

A strategy
developed in cooperation with
Ministry of Agriculture and Food,
Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs,
Ministry of the Environment

ENGLISH SUMMARY
January 2013





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Preamble

In 2010 almost one billion people did not have enough food to meet their basic nutritional needs. This is a serious human rights violation, because the right to food is a universal human right that is embodied in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

In its policy platform for the period 2009–13, the Government therefore emphasised the need to intensify Norway's efforts to promote global food security by focusing on climate-resilient agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture in development cooperation. This was followed up in the white paper Towards Greener Development (Meld. St. 14 (2010–2011)), which describes the tools Norway will use to promote green development strategies. Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative, promotion of renewable energy and support for climate change adaptation, with an emphasis on agriculture, are the main pillars of our efforts to promote green development.

We will give priority to increasing food production, especially by strengthening small-scale climate-resilient agriculture, and to the development of competence about the importance of ecosystems for climate resilience and access to water. We intend to promote research and private-sector engagement in African countries and to support measures to reduce wastage in food production. We also intend to promote the rights of smallholders, particularly women, and to strengthen the fisheries and aquaculture sector and the efforts of regional organisations in the agricultural sector. This will require close cooperation with national authorities and support for their plans for boosting production and food security. It will also mean intensifying international cooperation on improving the global framework conditions for achieving food security.

The present strategy, developed jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs, and the Ministry of the Environment, is intended to promote increased food production in a changing climate. It covers the period 2013 – 2015. The Strategy is the Norwegian government's most important answer to the developing countries' demands for greater support for climate change adaptation.

Heikki Holmås
Minister of International Development

Trygve Slagsvold Vedum
Minister of Agriculture and Food

Lisbeth Berg Hansen
Minister of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs

Bård Vegar Solhjell
Minister of the Environment



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An integrated approach

The productivity of African agriculture is significantly lower than that on other continents. This contributes to maintaining poverty and increasing vulnerability to climate change. In some countries, especially in the Sahel region, food production could be halved by 2020 as a result of climate change. The need for food also leads to clearing of new land for agricultural production. This is a significant cause of deforestation, which in turn increases net emissions by reducing greenhouse gas sequestration and causing loss of biodiversity and changes in global and local rainfall patterns, and diminishes forest food resources.

In the future, agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture will have to satisfy the growing demand for food caused by the growing world population combined with a growing scarcity of resources for food production. Overuse of water, impoverishment and pollution of soil, overfishing and loss of biodiversity resulting from unsustainable production methods threaten global food security and in many areas also livelihoods, especially those of the poor. Better methods and integrated land use management are needed in order to increase food production and make it more climate resilient, and to reduce the pressure on natural resources.

Countries that recognise the links between climate change, energy and agriculture will be able to take a more comprehensive approach to green growth and to provide more favourable conditions for sustainable development that will ensure safe, sufficient food for everyone. Norway will therefore contribute to improved coordination between these three pillars of food security in countries that have the capacity to adopt a comprehensive approach of this kind.

Food loss

Food loss is a serious problem. About one-third of all produced food is never consumed, for a number of reasons. Reducing food loss will yield considerable benefits – economic, environmental and in terms of equitable distribution – throughout the value chain. In developing countries, food loss is primarily due to inefficient harvesting methods, lack of competence, and post-harvest losses. Wastage also occurs as a result of lack of infrastructure, poor transport conditions, poorly developed local markets, and an imbalance between supply and demand.

Equitable distribution and gender equality

Today enough food is produced in the world as a whole. The fact that so many people suffer from hunger and malnutrition is therefore not only a question of production, but of social, political and economic factors that prevent food from being equitably distributed. Food insecurity is thus a political and technical problem that requires a major investment in the agricultural sector. In order for growth in productivity to improve food security and reduce poverty, investments must be made along the whole value chain. They must cover access to water, fertiliser, agricultural tools, improved seed, better agricultural methods, and improved post-harvest storage conditions. Agricultural development is also dependent on sound infrastructure, price information, and access to credit and to local, national and if possible international markets.

Norwegian support for development should be used for the benefit of small-scale African food producers. Many of these are women. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), equal access to productive resources and equal opportunities for women and men could increase local crop yields by up to 30 %. If climate-resilient agriculture is to be successful in boosting productivity and reducing poverty, women must be given real rights and opportunities. Strengthening the position of women in



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agriculture is an essential condition for greater food security and a more equitable distribution of resources. Women's right to own and inherit land, and their access to factor inputs, education and markets, are vital factors in this context. A sound agricultural policy therefore needs a mainstreamed gender dimension.

Marine resources

Fish is a valuable, sustainable and nutritious resource that contributes to food security. Much of the fishing in developing countries is done by artisanal fishers using simple technology, and their catches are mainly processed and sold locally. Women are often in a majority in this part of the value chain. Small-scale fisheries play an important role in local food security and local employment. Sustainable management and utilisation of marine resources helps to secure these jobs and increases access to food.

Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU fishing) reduces the resource base and poor people's incomes, and limits their access to food. IUU fishing is estimated to result in annual losses of around USD 1 billion in sub-Saharan Africa. It is also an unsustainable exploitation of natural resources and has serious long-term negative impacts on local businesses and development in the coastal communities concerned. Measures should be targeted at both commercial vessels that take advantage of inadequate monitoring capacity and local fishers using illegal fishing gear and operating in large enough numbers to deplete the resource base.

Investment

There is a considerable need for investment in African agriculture, both in small-scale farming and in large-scale operations. Measures to promote large-scale commercial agriculture are included in the national plans for growth and development of most African countries. However, if agriculture on this scale is not to result in unsustainable development, private investment must be regulated by strict requirements regarding environmental and social sustainability.

Large-scale commercial farming is dependent on access to capital from public and private investment, and a country wishing to attract investment in agriculture must provide good framework conditions. These must include predictable conditions, rules that permit return on invested capital, a taxation system that provides incentives to boost productivity, and clearly defined land tenure rights.

Large-scale projects can attract investment in infrastructure, introduce new, improved technology and create jobs in the formal and informal sectors. In addition, they can increase access to regional and international markets that also benefits smallholders.

Local ownership

Strong, free and locally organised civil society is a precondition for improving food security. Like the media, it serves as advocate and watchdog vis-à-vis the authorities and private actors. It also supplies services that complement public services and fill the gap before they are in place. In addition to local NGOs, Norwegian NGOs possess knowledge, experience and networks that will be needed in the years to come. Cooperation with these latter organisations, and to an increasing extent with their partner organisations in the South, is essential to the Government's efforts to promote food security.

Farmers' organisations play an important role in food security, not only as a local voice to authorities and donors, but also in spreading knowledge about locally adapted cultivation



methods and other agricultural concerns. Supporting the efforts of farmers' organisations to obtain better framework conditions is therefore essential to the development and facilitation of climate-smart agriculture.

Norwegian focus and efforts – financial framework and time horizon

Implementation of the strategy will be included in the work plans of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in the allocation letters to Norad and the embassies. The Government will consider priorities and shifts in the aid budget in connection with the annual budget proposals. Annual status reports will be submitted on the implementation of the strategy, based on reports from embassies drawn up in cooperation with the national authorities and partner organisations involved.

A two-track implementation

1) Norway will promote food security in a climate change perspective at the international level and will through these efforts seek to strengthen the global institutional architecture for food security.

Food security, including the improvement of productivity in agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, together with ecosystem conservation, is among the main priorities of Norwegian development cooperation. Norway intends to take a more active part in the discussion on food security in the UN system, in international financial institutions, and with both new and existing partners, in order to ensure that global priorities, guidelines and framework conditions strengthen the efforts to promote food security and the right to food at the national and local levels. Securing long-term access to food requires a broad approach that covers climate change and environmental considerations, integrated natural resources management, production conditions and a rights-based perspective.

Norway will act as a voice for the demand for formal and informal rights of small-scale food producers, especially women. Measures enabling smallholders and artisanal fishers to adapt to climate change and practise sustainable management will receive particular attention. The whole value chain must be taken into account. Smallholders also need access to improved seed, factor inputs, credit, education and well-functioning markets. Wastage and food losses along the value chain need to be reduced. Access to food depends not only on an adequate food supply to the market but also on people's ability to pay for it.

Norway will also advocate more sustainable national and local management of marine and terrestrial natural resources.

2) Norwegian aid to agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture will be increased.

Norwegian support for food security will be increased by NOK 500 million over the next three years (2013–15). Supported measures must meet the quality requirements for performance and good management that apply to all Norwegian development aid. The increase for 2013 will amount to up to NOK 200 million, which will be allocated under different budget chapters. In 2013, around 50 % of the allocation will go to bilateral cooperation and the remainder to multilateral organisations. The increases for 2014–15 shall be allocated from within existing budgetary frameworks.



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Aid to individual countries

a) Synergy between the Climate and Forest Initiative, efforts to promote renewable energy, and support for agriculture

In **Ethiopia, Mozambique** and **Tanzania** agricultural support should be viewed in the context of the Climate and Forest Initiative and the promotion of renewable energy. This will strengthen the country's capacity for integrated land use management. The intention is to enable the country concerned to increase food production without increasing deforestation. Better cultivation methods and good market access will encourage this trend. In Tanzania support for the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) will be given priority. In Mozambique support for the Beira Agricultural Growth Corridor (BAGC) will be considered. In connection with these corridors, efforts will be made to facilitate the expansion of public-private partnerships, for example with the Norwegian company Yara. In Ethiopia most of the support will be used to strengthen the authorities' own strategy for green development. Cooperation with a number of different actors, such as NGOs, academic institutions and bilateral and multilateral partners, will be sought.

b) A stronger focus on climate-resilient agriculture

Support for climate-resilient agriculture in **Zambia** and **Malawi** will be increased. There are already programmes for improving production methods that reduce the impacts of climate variations and erosion, and increase crop yields. The programmes consist of proven measures targeted at smallholders, especially women, and include training, access to factor inputs, product processing and improving market access.

c) Preventing famine in drought areas

The famine in the Sahel belt is being aggravated by violent conflicts and the resulting refugee flows. This reduces access to food and to land areas that can be used for food production. In 2013, Norway will primarily provide NOK 30 million in support for the Nigerians Nourish Nigerians (3N) initiative in **Niger**, and the money is being channelled through the World Food Programme (WFP) in the form of earmarked funds. In autumn 2012, Norway entered into a four-year agreement with WFP that ensures predictable funding and enables it to follow the organisation's activities through annual bilateral meetings. Norway will also consider reviving its cooperation with Mali as soon as the political situation allows. Efforts to prevent a food crisis in the Horn of Africa will be continued through humanitarian channels.

d) Fisheries and aquaculture

Norway is intensifying its efforts to promote sustainable fisheries and aquaculture management. Norway has expertise on every stage of the value chain and can provide advice and cooperation on efforts to ensure that fish becomes an even more important source of food. Aid for fisheries management and monitoring will make it possible to exploit this resource more fully, create a basis for commercial activity and increase access to food.

Norway will consider continuing the cooperation with Namibia on support for a revision of the country's fisheries legislation, and also whether to initiate projects under the bilateral agreement with Angola. The long-term cooperation with Mozambique, including on development of the aquaculture industry, will be strengthened and given a more commercial turn when the institutional framework is in place.

Norway will, in cooperation with international organisations, intensify its efforts to prevent IUU fishing in Africa and on promoting more sustainable fisheries management with a view to increasing food security. Cooperation with countries in West Africa that have signed the



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agreement on the Continental Shelf Initiative is a possibility. Norway will, in cooperation with FAO on completion and implementation of the Guidelines for Sustainable Small Scale Fisheries Development.

Cooperation with FAO on a programme to support the establishment of aquaculture in sub-Saharan Africa will be considered. The aim of the programme will be to facilitate financially and environmentally sustainable aquaculture based on an ecosystem approach.

Norway will intensify its work in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, primarily the work of assessment and monitoring of marine resources under the EAF-Nansen Project. Norway will also contribute to the practice of ecosystem-based fisheries management in developing countries, with a stronger focus on climate change and its impacts on marine resources.

Norway will consider supporting a programme for monitoring the presence of pollutants in fish from West African fisheries. A project for sampling and analysis could be conducted in cooperation with the EAF-Nansen Project.

e) Private sector development

Norwegian support for individual countries will be primarily directed at promoting public-private partnerships and providing incentives for private investment, for example by supporting value chain programmes. This will involve continuing the strategic cooperation with Norwegian and African private sectors, which is partly based on Norwegian business schemes in selected African countries.

Norway will intensify its efforts to ensure that developing countries produce food that is safe and can be sold in national and world markets. This means for example supporting efforts to ensure that food products meet the requirements set out in the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, including the international standards developed by the Codex Alimentarius, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and, to a growing extent, the private standards set by major international trade operators. These standards and requirements also apply to animal health in general and to plant health.

Regional cooperation

Norway will strengthen its cooperation with African countries by increasing its support for regional organisations and initiatives. This will mean stepping up the support to the African Union/New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and regional African organisations. It is particularly important to support the emphasis on climate change and women in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), and the development and implementation of national plans in line with this emphasis. Norway will also consider stimulating cooperation between coastal states with adjacent exclusive economic zones on combating IUU fishing more effectively.

The cooperation with TerrAfrica (coordinated by NEPAD) on sustainable land management will be deepened. Cooperation with the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) will be continued, with the aim of supporting climate-smart agricultural programmes in selected countries. In the research sector, support for the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) will be continued. The possibility of strengthening South-South cooperation between Embrapa and CAADP, particularly in Portuguese-speaking African countries, will be considered. Norway will examine the question of funding similar



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South–South research cooperation between a number of Asian and African countries on Sustainable Rice Intensification (SRI), in which Bioforsk plays a central role.

Multilateral cooperation


Norway will contribute financially to the work for global food security, primarily through the UN organisations WFP, FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), but also through closer cooperation with other multilateral organisations such as the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation and the African Development Bank. Priority will be given to strengthening the work on climate change adaptation and increasing women’s influence and participation in primary industries, including their access to means of production. Norway will also consider supporting the cooperation between UN Women, FAO, WFP and IFAD. The present cooperation with FAO will be continued and strengthened. Norway is thereby contributing to the long-term efforts of FAO in the fields of capacity-building and development of norms and standards. This includes reducing food loss along the whole value chain, preventing plant and animal diseases, and intensifying the work for conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources. In this connection Norway will consider supporting the efforts of small-scale food producers in developing countries on conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, partly through contributions to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

Norway will strengthen the efforts to improve conditions for artisanal fishers in its cooperation with FAO and in accordance with the Guidelines for Sustainable Small Scale Fisheries Development. The efforts to improve women’s position in the value chain will also be strengthened. The broad-based efforts to comply with the Aichi Targets under the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 will be continued.

Civil society

The present strategy is intended to encourage African farmers’ organisations to become involved in climate-resilient agriculture. Civil society organisations will also be valuable partners in the efforts to strengthen the position of small-scale food producers and women’s formal and informal property rights in particular. Norway will continue and consider increasing its support for the establishment of farming cooperatives. An increase in support to farmers’ organisations and fisheries and aquaculture organisations will also be considered.

The Venezuelan Food Sovereignty Experiment

 www.resilience.org/stories/2015-03-10/the-venezuelan-food-sovereignty-experiment

Christina Schiavoni. Practicing traditional agriculture in Comuna Maria Teresa Angulo, Sanare, Lara state.

In Brief

In 1999, at the start of its process of social transformation known as the Bolivarian Revolution, Venezuela became among the world's first countries to adopt a national policy of *food sovereignty*. Its newly reformed constitution guaranteed its citizens the right to food through a secure national food supply based on sustainable agriculture as a strategic framework for rural development, to be carried out through a series of laws, institutes, and programs. This move could be seen as a leap of faith for a highly urbanized country that had largely abandoned agriculture as it built its economy around its petroleum industry over the last century. And yet, against these odds, Venezuela has moved forward in its efforts to build food sovereignty, drastically cutting hunger while bolstering domestic food production. This has been carried out through a host of government programs, in partnership with communities, ranging from land reform to feeding programs to urban agriculture. Today, some of the most promising efforts toward food sovereignty in Venezuela are coming from citizen-run social institutions known as *comunas*, which are forging relationships and carrying out innovative projects across the urban-rural divide.



Key Concepts

- Food sovereignty—defined as "the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems"—is a concept coming from social movements in response to the injustices of the global food system.
- Thus far, a handful of countries have adopted food sovereignty into state policy. Among the first to do so was Venezuela in 1999. This was a bold move for a highly urbanized country that had abandoned its agriculture sector as it focused instead on oil production over the last century.
- Today, there is a wide range of support for food production and distribution in both rural and urban areas coming from the Venezuelan government, working in conjunction with citizen-led efforts. These initiatives have dramatically reduced hunger while bolstering domestic food production.
- Some of the most promising efforts toward food sovereignty in Venezuela today are coming from citizen-run social institutions known as *comunas*, which are forging relationships and carrying out innovative projects across the urban-rural divide.

As I wandered through the streets of Caracas on my first trip to Venezuela nine years ago, a huge urban farm in the midst of concrete high-rises caught my attention. It wasn't tucked away on a side street or in a residential area, but

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was right out in the middle of the bustling downtown. I asked a local walking by if he could tell me anything about the farm—whose initiative was it, how long had it been there, who farms the land? With a matter-of-fact shrug he said, "*Es parte del proceso.*" It's part of the process. Part of what process, I wondered. Did he mean Venezuela's broader process of political and social transformation, the Bolivarian Revolution? Or did he mean the efforts to transform Venezuela's food system? Later, I would learn that the two concepts were inseparable.

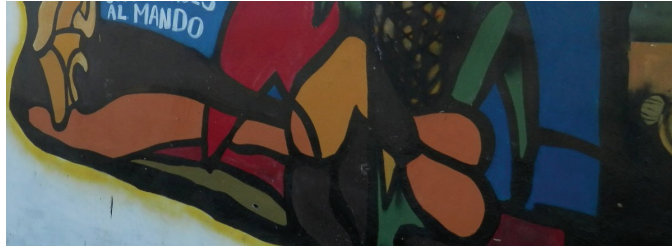
Now having followed the processes unfolding in Venezuela for nearly a decade, I often reflect back on this early moment for the meaning behind that simple exchange. In the US, where I'm from, there are also inspiring community food projects, which are local manifestations of the alternative food system that many hope for, dream about, and painstakingly work toward. Yet these still remain pockets of change in an otherwise broken system—in the US and globally—where profits come before people, good food is a privilege for those who can afford it rather than a right for all, and food production comes at the expense of farmers, workers, the environment, and human health. There is often talk of 'scaling up' positive models of food system change as a way forward, but there are few blueprints or examples as to how this might be done.

In a handful of countries, however, such as in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, there are national efforts to create systemic change in food and agriculture—and their advances and setbacks hold valuable lessons. Among these is Venezuela, which is home to one of the most fascinating experiments in food and agriculture today. The crux of Venezuela's experiment is an attempted 180° shift from a situation of *food dependency*, with high rates of imports controlled by a few powerful companies, to one of *food sovereignty*, in which the country is able to feed itself from its own food supply and people have greater control over the food they eat and produce.

Food is Political

It is an understatement to say that Venezuela's late president, Hugo Chavez, and his predecessor, Nicolas Maduro, have been magnets for negative attention by the mainstream media. A rare accuracy in current media reports on Venezuela, however, is that food is a highly politicized issue there. What the reports fail to mention, though, is that this is nothing new. In fact, issues directly connected to food were among the sparks that ignited the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela. On February 27, 1989, hundreds of thousands of people poured into the capital from the impoverished hillside communities on the periphery of Caracas, protesting in the streets as they looted shops first for food, then for other basic goods, and finally for anything in sight.¹ The protest was precipitated by then Venezuelan president Carlos Andrés/ Pérez signing a deal with the IMF to enter Venezuela into a structural adjustment program. This led to an abrupt surge in food and fuel prices in which the cost of bread rose by over 600 percent.¹ President Pérez's response to the massive mobilization, known as the Caracazo, was to order the military to open fire. The official death toll was 276 civilians, with actual deaths estimated in the thousands. Corresponding events transpired in cities across Venezuela that same day. The Caracazo is credited not only with being one of the earliest public protests against neoliberalism but also a defining moment of popular power. It ushered in a politically heated decade and paved the way for the rise of the Bolivarian Revolution following the election of Hugo Chávez Frías in 1998.²





Christina Schiavoni. A mural supporting “the process” at La Comuna Ataroa, Lara State.

For insights into why an oil-rich country like Venezuela would embark on an ambitious food sovereignty experiment, it is important to understand the basic context that gave rise to the Caracazo. The hillside shantytowns of Caracas are a visual representation of Venezuela’s withdrawal from agriculture as the country developed its petroleum industry beginning in the early 1900s. As attention turned to oil, both the land-owning elites and the government lost interest in agriculture and stopped investing in land.³ The flight of capital from the countryside was accompanied by a mass exodus of *campesinos* (peasant farmers and rural workers) into the cities, particularly Caracas.³ Finding little work, many *campesinos* were pushed to the edge of existence, living in extreme poverty. For those remaining in the countryside—just over 10 percent of the population by 1999—the situation was equally tenuous.⁴ Seventy-five percent of the land was concentrated among five percent of the largest land owners while 75 percent of the smallest land owners shared only six percent of the land.⁵ These small land owners also faced a lack of basic public services and received little or no technical or material support to engage in agricultural production. The abandonment of its agriculture sector led Venezuela to become among the most urbanized countries in Latin America and the first country in the region to be a net importer of food.⁵ At the beginning of the Bolivarian Revolution in 1999, the country was importing an estimated 70 to 80 percent of its food supply—at prices largely out of reach by the poor—and the Caracazo was still fresh in the public consciousness.

It was against this backdrop that renewed attention to food and agriculture became a strategic priority of the Bolivarian Revolution.

Sowing the Seeds of Food Sovereignty

The foundation for Venezuela’s current food sovereignty efforts was laid in a series of articles in its newly reformed constitution, passed by popular referendum in 1999. Article 305 states:

*The State shall promote sustainable agriculture as the strategic basis for overall rural development, and consequently shall guarantee the population a secure food supply, defined as the sufficient and stable availability of food within the national sphere and timely and uninterrupted access to the same for consumers....Food production is in the national interest and is fundamental to the economic and social development of the Nation.*⁶

Today, a broad range of both government and citizen-led institutions and initiatives are aimed at carrying out the provisions of Article 305. On the production end, there are numerous programs to bolster domestic agriculture and provide support to small and midscale farmers. Such measures include a land reform process that has redistributed large landholdings to over 200,000 farming families,⁷ totaling more than a million people—roughly half of the rural population.⁸ Once land is secured, farmers then have government assistance to access tools, inputs, credit, training and technical assistance, and support in receiving fair prices for their products.⁹ Similar support structures exist for fisherfolk, who have also benefited from a ban on environmentally destructive, large-scale bottom trawling boats off



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the coast. Other advances for Venezuela's long-marginalized food providers include a debt eradication program and the unprecedented granting of pensions to farmers and fisherfolk.^{10,11} Through this reinvestment in domestic food production, Venezuela has reached self-sufficiency in several foods of strategic importance, such as corn and pork.¹² Furthermore, the country has taken some important steps toward sustainable agriculture, including the availability of credit earmarked specifically toward agroecological purposes, such as seed saving and exchange and the use of biological pest control in place of pesticides. Agroecology advocates point out, however, that state support remains skewed toward industrial agriculture and are pushing for a more wholesale paradigm shift.



Christina Schiavoni. Youth involved in an intergenerational urban farming project in Caracas.

On the distribution end, perhaps the most far-reaching initiative is Mercal, a national network of government-run supermarkets selling foods at affordable, subsidized prices. With an emphasis on reaching the most underserved areas, Mercal outlets range from large supermarkets to small mobile markets and have distributed 12 million tons of food in the decade since their inception.¹³ A variety of other initiatives complementing Mercal bring the total number of government-run food retail outlets in Venezuela to 22,000.¹⁴ A recent addition is the piloting of mobile fish markets in collaboration with local fisherfolk.¹⁵

Yet another critical program is *casas de alimentación*, or 'feeding houses,' run through community-government partnerships in which community members lend their homes and labor and the government provides food and supplies. Through the *casas*, people provide those most vulnerable in their communities—pregnant/nursing mothers, children, elderly, and the sick—with nutritious meals free of charge. To date, 6,000 *casas* across the country are serving 900,000 people.¹⁶ Free nutritious meals are also spooned out to 4.3 million public school children through the School Feeding Program.¹⁷ Many workplaces additionally arrange free meals for their workers through the Worker Nutrition Law.¹⁸ Along with free meals for those who need them, there is an effort to make affordable meals more universally available. A growing chain of over 250 worker-run, government-supported *Arepera Venezuela* restaurants serves Venezuela's most popular traditional cuisine, the corn flour-based *arepa* with a variety of fillings, as an affordable and healthier alternative to corporate fast food.¹³ These restaurants pride themselves in supporting food sovereignty through using predominantly Venezuelan-grown ingredients produced through socialist production chains.¹⁹

Together, these programs and others have dramatically reduced hunger and food insecurity. Venezuela was recently



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recognized by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for surpassing the first Millennium Development Goal of halving hunger in advance of 2015.²⁰ According to a national census, 96.2 percent Venezuelans now eat 3 to 4 meals per day, and the government has pledged to reach the remaining 3.8 percent who do not, with the goal of achieving 'Zero Hunger' for Venezuela by 2019.²¹

Challenging Times

Ironically, these developments came at the same time that international media outlets were widely reporting food shortages in Venezuela—presenting quite a different scenario from that recognized by the FAO. The fact is, given the continued power of private companies in the supply chain, connecting the many dots between the production and distribution remains a major challenge for the Venezuelan government, and shortages of particular food (and some nonfood) items in retail outlets are still a regular occurrence.²² While some attribute this to government-set price regulations creating disincentives for companies to sell food products in the country, others point to politically motivated hoarding and withholding of products as a way to destabilize the government. Many see it as no coincidence that two items considered indispensable by Venezuelan households, that is, corn flour and toilet paper, were the two items most frequently missing from supermarket shelves in 2013. They see this as part of an 'economic war' by the members of the political opposition who own the country's largest private food companies.²³

The government has taken a series of measures to combat these shortages, including dialogue with the private sector, cracking down on illegal practices, and increasing imports of certain goods from neighboring countries. Venezuelan food activists say that the government's ability to ensure that the population's nutritional needs are not impeded by the periodic shortages demonstrates that Venezuela has reached food security but is still far from food *sovereignty*. "We know that food security is achieved through resources," said Laura Lorenzo, a representative of the Jirajara Peasant Movement. "But food sovereignty has to be a process coming from the bottom up—from the peasant, from the communities," she added.²⁴

Transformations on the Ground



Christina Schiavoni. An integrated urban farming project in Caracas.

Lorenzo's sentiments get to the heart of the matter. Systematic change is necessary to achieve food sovereignty, but the advancements made at the national level in Venezuela, while substantial, are not enough. Change must also



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happen at the community level. Indeed, this is what I find to be most encouraging in Venezuela—reaffirmed by my most recent visit in the summer of 2013.²⁵ A fundamental component of the Bolivarian Revolution has been a shift from *representative to participatory democracy*, in which ordinary citizens take on a more active role in politics and governance. One of the main vehicles for this has been communal councils: local, self-organized governing bodies through which communities determine their own priorities, manage their own budgets, and interface with the government. Supported by the Communal Council Law of 2006, there are upwards of 43,000 communal councils in Venezuela today.²⁶ Most recently, coming from both above and below is a major push toward the construction of new social institutions called *comunas* through the joining of multiple communal councils across a shared territory. The stated goal is for power to gradually be transferred from the state to the *comunas* as they become increasingly organized, with an ultimate goal of a transition from state power to popular power. As of October 2013, there were 220 *comunas* officially registered with the government and, according to a recent national census, over 1,000 more under construction throughout the country.^{27,28} By September 2014, the number of registered *comunas* had reached 803.²⁹ The construction of the *comunas* is seen as the cornerstone of the latest stage of the Bolivarian Revolution and has vast implications for food sovereignty.^{30,31}

One of the ways in which *comunas* and other citizen-led efforts in Venezuela are working toward food sovereignty is through attempts to bridge the urban–rural divide. In a country as highly urbanized as Venezuela, where upwards of 90 percent of the population lives in cities, food sovereignty will not be possible without the active participation of urban inhabitants. This is being addressed, not only through the creation of direct marketing channels such as farmers markets, but also through the co-construction of food sovereignty as a common political project shared by rural and urban Venezuelans. That is, people are increasingly seeing themselves as connected via the *process* of constructing food sovereignty. In this process, they are not only changing their relationships to one another, but also their *relationship to food* and to the processes of food and how it is produced, distributed, and consumed. Relatedly, a term gaining in popularity among rural and urban movements alike is *prosumidor(a)*, a combination of the words for producer (*productor(a)*) and consumer (*consumidor(a)*), in an attempt to blur the lines between the two.

One such *prosumidor*, Virgilio Durán of the Comuna Ataroa in the city of Barquisimeto, is encouraging the members of his urban comuna to grow food on rooftops, in patios, and in community gardens (practices for which communities can receive free technical assistance and supplies via state-supported programs). His vision is the creation of 'productive corridors' of traditional *conuco*-style agriculture that extend from the cities to the countryside (the *conuco* is a traditional form of small-scale agriculture with indigenous origins). Comuna Ataroa has also been able to acquire land on the outskirts of the city that is designated for agricultural production and has been partnering with rural producers on a large weekly farmers market, to complement distribution of staple goods coming from state channels.





Christina Schiavoni. An example of urban agriculture in Caracas.

Another example is the urban *comuna*, El Panal 2021 of Caracas, and a rural social movement, the Jirajara Peasant Movement, which are working together on multiple fronts. For instance, El Panal has an established sugar-packing local enterprise that the Jirajara movement will begin to supply with sugar. This demonstrates a point raised by a number of food sovereignty activists in Venezuela: that the people power and food processing infrastructure in cities such as Caracas provides ample possibility for partnership with rural producers in this area. El Panal and the Jirajara movement are also working on joint farmers markets and other distribution projects. Perhaps most interestingly, the Jirajara movement has helped El Panal to acquire land in the countryside, which they will work on in partnership. Robert Lanza of El Panal explains that the *comuna* has several other projects underway in the countryside, including training and educational components that enable *comuna* members to connect (or reconnect) to agricultural production. These efforts are complemented by a fairly extensive urban agriculture initiative within El Panal supported by state programs. This is part of a broader push for urban agriculture that has resulted in over 24,000 urban agriculture units throughout the country as of 2013, which the government has pledged to help triple.³² Lanza explains that it is a process of ongoing learning that combines life in the city with life in the countryside.

Lessons to be Learned

Unfortunately, the great strides being made towards food security and food sovereignty have gotten lost in the mix of news coverage on Venezuela. But I think it's important to share this story, not just for what it means for Venezuela and the surrounding region, but for those of us striving to change the food system in our own respective locations. Among the many lessons to be learned from the Venezuelan Food Sovereignty Experiment is that change is needed from above, below, and (as with the horizontal network of *comunas*) sideways. Similarly, food sovereignty is neither the task of the state nor of citizens alone, but rather it is the task of both, and how the two engage with each other is something that must constantly be renegotiated. Therefore, mechanisms that allow for ongoing debate and dialogue and for fluid interaction between citizens and their government are critical. And finally, food sovereignty is not something that just happens, nor is it a state to be attained. It's a process (*el proceso*, remember?)—and it's a process that we too can put into motion wherever we may be.

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Biodiversity to nurture people

Biodiversity provides the raw materials, combinations of genes, that produce the plant varieties and animal breeds upon which agriculture depends. Thousands of different and genetically unique varieties of crops and animal breeds owe their existence to 3 000 million years of natural biological evolution and to careful selection and nurturing by our farming and herding ancestors during 12 000 or so years of agriculture.

Whether they are used in traditional farming systems, conventional or modern breeding or genetic engineering, the genetic resources of plants and animals are a global asset of inestimable value to humankind. As genetic diversity erodes, our capacity to maintain and enhance crop forest and livestock productivity decreases along with the ability to respond to changing conditions. Genetic resources hold the key to increasing food security and improving the human condition.



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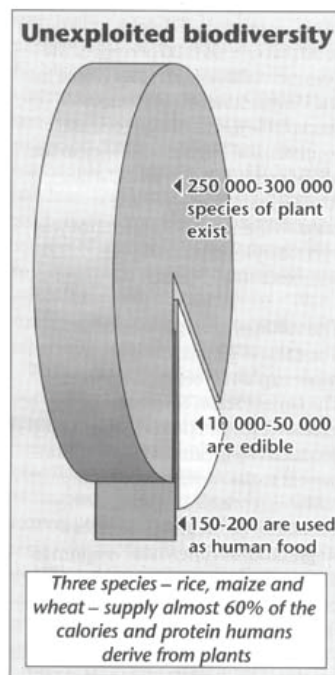
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Source: CGIAR.

Crop plants and their relatives

THE PLANT GENETIC DIVERSITY used in agriculture—the crops that feed us and their wild relatives—is being lost at an alarming rate. Just nine crops (wheat, rice, maize, barley, sorghum/millet, potato, sweet potato/yam, sugar cane and soybean) account for over 75 percent of the plant kingdom's contribution to human dietary energy.

None of the world's staple crops is likely to disappear. Yet they, too, are threatened—not by the loss of a single crop species such as wheat or rice, but by the loss of diversity within species.

Seeds of survival

All major food crops, the staple crops grown and consumed by the vast majority of the world's population, have their origins in the tropics and subtropics of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Over the years, farmers selected and domesticated all major food crops on which humankind depends today. Wheat and barley originated in the Near East, for example. Soybeans and rice came from China. Sorghum, yams and coffee came from Africa. Potatoes and tomatoes originated in the Andes of South America, and maize in South and Central America.

Crop genetic diversity is still concentrated mainly in regions known as “centres of diversity”, and located in the developing world. Farmers in these areas, who still practice traditional agriculture, cultivate local varieties known as “land races” that have been selected over many generations. Closely related species that survive in the wild are known as “wild relatives” of crops. Together, land races and their wild relatives are the richest repositories of crop genetic diversity.



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Thousands of different and genetically distinct varieties of major food crops owe their existence to millions of years of evolution and to careful selection and nurturing by our farmer ancestors during some 12 000 years of agriculture. This diversity protects the crop and helps it meet the demands of different environments and human needs. Potatoes, for instance, originated in the Andes, but nowadays they can be found growing below sea level behind Dutch dykes or high in the Himalayan mountains.

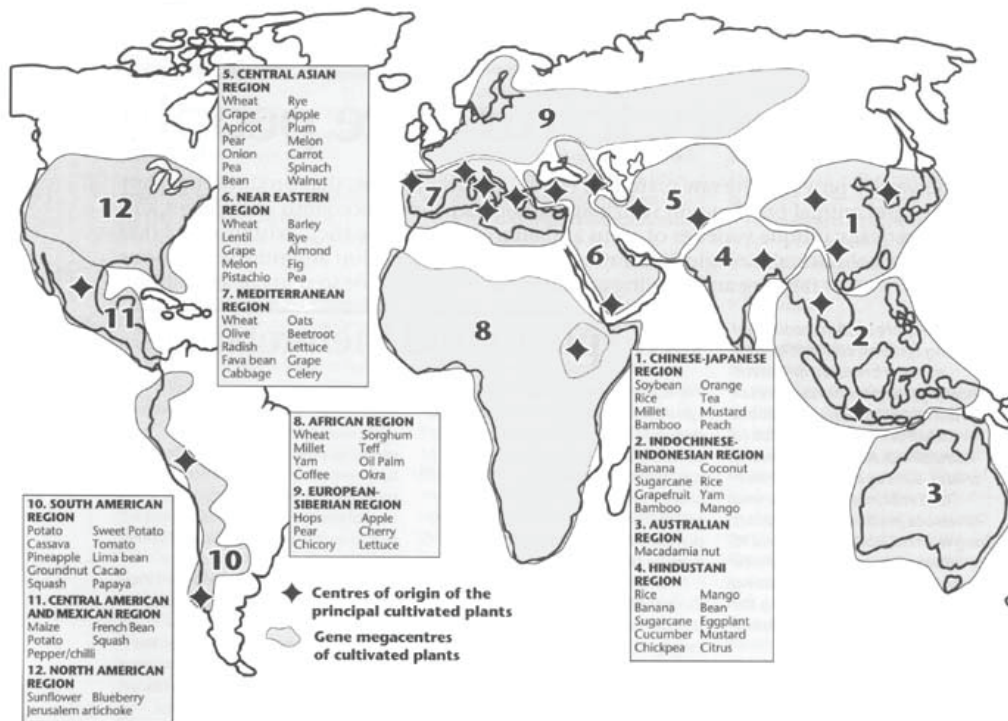
One variety of rice survives on just 60 centimetres of annual rainfall, another floats in 7.5 metres of water.

Agriculture's vanishing heritage

FAO estimates that since the beginning of this century about 75 percent of the genetic diversity of agricultural crops has been lost. We are becoming increasingly dependent on fewer and fewer crop varieties and, as a result, a rapidly diminishing gene pool. The primary reason is that commercial, uniform varieties are replacing traditional ones—even, and most threateningly, in the centres of diversity. When farmers abandon native land races to plant new varieties, the traditional ones die out. The introduction, beginning in the 1950s, of high-yielding grains developed by international crop breeding institutions led to the Green Revolution. The spread of the new varieties in the developing world was dramatic. By 1990 they covered half of all wheat lands, and more than half of all rice lands—a total of some 115 million ha. This resulted in large increases in yields...but large decreases in crop diversity.

The twelve megacentres of cultivated plants

(panels show selected food crops)



The erosion of crop genetic diversity poses a serious threat to food supplies. To maintain pest and disease resistance in major food crops, for instance, or to develop desirable traits such as drought tolerance or improved flavour, plant breeders require fresh infusions of genes from the farms, forests and fields of the developing world. Developing the high-yielding, elite cultivars of modern agriculture depends on a steady stream of new, exotic germplasm. Plant breeders continuously try to develop new varieties to keep one step ahead of thousands of pests and diseases. Without access to traditional land races and their wild relatives, modern agriculture would be seriously endangered.

Dangers of genetic uniformity

Industrialized agriculture favours genetic uniformity. Typically, vast areas are planted to a single, high-yielding variety—a practice known as monoculture—using expensive inputs such as irrigation, fertilizer and pesticides to maximize production. In the process, not only traditional crop varieties, but long-established farming ecosystems are obliterated. Genetic uniformity invites disaster because it makes a crop vulnerable to attack—a pest or disease that strikes one plant quickly spreads throughout the crop.

The Irish Potato Famine of the 1840s is a dramatic example of the dangers of genetic uniformity. None of the few varieties of the New World potato introduced into Europe in the 1500s were resistant to a potato blight that struck Ireland in the 1840s. The potato crop was wiped out. Over a million people died in the famine and a million more emigrated to the New World.

More recently, in 1970, genetic uniformity left the United States maize crop vulnerable to a blight that destroyed almost \$1 000 million worth of maize and reduced yields by as much as 50 percent. Over 80



percent of the commercial maize varieties grown in the United States at that time were susceptible to the virulent disease, southern leaf blight. Resistance to the blight was eventually found in an African maize variety called Mayorbella. A major catastrophe was averted by incorporating this resistance into commercial varieties.

The value of crop genetic diversity

The value of genetic diversity to modern plant breeding is enormous. The United States Government estimates that a 1 percent gain in crop productivity means a \$1 000 million benefit to the American economy. Italian scientists calculate that the benefits of exotic germplasm for a single crop, durum wheat, amount to \$300 million per year. Not only cultivated species but also the genes from wild relatives are enormously valuable. Between 1976 and 1980, wild species contributed an estimated \$340 million per year in yield and disease resistance to the farm economy of the United States.

Stunted rice: a wild plant to the rescue

During the 1970s the grassy-stunt virus devastated rice fields from India to Indonesia, endangering the world's single most important food crop. After a four-year search which screened over 17 000 cultivated and wild rice samples, disease resistance was found. Only one population of the species *Oryza nivara*, growing wild near Gonda in Uttar Pradesh, was found to have a single gene for resistance to grassy-stunt virus strain 1. Today, resistant rice hybrids containing the wild Indian gene are grown across 110 000 km² of Asian rice fields.

In the developing world, crop genetic diversity enables farmers to select crops suited to ecological needs and cultural traditions. Without this diversity, options for long-term sustainability are lost. This is particularly true in marginal areas with highly varied environments. The variety to a large extent determines the need for fertilizers, pesticides and irrigation. Communities that lose traditional varieties, adapted to local needs and conditions over centuries, risk becoming dependent on external sources of seeds and the inputs needed to grow and protect them. Without an agricultural system in harmony with a community and its environment, self-reliance in agriculture is impossible.

To feed an increasing world population, all available genetic resources, including wild relatives, will need to be tapped. Modern plant breeding as well as new biotechnologies offer the potential to exploit little-known plant species as sources of food, and to enhance the qualities of those plants that are underutilized—especially traditional plants of special significance to poor people, such as local grains, legumes, oilseeds, fruits and vegetables.

Traditional food crops, often grown by rural families to see them through the “hungry season” just prior to harvest, offer many advantages. Many of them are drought resistant, can be grown without expensive inputs and have good storage qualities. For many developing nations, self-reliance in food production will depend on low-input agriculture in poor production environments. The capacity to grow varieties, particularly those resistant to pests and diseases and adapted to marginal lands, is vital for sustainable agriculture and food security.

Geopolitics of plant genetic resources

Historically, scientists from the industrialized countries have ventured southwards in search of exotic plants for plant breeding. Seeds found in tropical centres of diversity have been freely collected and later deployed in plant breeding. As a result, much of the collected diversity of Third World origin has come to be stored in the northern hemisphere or in gene banks established by developed countries.

The issue of control, ownership and access to plant genetic diversity has come to the fore over the past two decades. Plant breeding in the industrialized world has become increasingly commercialized and is now dominated by transnational seed and agrochemical corporations. To promote innovation and to enable breeders to recoup their research investment, many governments in the industrialized world



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have adopted a system of “plant breeders' rights”. This gives patent-like protection to breeders with limited monopoly rights over the production, marketing and sale of their varieties for a period of up to 20 years.

The disparity between unrestricted access to genetic resources, including farmers' land races, and the existence of proprietary rights such as “breeders' rights” on improved varieties has fuelled intense debate over the inequity in the flow of germplasm from the developing world to the industrialized world. At the United Nations, representatives from the developing world ask: Why are patented seeds, originally from developing countries, bringing profits to seed companies in the industrialized countries without corresponding compensation for the developing world? What compensation will be made to those who have tended and nurtured the world's crop genetic diversity and continue to conserve and make it available today?

Promoting the use and conservation of plant genetic resources

The farmer uses plant genetic resources as seeds or vegetatively propagated material; they are often the one input that farmers can produce for themselves. FAO assistance includes projects for the production and use of good-quality seed, training and guidance in propagation and multiplication, quality control, and processing, storage and distribution of improved seed. FAO provides samples and information to research centres, scientists and field projects for use in crop introduction, evaluation and breeding.

F A C T S

Several thousand plant species have been used for human food in history, but now only about 150 are cultivated and no more than three supply almost 60 percent of the calories and protein derived from plants.

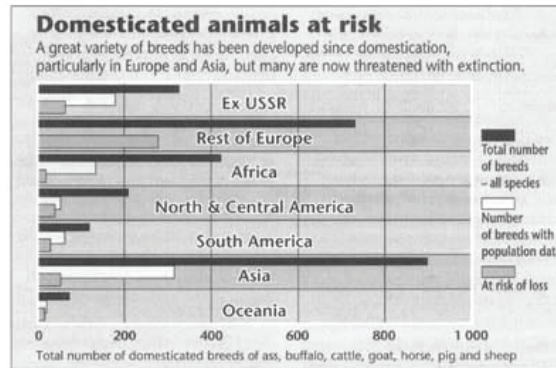
Since the beginning of this century about 75 percent of the genetic diversity of agricultural crops has been lost.

Kenaf (*Hibiscus cannabinus*), an East African plant related to cotton and okra, may provide an alternative source of pulp for making paper; in the southern United States it yields three to five times more pulp than trees do and requires minor chemical treatment to whiten the fibres.

From wild pineapples found in the dry open Chaco of South America, breeders have imparted high-sugar content and a distinctive “wild fruit” flavour to cultivated varieties.

Genes transferred from a wild relative of the tomato found on the shores of the Galapagos Islands has conferred salt tolerance to cultivated varieties so that they can be irrigated by one-third sea water.

FAO, as a sponsor of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), supports plant breeding and other research carried out at international research centres. Many of its projects focus on traditional food crops such as roots and tubers which in some developing regions contribute up to 46 percent of total calories consumed. Roots and tubers can tolerate a wide range of conditions and are well suited to traditional farming systems. They can be intercropped with other plants and most of them can be grown year-round, providing extra calories during the hungry season. Traditional crops have yet to be explored genetically, but their potential for improvement through breeding seems promising.



FAO has pioneered the collection of plant genetic resources. An early activity was to field seed-collecting missions, particularly in centres of diversity, where modern cultivars were already displacing traditional varieties. Recently, these and related activities have been undertaken in cooperation with the International Board for Plant Genetic Resources (IBPGR), a CGIAR centre that was established in 1974.

Since 1983, FAO has developed a global system on plant genetic resources based on the principle that plant genetic diversity is the heritage of humanity. The objective is to ensure safe conservation, sustainable use and unrestricted availability of plant germplasm (see page 23).

Domesticated and related animals

ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES include all species, breeds and strains that are of economic, scientific and cultural interest to humankind for agriculture, both now and in the future. Common agricultural species include sheep, goats, cattle, horses, pigs, buffaloes and chickens, but there are many other domesticated animals such as camels, donkeys, elephants, reindeer, rabbits and rodents that are important to different cultures and regions of the world.

Animal domestication began some 10 000 years ago when people began selecting animals for food, fibre, draught and other agricultural uses. Livestock provide valuable products, such as hides, wool and manure, that are important both for subsistence and as sources of income for rural communities. Livestock process forage and crop waste, inedible to humans, into nutritionally important food products.

Approximately 40 percent of the total land available in developing countries can only be used for some form of forage production. An estimated 12 percent of the world's population lives in areas where people depend almost entirely on products obtained from ruminant livestock—cattle, sheep and goats.

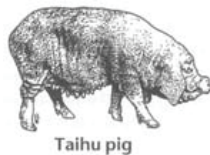
Centuries of human and natural selection have resulted in thousands of genetically diverse breeds of domestic animals adapted to a wide range of environmental conditions and human needs. Some are resistant to parasites or disease, for example, while others are adapted to humidity or drought or extremes of heat and cold. Animal genetic diversity, represented by this wide range of breeds, is essential to sustain the productivity of agriculture.

Animals account for 19 percent of the world's food basket directly, but they also provide draught power and fertilizer for crop production, bringing their overall contribution up to 25 percent. In addition, livestock serve as a very important form of cash reserves in many of the mixed farming systems. Taking this into account, animals contribute an estimated 30 percent of total human requirements for food and agriculture.

A sinking ark

In Europe, half of the breeds that existed at the beginning of the century have become extinct; a third of the remaining 770 breeds are in danger of disappearing over the next 20 years. In Germany, for example, only five out of at least 35 indigenous breeds of cattle remain. In North America, over one-third of all breeds of livestock and poultry are considered rare or in decline.

Much less is known about breeds in the developing world. As with plants, domestic animal diversity is greatest in the developing world. Asia, for instance, is home to more than 140 breeds of pig, while North America can claim only 19. Based on preliminary data, FAO predicts that one in four of all non-European livestock breeds may be at risk of extinction, and more than half of them are likely to be found in developing countries.

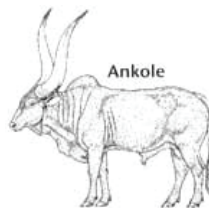


Worldwide, the greatest threat to domestic animal diversity is the highly specialized nature of modern livestock production. In the developed world, commercial livestock farming is based on very few breeds that have been selected for the intensive production of meat, milk or eggs in highly controlled and regulated conditions. The spread of intensive production systems to the developing world places thousands of native breeds at risk. Commercial breeds imported from North America and northern Europe are usually unable to sustain high production in less hospitable environments. They require intensive management and high levels of inputs such as high-protein feed, medication and protective housing. Introduction of intensive animal production creates dependency on imported technologies: it is neither affordable nor sustainable for most farmers in the developing world.

After thousands of generations of controlled interbreeding, most domesticated animals no longer have wild relatives from whom germplasm can be obtained. When a variety becomes extinct, an already narrow genetic base shrinks irreversibly. Commercial breeds suited to intensive production do not offer an adequate genetic reservoir for the future. Their genetic base reflects the emphasis on maximizing production. The turkey that is mass-produced on factory farms in North America and Europe, for example, has been selected for such a meaty breast that it can no longer breed unassisted. This broad-breasted breed—which accounts for 99 percent of all turkeys in the United States today—would become extinct in one generation without human assistance in the form of artificial insemination.

What value animal genetic diversity?

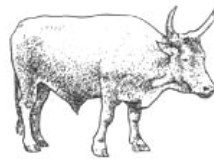
The genetic diversity now found in domestic animal breeds allows farmers to select stocks or develop new breeds in response to changes in the environment, threats of disease, market conditions and societal needs, all of which are largely unpredictable. Indigenous livestock breeds often possess valuable traits such as disease resistance, high fertility, good maternal qualities, longevity and adaptation to harsh conditions and poor-quality feed, all desirable qualities for low-input, sustainable agriculture.



The rare Taihu pigs of China, for instance, offer valuable traits for swine breeders worldwide. This group of pigs has thick, wrinkled skin and long, droopy ears. They can use a high proportion of forage foods in their diet. The adult pig has little lean meat—whence the Chinese passion for sucking pig. But Taihu pigs reach sexual maturity in just 64 days and are extraordinarily fertile, producing an average litter of 16 piglets compared with only ten for western breeds. Researchers in Europe and the United States are exploring ways to incorporate these beneficial qualities into commercial breeds. A company in the United Kingdom, National Pig Development, has already produced a commercial hybrid of the Meishan, one of seven strains of Taihu pig. Announced in 1992, it combines the fecundity of the traditional Chinese breed with a higher lean meat content.

Ancient African cattle breed offers resistance to a devastating livestock disease

THIRTY PERCENT of Africa's cattle population, approximately 160 million cattle, are at risk from trypanosomiasis — a debilitating and frequently fatal disease transmitted by the tsetse fly in 36 African countries covering over 10 million square kilometres. This devastating disease jeopardizes not only African milk and meat supplies, but important by-products and services such as hides, manure, fuel and draught power. Annual losses in meat production alone are estimated at US\$5 000 million.



Several traditional African cattle breeds, among them the small humpless N'Dama, have developed resistance (trypanotolerance) over thousands of years of exposure to the parasite — a trait that relatively modern African breeds do not possess. This genetically based resistance offers hope of reducing or controlling the impact of trypanosomiasis.

Small numbers of trypanotolerant N'Dama cattle have long been maintained by West African farmers in marginal farming areas. They thrive on low-quality forage and, though less productive than modern breeds of cattle, their high survival and reproductive rates and longevity make them extremely valuable in harsh environments.

Using a technique known as “embryo transfer”, the population of trypanotolerant N'Dama cattle has already been increased in order to conserve this rare breed, improve its performance and study its disease resistance. The N'Dama's hardiness, heat tolerance and disease resistance have also been recognized. N'Dama cattle have been crossed with the Red Poll, an endangered British breed, to produce the Senepol breed. The Senepol has been introduced successfully in the Caribbean and the southern United States.

Conserving animal genetic diversity

There is already less genetic diversity in farm animals than in crop plant species and over a third of the remaining animal genetic resources is currently at risk. In 1992, FAO launched a comprehensive

programme for the global conservation of animal genetic resources. It includes:

- A global inventory of animal genetic resources including a database to characterize and enumerate all breeds of livestock used in agriculture.
- Action to identify breeds at risk of extinction as well as ways of protecting them.
- Promotion of programmes in developing countries to conserve endangered breeds in their native habitats. The aim is to enhance the attraction of indigenous breeds at risk of being substituted by imported breeds which are often brought in without considering local conditions or sustainability.
- Improvement of livestock breeding capacities in the developing world. In particular, new technologies will be used to identify livestock diversity and the specific genes responsible for valuable traits.

FAO is exploring the possibility of establishing a global centre for domestic animal genetic diversity to serve as the focus for efforts to overcome the present erosion of these irreplaceable resources and to promote their effective and sustained use. Conservation of animal genetic diversity is essential to global food security and to protect our ability to meet the challenges of the future.

FACTS

In Europe, half of the livestock breeds that existed at the beginning of the century have become extinct and a third of the remaining 770 breeds are in danger. Almost 20 percent of breeds in the developing world are at risk.

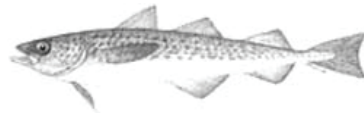
The sheep of North Ronaldsay island in Scotland have adapted to feeding on seaweed while Ming pigs have adapted to the cold winters and hot summers of northeastern China.

The cattle of Secotra (an island off Yemen) are among the highest milk-producing cattle per kilogram of body weight in the world.

The broad-breasted turkey—which accounts for 99 percent of all turkeys in the United States today—would become extinct in one generation without the assistance of artificial insemination.

Fish and aquatic life

OCEANS, LAKES AND RIVERS cover four-fifths of the earth's surface, but little is known about their living resources. Fewer aquatic than terrestrial species have been described, but there is no reason why aquatic biodiversity should be less.



Alaska pollack, a demersal fish, accounts for almost 6 percent of the marine fish catch

Tropical waters are the richest in terms of species diversity. The Indo-West Pacific Ocean, for example, contains an estimated 1 500 species of fish and over 6 000 species of mollusc, compared with only 280 fish and 500 mollusc species in the Eastern Atlantic.

Inland waters are also rich in diversity, the greatest concentration once again being in the tropics. Thailand, for example, could have as many as 1 000 species of freshwater fish, but so far only 475 have been documented. Brazil is believed to have more than 3 000 freshwater fish species — three

times more than any other country.



South American pilchard, a small pelagic fish, accounts for about 5 percent of the marine catch

For the most part, the aquatic harvest consists of wild rather than farmed species. World production, 90 percent of it finfish, stands at almost 100 million tonnes a year. Of this, only about 13 million tonnes come from aquaculture. Over 4 million tonnes of algae are also harvested annually.

Importance of fisheries

Fishing, fish processing and fish trading have provided food, employment and income in coastal and inland communities for centuries. Fish contribute substantially to the world supply of animal protein, either directly or through their use as feedstuff for livestock — almost a third of the fish catch is converted into meal and oil.

The developing countries account for more than half the world catch. Their fisheries are dominated by small-scale or artisanal producers. Artisanal fisheries, typically using small boats and canoes, account for more than 25 percent of the world catch. They supply more than 40 percent of the fish used for human consumption. These fisheries are also a significant source of employment — an estimated 100 million people in the developing world depend upon them for all or part of their livelihood.

By the turn of the century, demand for fish is expected to exceed by some 20 million tonnes the productive capacity, estimated at about 100 million tonnes, of stocks now exploited by the capture fisheries. Increased incomes and appreciation of the dietary value of fish are spurring the demand for fish and fish products in the industrialized countries, especially for luxury products such as oysters, shrimp, salmon and tuna. In the developing regions, population increases and the need to tap every potential source of food and foreign exchange provides the main impetus for increased fishing activities.

One response to the growing demand for fish and its falling availability has been the development of aquaculture. This rapidly expanding source of food poses some threats to biodiversity by concentrating on a very small range of species and an equally narrow genetic base in these species. Large-scale escapes of cultured fish, or deliberate releases of stocks for ranching, are thought to influence the genetic composition of the wild resource.



The Peruvian anchoveta, once a source of the world's largest single species fishery, declined because of over-fishing and environmental change

Troubled waters

Aquatic biodiversity is threatened primarily by human abuse and mismanagement of both the living resources and the ecosystems that support them. Loss of habitats, over-exploitation and introduction of exotic species are the prime hazards.

Overexploitation. Fish stocks are a renewable resource, but already many of them are strained to the limit. Over the years, they have suffered from a widespread notion that the seas are inexhaustible,

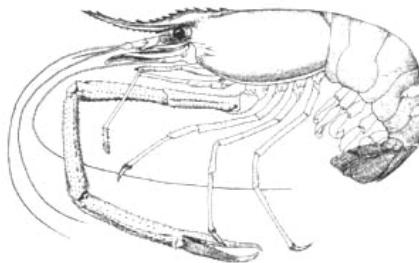
economic pressures that have encouraged overexploitation and, until just over a decade ago, an international regime that gave almost unlimited access to the majority of them. All fishing activities depend on a fragile resource base which, if mismanaged and overexploited, can easily collapse.

Efforts to regulate marine fisheries can be traced back to the late 1800s with the creation in Europe of the Intergovernmental Commission for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES). Many fishery bodies for developing and regulating fisheries, in both marine and inland waters, have been established since — nine of them under the auspices of FAO. Despite this appreciation of the threat posed by overfishing, stocks have continued to be exploited at a non-renewable rate.

All demersal (deep water) species such as cod, haddock and pollack are now either fully exploited, overfished or depleted. Larger pelagic (surface water) species such as herring, sardines and anchovy, stocks of which can fluctuate greatly from year to year, are in serious need of management. Crustacea such as shrimp, lobster and crab are also overexploited. Only the bivalve molluscs, such as mussels and clams, and cephalopods such as squid and octopus, offer much scope for expanded production.

The world fish catch has increased more than fourfold in the past 40 years, but the misuse of modern technology, coupled with government support for otherwise non-economic production, has had a devastating impact on fish stocks. Fleets using sophisticated fish detection, non-selective nets (up to 50 km long) and bottom trawls are driving some species to extinction. FAO estimates that the cost of overexploitation amounts to some US\$30 000 million per year.

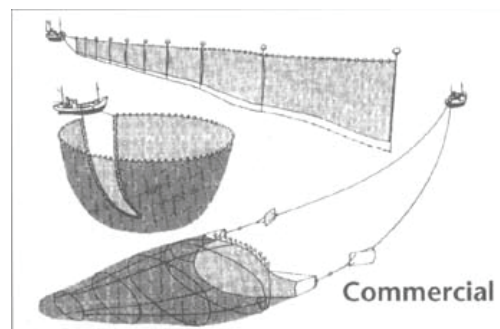
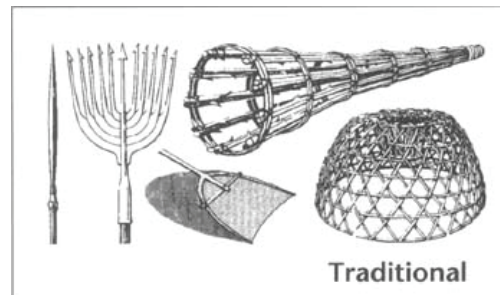
Production of crustaceans, mostly from aquaculture, has increased dramatically over the past ten years, exceeding 4.25 million tonnes in the early 1990s.



The impact of overexploitation of fisheries may be greatest in the developing world. Commercial fishing in tropical waters can often mean valuable foreign exchange for developing nations, but it can also lead to intense competition with declining catch rates for small-scale fisheries, many of which provide fish for local consumers and markets. Higher fish prices, the result of increased demand exacerbated by overfishing, are making fish unaffordable to an increasing number of poor people. Fish is no longer “a cheap meat dish” — a marketing slogan used in the United Kingdom in the 1950s.

Selectivity of fishing methods

Traditional fishing gears, ranging from a simple harpoon to a basket-work fishtrap, are typically selective for both size and species and are adapted to the diversity of fish captured, whereas commercial gears, such as the purse seine, large driftnet and trawl, often have a by-catch of unwanted species. The displacement of traditional fishing methods, combined with the introduction of new materials and highly mechanized fisheries, has contributed to overexploitation of resources in both marine and freshwater environments.

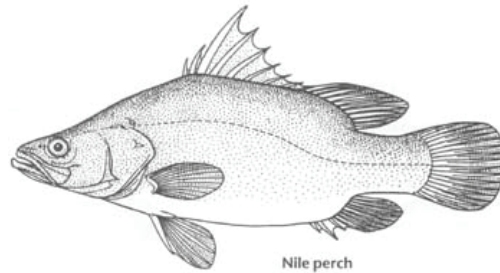


Environmental degradation. To the pressure of exploitation must be added the degradation or destruction of aquatic ecosystems caused by pollution or competing uses. The oceans function as a sink for carbon dioxide, eroded soils, contaminants, fertilizers, human and industrial wastes. Most urban and industrial activities and, indeed, much of human life, are concentrated close to coastal waters, rivers and lakes. Six out of ten people live in coastal areas, and migration towards them is increasing.

The development of intensive aquaculture has, in some cases, damaged coastal ecosystems and water resources, causing conflicts over land use and resources, and even undermining local sources of employment and food. In parts of Asia, thousands of hectares of rice paddy have been replaced by high-value shrimp farming or had their productivity reduced by salinization caused by neighbouring aquaculture enterprises. In the Indo-Pacific, more than one million hectares of mangrove forests have been converted to aquaculture ponds. Mangroves provide spawning and nursery areas for many marine species and are vital to maintaining ecological balance and biodiversity.

Introduction of exotic species.

The introduction of exotic fish species can have many unforeseen consequences. The release of the Nile perch in Africa's Lake Victoria is a classic example. Introduced in the late 1950s as a sports fish, its voracity and large size has driven many of the smaller indigenous species to extinction. Some scientists speculate that 200–300 species of fish may have been lost.



The expanding population of Nile perch is making Lake Victoria one of the most productive lake fisheries in the world, yielding 200 000 to 300 000 tonnes per year. But increased productivity may have been achieved at serious ecological and social cost. The lake is increasingly providing fish for export rather than local consumption. Lakeside fishing communities have lost species that traditionally provided food and supported the local economy. The long-term impacts remain to be seen, but this example provides a valuable lesson for future introductions and transfers of fish species.

Tilapia: an “aquatic chicken”

Tilapias, consisting of species of the genera *Tilapia*, *Oreochromis* and *Sarotherodon*, have been widely distributed around the world from their original African home. They are now the mainstay of small-scale aquaculture for many poor farmers in the developing world, as well as for enterprises in the developed world. They are most widely cultured in Asia, particularly China, the Philippines and Thailand.



Dubbed the “aquatic chicken”, tilapias possess many positive attributes that suit them for a wide range of aquaculture systems: excellent growth rates on a low-protein diet; tolerance of a wide range of environmental conditions; high resistance to diseases and parasitic infections; ready breeding in captivity and ease of handling; and wide acceptance as food fish.

Because tilapias are so widely farmed in the developing world, the Philippines-based ICLARM, the CGIAR centre devoted to fisheries, has established the Genetic Improvement of Farmed Tilapia (GIFT) programme. Its aim is to increase food production and income by and for small-scale producers. The GIFT programme has collected strains of tilapia and evaluated their culture and growth in different environments.

Scientists have discovered, for example, that tilapia breeds in Asia are deteriorating as a result of generations of inbreeding. Future breeding efforts must draw on a wider genetic base, incorporating genetic material from Africa. This underscores the importance of future conservation and utilization of Africa's native tilapia breeds.



community choices unit three

U3L5A3 | 5 Ws and How | Article 6

HARVESTING NATURE'S DIVERSITY

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/004/v1430e/V1430E04.htm>

Responsible fishing

In May 1992, the International Conference on Responsible Fishing at Cancún, Mexico, called upon FAO to draft, in consultation with other international organizations, an International Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing. The concept of “responsible fishing” embraces sustainable utilization of fisheries resources in harmony with the environment, and the use of capture and aquaculture practices that do not harm ecosystems, resources or food quality.

FAO supports comprehensive programmes on fisheries management, focusing on both coastal zones and high seas. It is also committed to international efforts to introduce ecologically safe fishery technologies. FAO provides technical assistance aimed at environmentally sound aquaculture practices, as well as incorporating aquaculture in rural development planning.

To conserve aquatic biodiversity, FAO emphasizes the sustainable use of aquatic resources. Activities include genetic selection programmes in aquaculture; the elaboration of codes of practice for the introduction and transfer of aquatic organisms and on access to genetic resources and biotechnology; and maintenance of a world database on introductions and transfers, as well as a database on species, strain and race identification.

FACTS

Capture fisheries have reached or may even have exceeded their sustainable yield at 100 million tonnes, leaving a gap between supply and demand which will reach an estimated 20 million tonnes by the year 2000.

About 300 kinds of finfish are cultured for food, but 85 percent of production comes from carp while tilapias account for much of the remainder.

In the northwestern United States, 159 genetically distinct populations of ocean-migrating fish species are at high or moderate risk of extinction.

Approximately 7 000 species of marine fish have been described from Indonesia, which has over 13 000 islands and the largest total coastline of any tropical country.

Trees and forests

ABOUT 30 PERCENT of the world's ice-free land surface is forest or woodland. Forested areas of the world today comprise between 3 000 million and 3 500 million ha — an area equal to the size of North and South America. According to recent estimates, temperate forests cover approximately 1 430 million ha in the industrialized countries and another 210 million hectares in non-tropical developing countries. Tropical forests, both moist and dry, cover an estimated 1 760 million ha.

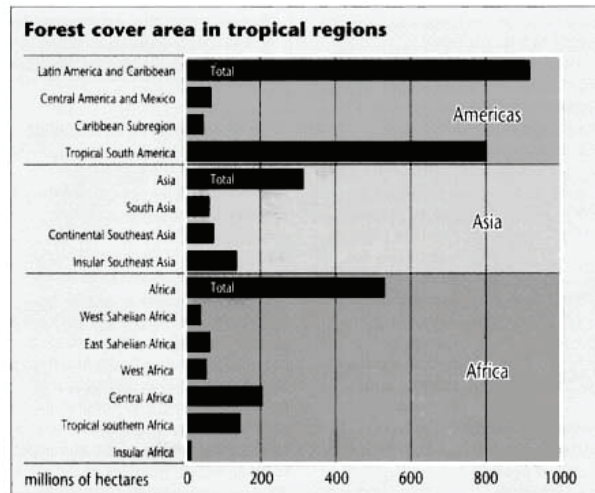


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Source: FRA, 1993, FAO.

Benefits and use of forests

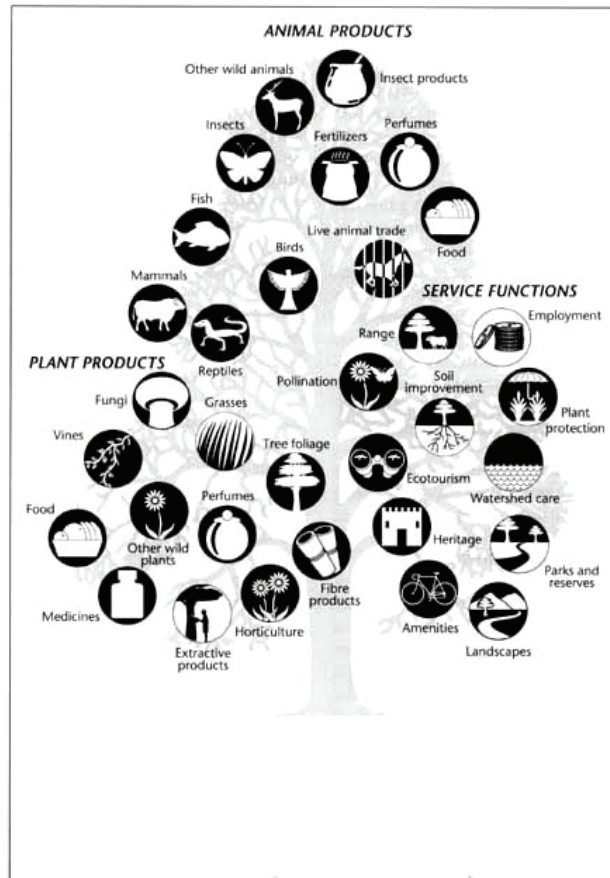
Forests supply food, fodder, medicine and timber, poles and fuelwood as well as raw materials for industry. The income earned from trees and forests is of vital importance to both rural populations and national incomes. Forests are home for an estimated 300 million people — shifting cultivators and hunter-gatherers — around the world. In the past, the slash-and-burn agriculture practised by forest-dwelling people was sustainable, but population pressures are reducing the land available for shifting cultivation; shorter fallow periods and overuse are turning traditionally sustainable methods into destructive ones.

Rural people living in and around forest areas depend on a large variety of forest products for subsistence. Forest foods form a major part of the diet of some population groups in rural areas in developing countries. They include leaves, seeds and nuts, fruit, roots and tubers, sap and gums, fungi and animals. Forest foods often increase in importance during the hungry season, which reaches its peak just before crops are harvested, and when crops fail.

Woody species provide three-quarters or more of the population in developing countries with their primary energy source. In developing countries, eight times more wood is used for fuel than is logged for industrial purposes. In many areas, fuelwood is being harvested faster than it is being replenished. By the year 2000, nearly 3 000 million people could face fuelwood shortages.

Forests provide vital ecological functions. Their absorption of carbon dioxide and release of oxygen through photosynthesis help control the level of greenhouse gases and provide an atmosphere essential to support life. Forest vegetation helps recycle nutrients. Forest cover also reduces soil erosion by slowing the runoff of water, reducing the hazard of floods and the silting of reservoirs and waterways.

Forests, woodlands and other wilderness areas are increasingly valued as sites of natural and cultural heritage, as well as for education and recreation. Ecotourism is the third most important source of income in Rwanda, for instance, largely because it is home to the mountain gorilla.



Non-wood products and services, many of which have long been used by people living in and around forests, are increasingly appreciated as a source of sustainable development. Many food crops and industrial, commercial and pharmaceutical products originated as non-wood forest products. The economic and social incentives provided by non-wood forest products encourage conservation and offer a defence against the loss of biodiversity.

World forest decline

The world's forests are declining at unprecedented rates. Major threats are deforestation and atmospheric pollution. Another threat is the narrowing of the genetic base of tree species as a result of commercial forestry operations.

Whereas reforestation of temperate forest lands now exceeds removal of trees, the loss of tropical forests gives cause for concern. The tropical forests were destroyed at an annual rate of 15.4 million ha between 1980 and 1990 according to a recent FAO survey. In terms of area, the greatest losses were in Latin America and the Caribbean (an average of 7.4 million ha per year) followed by Africa (4.1 million ha per year) and Asia and the Pacific (3.9 ha per year).



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The causes of deforestation vary from region to region. The most important include: conversion of forest land to agricultural use; excessive use of fuelwood and charcoal; shifting cultivation where fallow periods are too short; unsustainable logging; expansion of urban and industrial areas; and overgrazing and fodder collection. Poverty is the underlying cause of many of these environmentally degrading activities.



Fungi, commonly valued as meat substitutes, supply large amounts of protein and essential minerals

Despite a net increase in the forested area in Europe, pollution and forest fires have caused a severe decline in biodiversity and forest vigour. Forests in Germany and the former Czechoslovakia have been particularly affected. Less obvious, but equally alarming, is the decline in genetic diversity within forest species in both Europe and North America. This genetic erosion results mainly from deforestation, compounded for a few economically important species by intensive breeding for commercial forestry. FAO estimates that about 400 tree species are endangered in whole or in significant parts of their gene pools.

When forests decline or are removed, much more than trees is lost. Forests harbour many animals and plants that depend on their environment for survival. Many of these species, their potential value to society and their ecological importance have yet to be discovered. Untapped treasures include possible crops, pharmaceuticals, timbers, fibres, pulp, soil-restoring vegetation, petroleum substitutes and countless other products and amenities. The bark of the rare western yew tree *Taxus brevifolia*, which is now found only in the old-growth coniferous forest of the northwestern United States, was recently found to be the source of taxol, one of the most potent anticancer substances ever found. If forest felling continues at the present rates, new sources of scientific information are likely to be lost and inestimable biological wealth destroyed.



The cashew nut, a nutritious forest product that is easy to collect and roast

Even where conservation measures have been taken, they may not halt the decline in biodiversity and therefore the overall genetic resources of the forest ecosystem. At present less than 5 percent of the earth's land surface is allocated for conservation as national parks, scientific stations or other types of legally protected land. Conservation areas have been set aside for many reasons, but rarely with reference to the location of valuable gene pools. Frequently they are too small to maintain viable populations of the threatened species and varieties they do contain. At the same time, experience shows that policies to control and protect such reserves will not succeed without the active support of local people and complementary programmes aimed at meeting their everyday needs.

Sustainable development of forests

Properly managed, forest ecosystems can provide goods and services while, at the same time, perpetuating the genetic resources contained in them. Progress is being made towards new styles of management. The sustainable harvesting of non-wood forest products can improve food security and nutrition, while increasing income and job opportunities. Agroforestry — a farming system that combines trees, crops and livestock — enables farmers, even the poorest, to diversify agricultural production and reclaim degraded land. The degradation of forests can also be reduced by harvesting practices that enable logging to take place while promoting and conserving forest regeneration.

The sustained utilization of forests, coupled with the maintenance of a network of areas dedicated to the protection of ecosystems and their functions, provides the only solution for lasting genetic conservation.

FAO activities to conserve forest genetic resources

The FAO Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources, established 25 years ago, guides the Organization's actions to conserve forest genetic resources. FAO's Forestry Department collaborates with national or regional institutes that are or wish to become involved in these activities. Its field projects offer technical advice and assistance to governments in planning and carrying out conservation projects, as well as the integration of genetic resource conservation in land-use and forestry planning.

Specific activities include assistance in the exploration, collection and evaluation of forest genetic resources, planning and developing seed centres, and establishing and managing the conservation,

both *in situ* and *ex situ*, of priority species. The FAO Forestry Department also publishes and disseminates a wide range of educational and training materials on the use and conservation of forest genetic resources.



Western yew tree, the source of taxol, a potent anticancer chemical

FAO's Global System for the Conservation and Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources includes forest tree species. Within the framework of FAO's International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources, FAO's Forestry Department is the focal point for activities related to *in situ* conservation of plant genetic resources.

F A C T S

Deforestation of closed tropical rain forests could account for the loss of as many as 100 species every day.

Kalimantan, Indonesia, is an important centre of genetic variation for tropical fruit trees, including mango, breadfruit and durian. Of 16 species of mango in East Kalimantan Province, 13 are edible.

Exports of chicle, allspice and xate (edible palm fronds) earn Guatemala US\$7 million annually and support some 6 000 families in the Petén region of the country.

Collecting, extracting and processing the kernels of the fruit of babassu palm provides an estimated 25 percent of household income for 300 000 families in Brazil's Maranhão State.

In Côte d'Ivoire, harvesting giant snails (*Achatina achatina*) in the buffer zone around Tai National Park provides a source of food and income: each snail provides some 100 to 300 g of meat and the shells provide calcium for animal feed or crop fertilizer.

More than 20 tonnes of mushrooms, mainly chanterelles (*Cantharellus spp.*) are gathered and consumed every year by the 700 000 or so residents of the Upper Shaba area of Zaire.



Toronto Star

Life / Food & Wine

Food waste: An unappetizing, \$27B problem

We throw away 40 per cent of our food every year, worth about \$27 billion. It's a crisis, and green bins alone can't solve it. Nearly half of the food we produce in Canada goes to waste. Why aren't we ashamed at how much food we squander?

Food waste: An unappetizing, \$27B problem
Photo illustration by Keith Beaty / Toronto Star
By: Jennifer Bain Food, Published on Fri Jan 14 2011

Food is so plentiful in Canada that even our garbage cans are full of it.

We throw away 40 per cent of our edibles every year according to most recent estimates.

If wasting food is shameful, then why aren't we ashamed?

Gallery of solutions to our problem with food waste

Many of us blithely toss the food that rots in our fridges, kitchen scraps and unwanted leftovers into the green bin and congratulate ourselves for sending our waste for composting and keeping it out of landfill.

Food waste is an unappetizing problem. It involves the entire food chain, from farmers and manufacturers right down to supermarkets, restaurants and consumers. Though they are linked, one level doesn't care much about the other.

There hasn't been much political or industry will to analyze the problem. That's what the Value Chain Management Centre in Guelph hopes to combat with the release of its November study, Food Waste in Canada.

The unpublished study estimates \$27 billion worth of food finds its way into landfill and composting each year, which it considers a crisis.



community choices unit three

U3L5A3 | 5 Ws and How | Article 7

While “food miles (at the distribution level) are often portrayed as the environmental demon and creator of waste,” they cause just 3 per cent of it, the study estimates. Consumers who throw food out at home are to blame for 51 per cent.

“At home we look at the meal — we don’t look at what’s left over from the meal,” says centre director Martin Gooch, a researcher who co-authored the study with Abdel Fefel and Nicole Marenick.

The centre is part of Guelph’s George Morris Centre, a non-profit, agri-food think tank. The study was funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

“All of the incremental elements of waste add up,” stresses Gooch. “As a society, we look for simple solutions when we need to redesign the entire system.”

In his 2010 book, *American Wasteland: How America Throws Away Nearly Half of Its Food (and What We Can Do About It)*, U.S. journalist Jonathan Bloom reports that a Rockford, Illinois, elementary school sent kids out to play before they ate lunch instead of after. It discovered students were hungrier and wasted 30 per cent less food.

“I’d call that redesigning the system to get a better outcome,” says Gooch.

He says our food industry is “pretty dysfunctional” because links in the chain do not understand, or want to understand, each other. For example, food producers and processors don’t talk much except about price and volume. Small restaurants may bond with some farmers, but that should be happening on a larger scale.

“At the moment, there’s still too much ‘them and us’ thinking.”

Jo-Anne St. Godard, executive director of the Recycling Council of Ontario, calls food waste “the elephant in the room” and admits it’s difficult to create policies and regulations around it.

“Food is put on to the marketplace to be consumed,” she says. “The steward expects you to eat it. If it goes into the composting stream, who pays the bill?”

In Ontario, there are multiple fees for everyone from manufacturers to consumers to handle the disposal of e-waste (electrical and electronic equipment like televisions and computers). But how do you do that with a head a lettuce?



community choices unit three

U3L5A3 | 5 W's and How | Article 7

“I think we ignore this more than we should, especially given the environmental and economic impact of food waste,” says Gooch.

Bloom calls the green bin “a guilt eraser,” because it makes us feel noble to keep it out of landfill, even though we’re still wasting it and not thinking about what happens to it once it’s hauled away to be processed into compost.

While large-scale solutions to food waste are discussed, there is much to be done at each level. Farmers can turn over unwanted crops to gleaners who turn over the free harvest to the hungry.

Food manufacturers and restaurants can join food-recovery programs like Second Harvest. Consumers, whether they’re eating at restaurants or at home, can choose not to buy more than they can eat or cook.

“It’s a bizarre sort of culture we’ve cultivated,” says St. Godard.

All-you-can-eat buffets, fast food lunches with options to supersize, weekly supermarket binges, chest freezers and a “buy now and pay for it later” mentality all contribute to the problem.

In England, the government is working hard to combat the culture of overshopping.

A government-funded agency called Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) analyzed the trash of more than 2,000 households a few years ago and discovered that about one-third of food bought in United Kingdom is thrown out every year. Gooch would love funding for a similar study here.

Riffing off the adage “waste not, want not,” WRAP launched its “Love Food Hate Waste” campaign. With the help of chefs and celebrities, it suggests simple things people can do at home to waste less food, save money and help the environment.

Lovefoodhatewaste.com also doles out advice on portion size, meal planning and food storage. A recipe area lets people do a search on “what food needs using up.” There’s even a downloadable 21-page, seven-day diary that you can use to keep track of your food waste.

England’s campaign to reduce food waste really began in 1990 when a new Food Safety Act put pressure on everyone from retailers to the top of the chain to connect, notes Gooch.

“The U.K. is 10 or even 20 years further down the road in hard, objective analysis of ways to reduce waste and in turn increase competitiveness at all levels of the food chain.”

U3L5A3 | 5 Ws and How | Article 7

Like Canada, the United States suffers from a dearth of data. Jonathan Bloom, a Chapel Hill, N.C., journalist, has been investigating the subject for more than five years and blogging about it at Wastedfood.com.

In his book *American Wasteland*, he notes that “depending on who you ask, we squander between a quarter and a half of all the food produced in the United States.”

He outlines the ethical, economic and environmental consequences of wasting food, like the fact it rots in landfills and releases harmful greenhouse gases.

“There’s just something wrong with throwing away food when so many people go without,” Bloom said in a telephone interview. “There are ways to get that food to people before you put it in the garbage.”

Why do supposedly cost-conscious consumers waste so much food?

Blame it on the “all-you-can-eat” culture that Bloom has renamed “all-you-can-waste.” Or the fact that asking a restaurant for a doggie bag is sometimes seen as gauche. Or the sad truth that so many people lack basic cooking skills and are needlessly scared that their cooked or uncooked food might be hazardous.

“If you didn’t grow up with leftovers, you might not know that they can taste as good or better than the original meal.”

jbain@thestar.ca
www.twitter.com/thesaucylady



community choices

unit three

U3L5A4 | Awareness campaign

overview

Create an awareness campaign on one of the issues in sustainable food system. An awareness campaign could include posters, billboards, newspaper articles, ad jingle, radio announcement etc.

learning goal

- To create an awareness campaign on one aspect of a sustainable food system.

success criteria

- Creation of an awareness campaign on one aspect of a sustainable food system.

Inquiry question

- How do you make our food system, sustainable?

Considerations when creating an effective awareness campaign.

Once you have chosen which aspect of sustainable food systems you would like to bring awareness to the public. The list of areas include: Carbon Footprint of Food, Food Miles, Genetic Diversity, Food Security, Food Wastage, Organic Methods of Food Production, Environmental Factors, Ethical Factors or Food Policy. Select a method to get your message out about promoting sustainability through posters, billboards, newspaper articles, Ad jingle, radio announcement or some other method you develop. Remember to target you message so it is seen or heard by the intended audience. If you want high school students to change their carbon footprint towards food then be sure to use appropriate language, style and photos. Be sure that your awareness campaign is easy to understand and memorable. People need to understand and think about the message. Make sure it is meaningful to the intended audience. Using the rubric as a guide, create a campaign on one aspect of the sustainable food system.



community choices
unit three

U3L5A4 | Awareness campaign | Rubric

Rubric for Sustainable food systems awareness campaign

	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Related to sustainable food systems	Well described and link to sustainable food systems clearly understood	Explanation somewhat clear, good points	Explanation unclear, a few good points	Not clear about the link, most did not understand
Persuasiveness	Many persuasive arguments and information	Moderately persuasive arguments and some information	A few persuasive arguments and information	Little if any persuasive arguments or information
Content	Accurate and up-to-date information on sustainable food system	Somewhat accurate and up-to-date information on sustainable food system	A few points on sustainable food system	One point on sustainable food system
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Source cited	All of your sources of information were trustworthy and cited	Most of your sources were trustworthy and cited	Most of your sources were not trustworthy and cited	No reference to your

Comments:



Introduction
 Hungry Planet: What the World Eats in One Week By Peter Menzel and Faith D'Aluisio

Peter Menzel and Faith D'Aluisio traveled the world documenting everything that an average family consumes in a given week—and what it costs from Time.com —<http://time.com/8515/hungry-planet-what-the-world-eats/>

What is something you noticed about how other countries eat and how much they pay for their food?

The goal is to become aware of many of the aspects of sustainability in our food system.
 Write down what you think is a sustainable food system?

One definition:

- “A sustainable food systems values and cares for the earth. It produces food that is grown and processed close to those who consume it in such a way as to conserve natural resources and biodiversity. A sustainable food system supports social inclusion, as well as economic, environmental and nutritional well-being for all citizens.”




Carbon footprint of food

- Carbon footprint relates to “the emission of greenhouse gases such as Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), Nitrous Oxide (N₂O) and Methane (CH₄) that are released to the atmosphere during the growing, rearing, farming, processing, transporting, storing, cooking and serving the food on your plate. By buying and using locally grown or produced food we reduce our carbon footprint, helping the environment.” Amcglasson 2015.

Carbon footprint of food

- How does your diet affect the carbon footprint?

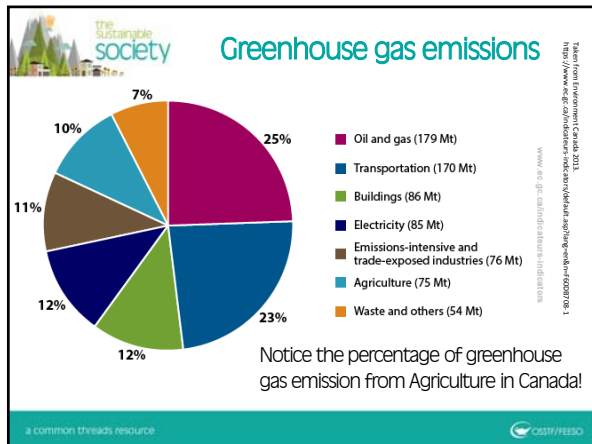
Foodprints by Diet Type: t CO₂e/person

Diet Type	Carbon Footprint (t CO ₂ e/person)
Meat Lover	3.3
Average	2.5
No Beef	1.9
Vegetarian	1.7
Vegan	1.5

Note: All estimates based on average food production emissions for the US. Foodprints include emissions from supply chain inputs, consumer waste and consumption. Each of the four example diets is based on 2,400 kcal of food consumed per day, which is the US average to sustain 2,400 kcal of supplied food.

Sources: ERO/FNDA, various LCA and EIO-LCA data

<http://shrinkthatfootprint.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/foodprints5.gif11>



Carbon footprint

- Meat production represent 18 % of global climate gas emissions.
- The environmentally friendly approach to meat consumption is pretty straight forward—just eat less meat

Check out the meat consumption for Norway, Canada and Venezuela at ChartsBin : <http://chartsbin.com/view/12730>
 Norway meat consumption in 2009 was 66kg per person
 Canada meat consumption in 2009 was 94.3kg per person
 Venezuela in 2009 was 76.8 kg per person

<http://sciencenordic.com/norwegians-dark-red-meats-carbon-footprint>
<http://www.carbonjar.com/carbonfootprints>

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Carbon footprint

How is the quantity of meat that a person consumes connected to carbon footprint?

How is the quantity of meat that a person consumes connected to food sustainability?

Item	Carbon Emissions (g)
Bun	50g
Salad	30g
Condiments	80g
Cheese	250g
Beef	1,900g
Other (inc. Cooking and Transport)	300g
Cheeseburger Total	2,500g
Veggie-burger instead of Beef	-1,500g
Veggie-burger Total	1,000g

<http://sciencenordic.com/norwegians-dark-red-meats-carbon-footprint>
<http://www.carbonjar.com/carbonfootprints>

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Food miles

Food miles refer to the distance that food is transported from the site of production until it reaches the consumer. This is also referred to as the distance from "field to fork." Food miles make us aware of the environmental impact of transporting food around the world.

How Can you Reduce your food miles?

Graphic taken from <http://www.politicallyincorrect2.com/sus2.gif>

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Use the food miles calculator to determine how far the food has travelled www.foodmiles.com/results.cfm

Food	Name	Located in the following country	Food Miles (to Ottawa Canada)
	Tomate de arbol – tamarillo or Tree Tomato	Venezuela	
	Cloud Berries	Norway	
	Strawberries	Canada	

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Use the food miles calculator to determine how far the food has travelled www.foodmiles.com/results.cfm

Food	Name	Located in the following country	Food Miles (to Ottawa Canada)
	Tomate de arbol – tamarillo or Tree Tomato	Venezuela	2468 miles (3971km)
	Cloud Berries	Norway	3479 miles (5597km)
	Strawberries	Canada	0 miles (0km)

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Genetic diversity

Background Information

- Show the following two videos to contrast and compare Genetic Diversity
- USC Canada on Banking Diversity (8:29 min) <http://usc-canada.org/resources/videos>
- The Eyes of Nye - Genetically Modified Foods by Bill Nye Disney Educational Productions 2005

Genetic diversity refers to a wide range of genetic variation within a species to help them adapt to changing environmental conditions and new pests and diseases

Taken from...<http://www.fao.org/docrep/004/v1430e/v1430e04.htm>

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Food security

The Global Food Security Index compares countries in regards to issues of affordability, availability and quality, across 109 countries.

Compare Canada to another country such as Venezuela. <http://foodsecurityindex.eiu.com/Country/>

Look at the picture of similar rice. One of the rice packages is subsidized by the government of Venezuela to cost less. This rice is sold to people with less wealth at a reduced cost. What do you think of this? Share with a partner.



For Further information on Venezuela and it subsidized food system check out: <http://iain.com/article.asp?ArticleId=344298&CategoryId=10717>

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Interesting...

- Five million Venezuelan receive free food, four million of them are children in schools and 6,000 food kitchens feed 900,000 people. The population of Venezuela in 2013 was roughly 30 million people
- Turn to a partner and tell them how you think this compares to Canada.
- Watch the video at Food Banks Canada 1: 26 minutes
- Hunger Count 2014 at <http://www.foodbankscanada.ca/HungerCount>
- For more information Food Banks Canada – HungerCount: 2014 report on hunger and food bank use. Retrieved From

For more information Food Banks Canada – HungerCount 2014 report on hunger and food bank use. Retrieved From https://www.foodbankscanada.ca/getmedia/77799c0ff-72d5-4cee-85e9-54485669564/HungerCount_2014_EN.pdf.aspx?ext=.pdf

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Questions on video: Hunger Counts 2014

- What do these statistics tell you?
- What is the meaning of food insecurity?

Compare Venezuela food system to Canada's
Venezuela
Canada



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Food wasteage

- According to an article in the Toronto Star by Jennifer Blins Food waste: An unappetizing, \$27B problem
- We throw away 40 per cent of our food every year, worth about \$27 billion. It's a crisis, and green bins alone can't solve it. Nearly half of the food we produce in Canada

Watch Food Wasteage Footprint: 2 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (3:38 minutes)

Turn to a partner and explain the problem with food wasteage?

http://www.thestar.com/life/food_wine/2011/03/14/food_waste_an_unappetizing_27b_problem.html
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Md3dmtjds>

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Organic food

- Video from the Organic Council of Ontario (4:24 min) on Organic Food Production in Ontario <https://vimeo.com/36299613>

How is growing Organically different?

- protects soil
- protects water
- no synthetic chemicals

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Environmental factors

What are some of the issues:

- Food packaging produces A LOT of waste.
- Transporting the food releases greenhouse gases into the air.
- Water waste by irrigation practices
- Loss of biodiversity by farming
- Purchasing products that must travel long distances.
- Using food grown in greenhouses heated with fossil fuels during cold months
- Fertilizer—its source, use and depletion in soil
- Herbicide use and pesticide use

Amglasson, National 5/4 Hospitality – Food Sustainability. (2015, Oct 15).

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Ethical practices in food choices are things that can be seen as morally right

Fair trade food production aims to provide fair prices and better working conditions for farmers and farm workers.

Genetically modified food is grown with genetic manipulation technology.

Food sovereignty—defined as the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems—is a concept coming from social movements in response to the injustices of the global food system.

Farm assured means that the farms and food companies meet high standards of food safety and hygiene, animal welfare and environmental protection.

Free range is a method of farming where animals are allowed to roam freely.

Taken from <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2015-03-10/the-venezuelan-food-sovereignty-experiment>

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Ethical practices in food choices are things that can be seen as morally right

What are some ethical issues you can think of?

- Who owns and has rights to the use of the Land and Water?
- What are the Implications of cheap food?
- Who has the power in the food chain? The farmer, retailer, consumer?

Taken from <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2015-03-10/the-venezuelan-food-sovereignty-experiment>

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The 10 corporations control almost everything you buy

by PolicyMic at <http://>

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Food security in a climate perspective from Norway

- "In 2010 almost one billion people did not have enough food to meet their basic nutritional needs. This is a serious human rights violation, because the right to food is a universal human right that is embodied in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- In its policy platform for the period 2009–13, the Government therefore emphasized the need to intensify Norway's efforts to promote global food security by focusing on climate-resilient agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture in development cooperation." p 3.

Taken from *Food Security in a Climate Perspective: A strategy developed in cooperation with Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs, Ministry of the Environment.* January 2013- English Summary

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Norway's solution

"We will give priority to increasing food production, especially by strengthening small-scale climate-resilient agriculture, and to the development of competence about the importance of ecosystems for climate resilience and access to water. We intend to promote research and private-sector engagement in African countries and to support measures to reduce wastage in food production. We also intend to promote the rights of smallholders, particularly women, and to strengthen the fisheries and aquaculture sector and the efforts of regional organisations in the agricultural sector. This will require close cooperation with national authorities and support for their plans for boosting production and food security. It will also mean intensifying international cooperation on improving the global framework conditions for achieving food security." 3

Taken from *Food Security in a Climate Perspective: A strategy developed in cooperation with Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs, Ministry of the Environment.* January 2013- English Summary

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Venezuela's national policy on food sovereignty

Sowing the Seeds of Food Sovereignty

- The foundation for Venezuela's current food sovereignty efforts was laid in a series of articles in its newly reformed constitution, passed by popular referendum in 1999. Article 305 states:
- The State shall promote sustainable agriculture as the strategic basis for overall rural development, and consequently shall guarantee the population a secure food supply, defined as the sufficient and stable availability of food within the national sphere and timely and uninterrupted access to the same for consumers. ...Food production is in the national interest and is fundamental to the economic and social development of the Nation.⁶

<http://www.thesolutionsjournal.com/node/237281>

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Canadian food policy by Diana Bronson Coming up with a Canadian food policy at: (16:58 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrnSp0662gW>

- What are the three criteria for changing the Canada's Food System for the well being of the planet?
 - The number of farms has _____ and there is _____ in the size of the farm.
 - The number of acres have _____ and there is _____ in the surface area.
 - 4 or 5 retailers sell _____ of our food.
 - 96% of our meat supply is controlled by _____ companies.
 - 75% of the world seed supply is controlled by _____ companies.
 - There is an exploding growth of _____ and _____ food.
 - Roughly _____ of our greenhouse gas emissions is connected to our food system.
 - Canada wastes more than _____ dollars each year. 1/2 of all food is wasted.
 - Canada does not have a _____ policy.
- On the planet
 - a. _____ there are more over feed people than under feed people.
 - b. _____ There are less over feed people than under feed people.
 - c. _____ There is the same over feed people as under feed people.
 - d. _____ The number of over feed people is the same as under feed people.
- The UN defines food security: when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food, to maintain an active and healthy life.
 - a. What is one location in Canada with high food insecurity?
 - b. What is one reason that this location has high food insecurity?
- Fill in some of the changes in how we grow, process, transport, store, sell and eat our food:
 - 5. What are 6 things you can do :
 - +
 - +
 - +
 - +
 - +
 - +

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Factors that affect food sustainability

- Carbon Footprint
- Food Miles
- Genetic Diversity
- Food Security
- Food Wastage
- Organic methods
- Environmental Factors
- Ethical Factors

In small groups, select one of these factors and complete the worksheet.

Answer the 5 W's and H


- Who – the people involved
- What – the problem, thing, ideas
- Where- the places involved
- When- past, present, future of the topic
- Why-should I care?
- How- can I make a difference?

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The 5 Ws and H


Who	Factor	When
What		Why
Where		How

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Select one factor that affects Food Sustainability and create an awareness campaign that could include posters, billboards, newspaper articles, Ad jingle, radio announcement etc.

- "A sustainable food systems values and cares for the earth. It produces food that is grown and processed close to those who consume it in such a way as to conserve natural resources and biodiversity. A sustainable food system supports social inclusion, as well as economic, environmental and nutritional well-being for all citizens."




Taken from <http://www.foodshedproject.ca/pdf/food%20sustainability%20checklist.pdf>

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the sustainable society

Rubric for Sustainable Food Systems Awareness Campaign

	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Related to Sustainable Food Systems	Well Described and Linked to Sustainable Food Systems Clearly Understood	Explanation Somewhat Clear, Good Points	Explanation Unclear, A few good points	Not Clear what the link is, most did not understand
Persuasiveness	Many Persuasive arguments and information	Moderately persuasive arguments and some information	A few persuasive arguments or information	Little if any persuasive arguments or information
Content	Accurate and Up to Date information on Sustainable Food System	Somewhat accurate and Up to Date information on Sustainable Food System	A few points on Sustainable Food System	One point on Sustainable Food System
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Overall Effort and Effectiveness	Excellent effort to engage the audience and share information	Good effort to engage the audience and share information	Some effort to engage the audience and share information	Little to no effort to engage the audience and share information
Source Cited	All of your sources of information were trustworthy and cited	Most of your sources were trustworthy and cited	Most of your sources were not trustworthy and cited	No reference to your citations

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Student PowerPoint worksheets

Name: _____



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How does your diet affect the carbon footprint?


How is the quantity of meat that a person consumes connected to carbon footprint?


How is the quantity of meat that a person consumes connected to food sustainability?

What is a definition for sustainable food system?

What are the Threats to Genetic Diversity?

How can you reduce your food miles?




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Carbon footprint of food

- Carbon footprint relates to “the emission of greenhouse gases such as Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), Nitrous Oxide (N₂O) and Methane (CH₄) that are released to the atmosphere during the growing, rearing, farming, processing, transporting, storing, cooking and serving the food on your plate. By buying and using locally grown or produced food we reduce our carbon footprint, helping the environment.” Amcglasson 2015.

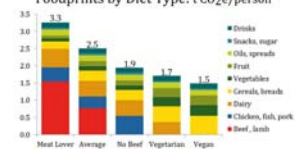
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the sustainable society

Carbon footprint of food


- How does your diet affect the carbon footprint?

Footprints by Diet Type: t CO₂e/person






Note: All estimates based on average food production emissions for the US. Footprints include emissions from supply chain losses, consumer waste and consumption. Each of the four example diets is based on 2,000 kcal of food consumed per day, which is the US equate to around 2,000 kcal of supplied food.


Source: ERS/USDA, various LCA and EIO-LCA data <http://shrinkthatfootprint.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/foodprint5.gif11>

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	Cloud Berries	Norway	
	Strawberries	Canada	

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Compare Venezuela food system to Canada's

Venezuela

Canada


Food security

What do these statistics tell you?

What is the meaning of food insecurity?

- Name one environmental factor to consider for a sustainable food system
- Name one ethical factor to consider for a sustainable food system
- Do you think that Canada should have a national food policy? Why or why not?

How is growing Organically different?

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Canadian food policy by Diana Bronson Coming up with a Canadian food policy at:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrspD662gW

- What are the three criteria for changing the Canada's Food System for the well being of the planet?
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- Fill in some of the changes in how we grow, process, transport, store, sell and eat our food?

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- What are 6 things you can do :
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 -
 -
 -
 -

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The 5 Ws and H

Who	Factor	When
What		Why
Where		How

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