

CHAPTER 1—THE NATURE OF CANADIAN SOCIAL WELFARE

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

The social welfare of Canadians depends on the extent to which human needs are met. This chapter will

- define the term *social welfare*
- describe the scope and purpose of the social welfare system
- discuss social welfare programs and services
- examine three political ideologies and their influences on social welfare provision

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

1. ***Community Inventory of Social Welfare Programs and Services***
Complete a brief inventory of the income-security programs and/or social services in your community. This assignment may involve one or more interviews with a service provider or administrator in a social agency. What are the various types of social welfare programs in the community? Which programs are in particularly high (or low) demand? What factors are likely to affect the demand for certain programs and services at any given time? Share your findings in a term paper or class presentation.
2. ***Assessing Human Needs***
Consider Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Write a paper on the types of programs or services in your community that strive to meet those needs. Which type of organization (e.g., recreation, health, social welfare, education) focuses on which human needs? In your opinion, how well does your community do in terms of meeting people's needs? What evidence do you base your opinion on? How might your community or organizations do a better job of meeting human needs?
3. ***Social Welfare in a Neoliberal Context***
Compile a scrapbook of magazine and newspaper articles that reflect a neoliberal approach to social policies or programs at the federal, provincial, or territorial level. For each article, describe how the policies or programs reflect neoliberal values, philosophy, strategies, or goals.
4. ***Fair Trade***
Write a brief paper about the fair trade movement in Canada. What beliefs about people, government, and social welfare are promoted by the movement? Which political ideology is the movement most closely aligned to? Which does it challenge? How?

IN-CLASS EXERCISES

1. ***Debate: Divergent Approaches to Social Welfare***

Divide the class into three groups.

- Group A prepares an argument for a residual approach to social welfare: that is, “social welfare programs should be used sparingly and only as a last resort, when help from one’s family, church, banks, and other private resources have been exhausted.”
- Group B prepares an argument for an institutional approach to social welfare: that is, “social welfare programs should provide universal support to all citizens as a matter of right and regardless of individual economic status or need.”
- Group C prepares an argument for a social investment approach to social welfare: that is, “social welfare programs should be proactive, meeting people’s needs in order to prevent problems, and to yield long-term social benefits.”

Bring the groups together for a lively debate. After the debate, reconvene in a large group. Summarize positive and negative aspects of each approach. Speculate on the future of each approach in Canada given prevailing economic factors, current political climate, and social values.

2. ***A Political Forum***

Schedule a forum whereby members of the community with varying political ideologies (e.g., conservative, liberal, social democratic) discuss social problems and possible solutions. The discussion may be about a wide range of social issues; or, it may focus on a specific topic such as old age pensions, poverty, unemployment, violence against women, child abuse, racism, or alcohol/drug abuse. Students are encouraged to ask the forum participants questions and get their perspective on social problems and their possible solutions.

3. ***Income Inequity***

Read material found at the Centre for Policy Alternatives, the Conference Board of Canada, and TVO’s *Agenda* pertaining to income inequity in Canada. Develop three thought-provoking questions (with explanations about the rationale and the significance of your choices) about income inequity and its implications for social welfare and our society in general. Students submit the three questions for marking and select one favourite question of the three to be used in a random question draw to launch class discussion.

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2010/12/Richest%201%20Percent.pdf>

<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/>

<http://theagenda.tvos.org/blog/agenda-blogs/income-inequality-problem-canada>

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Note: Most of the following publications can be accessed online. Search by document title, or visit the publisher's website and list of publications.

Albert, J., & Kirwin, B. (2009). Social and welfare services. *Canadian Encyclopedia*.

Baines, C., Evans, P., & Neysmith, S. (1998). *Women's caring: Feminist perspectives on social welfare*, 2nd ed. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Battle, K., & Torjman, S. (2001, May). *The post-welfare state in Canada: Income testing and inclusion*. Ottawa, ON: Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

Block, W. (1983). Social welfare in Canada: The case for selectivity. *Canadian Social Work Review*, 83, 25–32.

Chretien says he's sorry for remarks. (1994, April 22). *Calgary Herald*, p. A13.

Daniels, R. J. (2004). *Investing in people: Creating a human capital society for Ontario*. Toronto: Panel on the Role of Government, Office of the Premier, Government of Ontario.

Findlay, P. C. (1983). Social welfare in Canada: The case for universality. *Canadian Social Work Review*, 83: 17–24.

George, V., & Wilding, P. (1985). *Ideology and social welfare*. London and New York: Routledge.

Hareven, T. K. (1969, April). An ambiguous alliance: Some aspects of American influences on Canadian social welfare. *Social History: A Canadian Review*, 3, 82–98.

Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Hepworth, P. (1984). Personal social services in North America: From residualism to universality. In M. D. Nair, R. C. Hain, & J. A. Draper (Eds.), *Issues in Canadian human services* (pp. 115–124). Toronto: OISE Press.

Hess, M. (1992). *The Canadian fact book on income security programs*. Ottawa/Montreal: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Hum, D. (1984, Summer). The nature and role of social services: An economist's perspective. *The Social Worker*, 52(2), 52–56.

Human Resources Development Canada. (1994). *Overview: Income security programs*. Ottawa: Author.

- Kirwin, B. (Ed.). (1991). *Ideology, development and social welfare: Canadian perspectives* (2nd ed.). Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press.
- Levitas, R. (2003, March 27–28). *The idea of social inclusion*. In Online Proceedings of the 2003 Conference on Social Inclusion Research, Ottawa, ON.
- Lochhead, C. (1998). Who benefits from Canada's income security programs? *Perception*, 21(4): 9–12.
- Maxwell, J. (2003, September). *The great social transformation: Implications for the social role of government in Ontario*. Paper prepared for the Panel on the Role of Government, Ontario: Canadian Policy Research Networks.
- McGilly, F. (1998). *An introduction to Canada's public social services: Understanding income and health programs* (2nd ed.). Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2001). *The role of human and social capital*. Paris, France: Author.
- Peters, S. (1995). *Exploring Canadian values: A synthesis report*. Canadian Policy Research Networks.
- Piven, F. F. (2007, Summer). The neoliberal challenge. *Contexts*, 6(3), 13–15.
- Philp, M., & Mackie, R. (1998, April). Beer gibe earns Harris a blast. *The Globe and Mail*, A1.
- Policy Research Initiative. (2005). *Social capital: A tool for public policy*. Government of Canada.
- Ross, D. P. (1987). Income security. In Shankar A. Yelaja (Ed.), *Canadian social policy* (rev. ed.) (pp. 27–46). Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Simpson, M. (1999, November). *Social investment: It's time to invest in New Brunswick's children, families and communities* (Policy Discussion Series Paper No. 4). Halifax, NS: Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health.
- Torjman, S. (2007, May). *Repairing Canada's social safety net*. Ottawa, ON: Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

Note: All websites are current as of October 2013.

2003 Social Inclusion Research Conference
Online: <http://www.ccsd.ca/events/inclusion/index.htm>

Indicators of Well-Being in Canada (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada)

Online: <http://www4.hrsdc.gc.ca/home.jsp?lang=en>

Canadian Index of Wellbeing

Online: <https://uwaterloo.ca/canadian-index-wellbeing/>

Panel on the Role of Government in Ontario

Online: <http://www.law-lib.utoronto.ca/investing/index.htm>

Programs and Services (now Employment and Social Development Canada)

Online: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/corporate/policy_programs/index.shtml

Social Capital Formation (Planning Network of Ontario)

Online: <http://www.spno.ca/>

Social Inclusion (Canadian Mental Health Association)

Online: <http://www.cmha.ca/public-policy/subject/social-inclusion/>