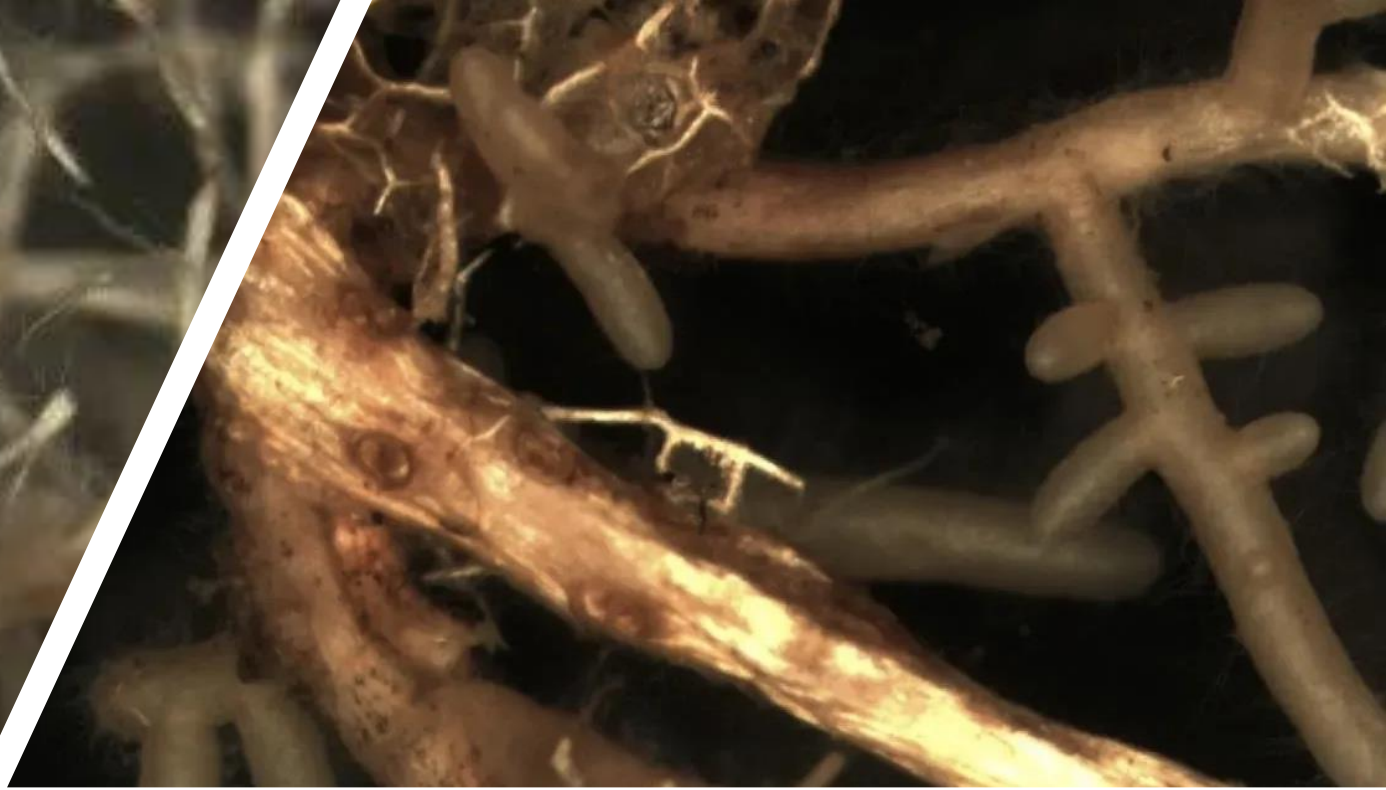
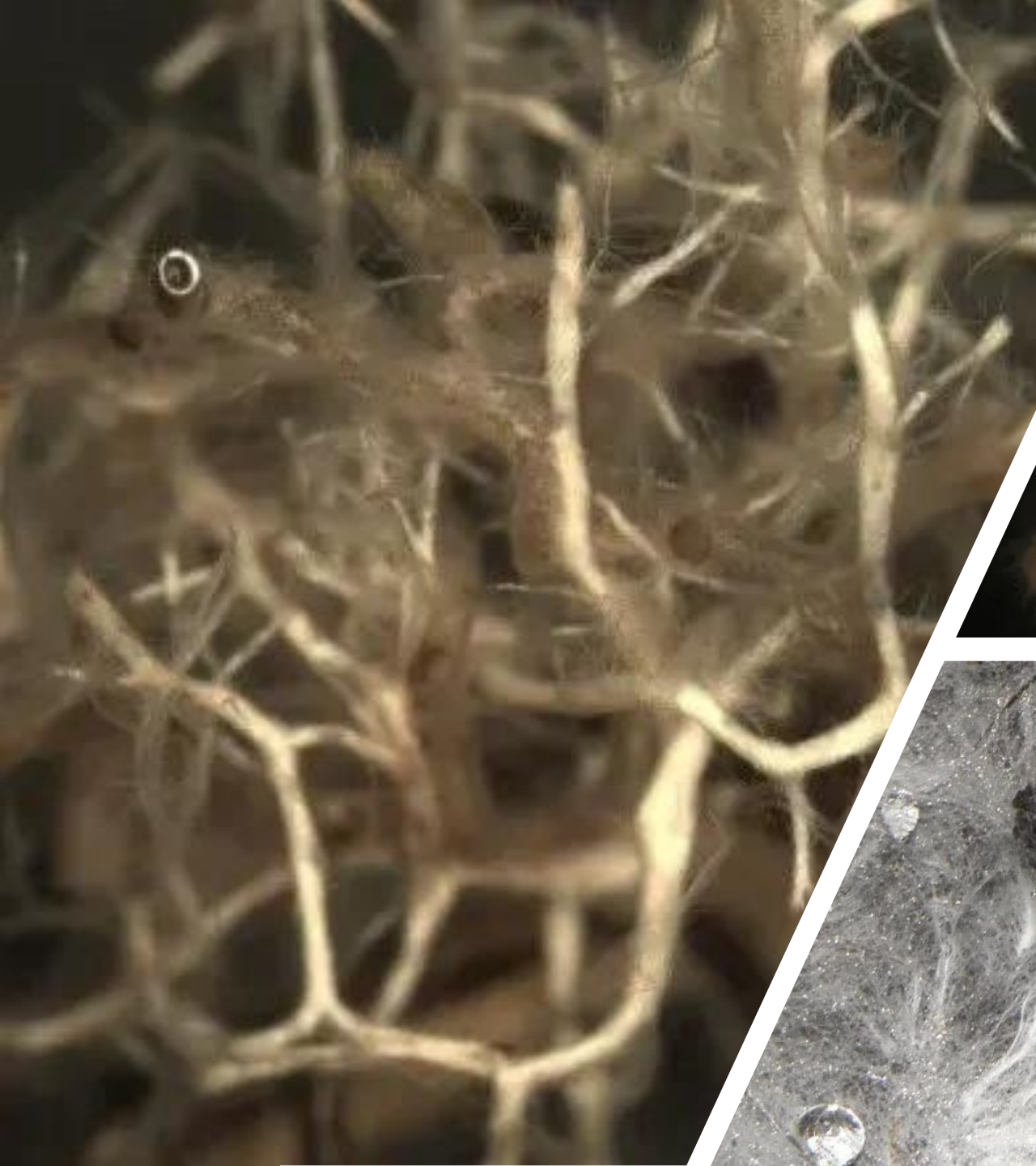


Food and Culture

FOOD MOVEMENTS

ERIK CHEVRIER, PH.D.

WWW.ERIKCHEVRIER.CA





Michael Kuo

What's Wrong With Industrial Food Systems

Please describe the current food related crises?

- Social crises
- Ecological crises
- Economic crises

Harms of the Global Food System

Food insecurity – billions of people without access to healthy food!

Pesticides kill pollinators – fruits need bees!

Food as a weapon of war – people in Gaza are starving!

Lack of food sovereignty – peasants and farmers are being affected by trade agreements and food dumping!

GMOs and privatization – restricted access!

Cost on farmers – family farms are not sustainable!

Reduction of biodiversity – we are destroying nature!

Unwanted genetics spreading onto non-GMO farms – lawsuits!

Loss of Indigenous farming methods – on stolen land!

Soil arability – we are killing our soil!

Creating dead zones in waterways – we are polluting our water!

Corporate concentration of agribusinesses – former war companies are now food chemical companies!

Health – our food contains toxins!

Carbon intensive practices – agroecology and permaculture methods can sequester carbons!

Structural racism, colonialism and patriarchy – glaring systemic issues!

Rising cost of seed and chemicals – we don't need to buy seeds!

Research funding being directed to GMOs instead of traditional breeding methods – 'science' is not only about GMOs!

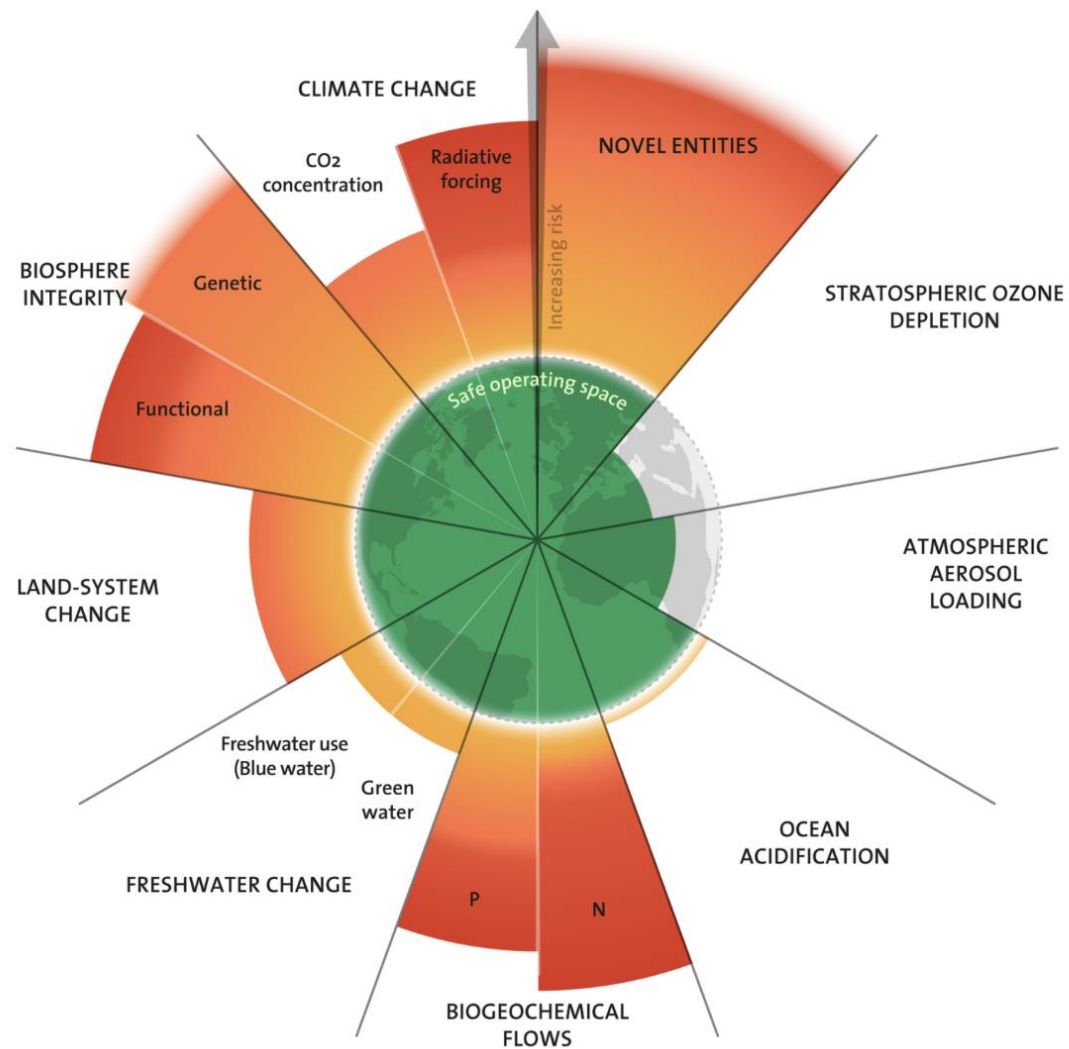
Pest and weed resistance to Bt crops and glyphosate!

There are so many more issues!

We Need To Transform Our Food System

Calls to “fix a broken food system” assume that the capitalist food system used to work well. This assumption ignores the food systems long, racialized history of mistreatment of people of colour. The food system is unjust and unsustainable, but it is not broken. It functions precisely as the capitalist food system has always worked, concentrating power in the hands of the privileged minority and passing off the social and environmental “externalities” disproportionately to racially stigmatized groups.

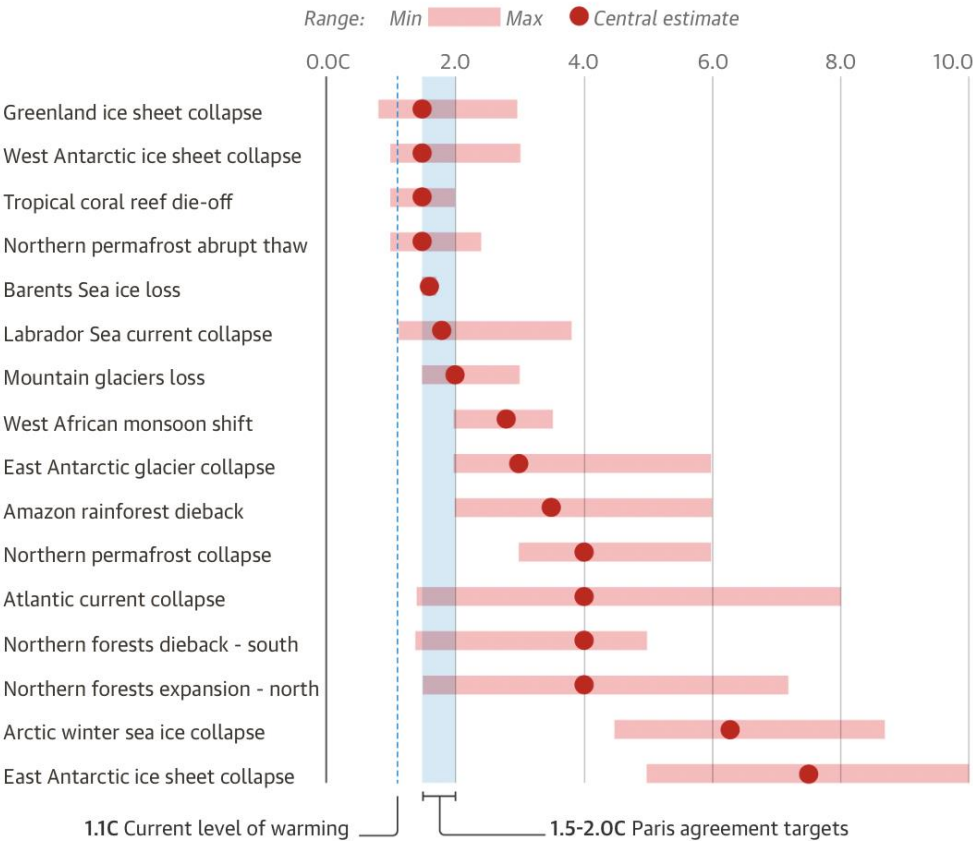
Holt-Gimenez, E. (2017) A Foodie's Guide to Capitalism: Understanding the Political Economy of What We Eat, Monthly Review Press, New York.



The 2025 update to the Planetary boundaries. Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 3.0. Credit: "Azote for Stockholm Resilience Centre, based on analysis in Sakschewski and Caesar et al. 2025".

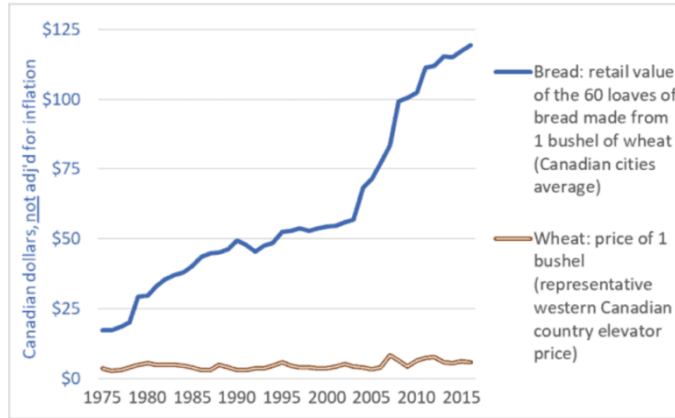
The risk of climate tipping points is rising rapidly as the world heats up

Estimated range of global heating needed to pass tipping point temperature



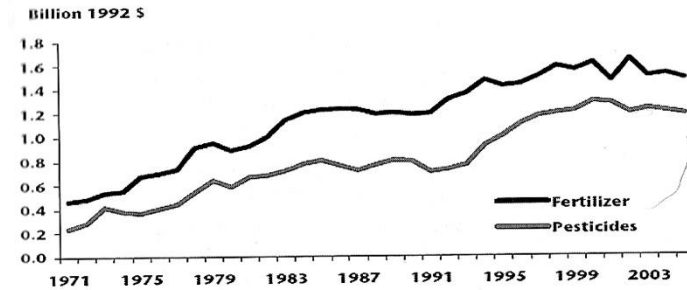
Guardian graphic. Source: Armstrong McKay et al, Science, 2022. Note: Current global heating temperature rise 1.1°C Paris agreement targets 1.5-2.0°C



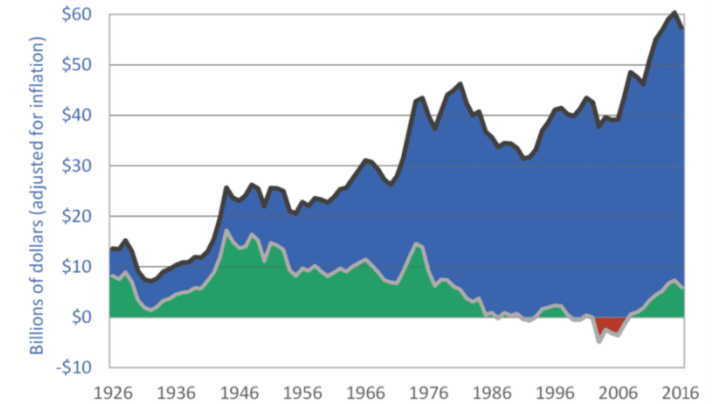


Canadian retail store bread price and farm-gate wheat price, 1975-2016

Figure 2-8 Canadian Farm Expenditures on Fertilizers and Pesticides (adjusted for Inflation): 1971-2005

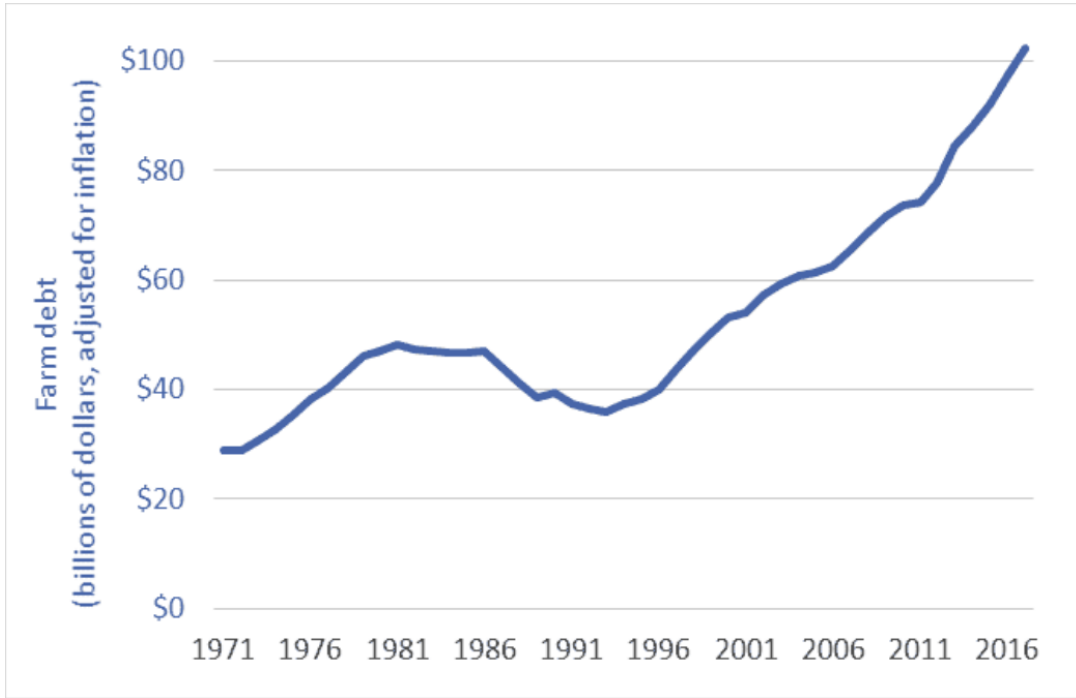


Sources: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, *An Overview of the Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food System: 2007*, p. 124.

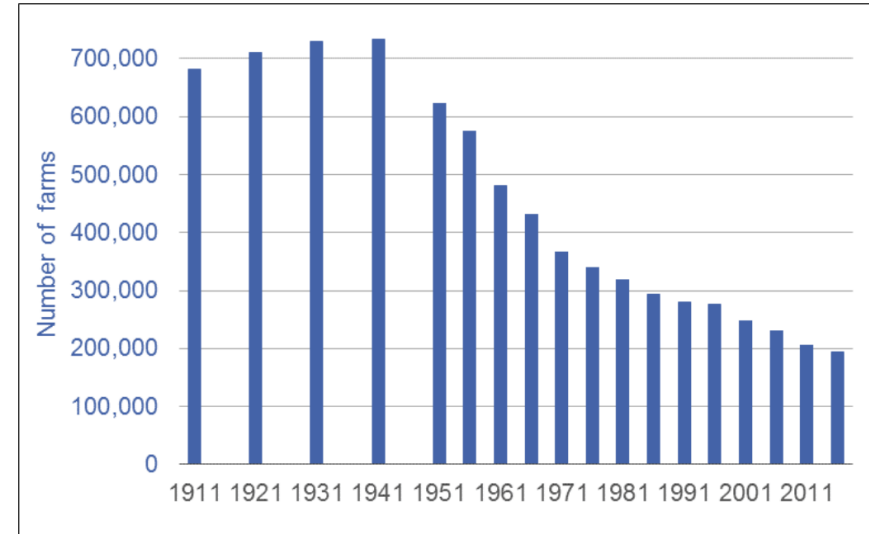


Canadian net farm income and gross revenue, inflation adjusted, net of government payments, 1926-2016.

The Global Food System is Not Economically Viable



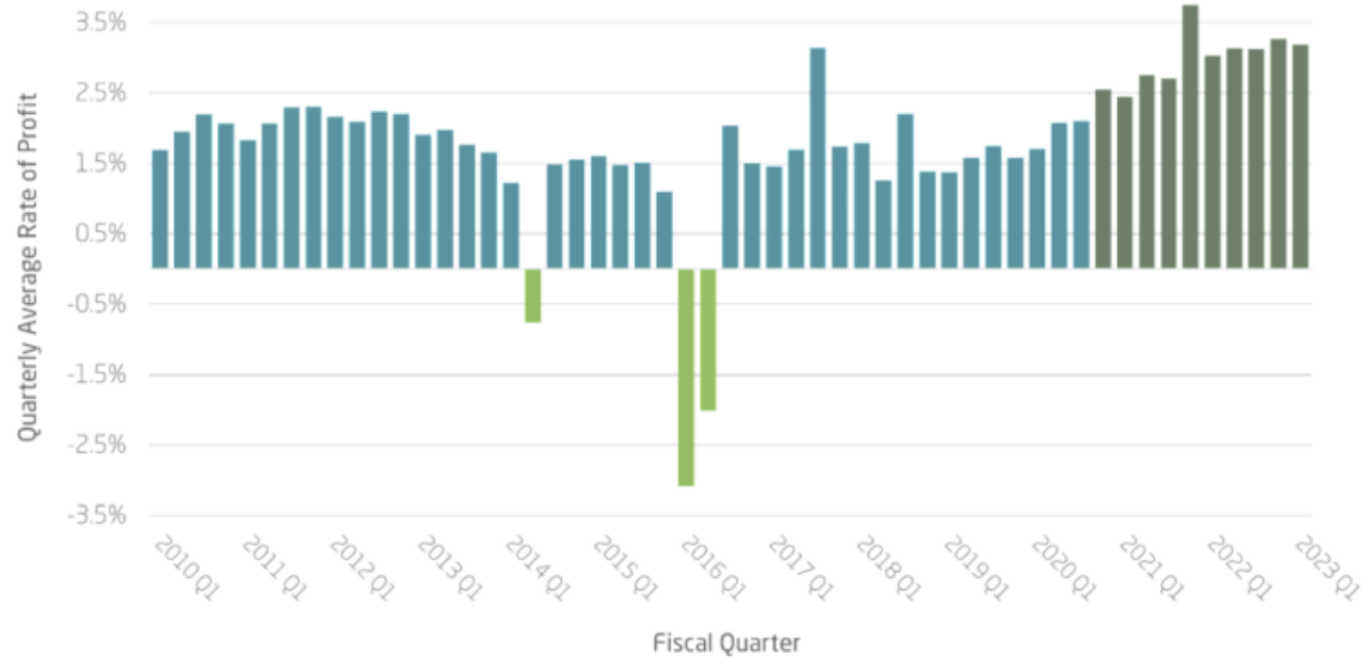
Losing the farm(s): Census data on the number of farms in Canada



Number of farms in Canada, Census years, 1911 to 2016

The Global Food System is Not Economically Viable

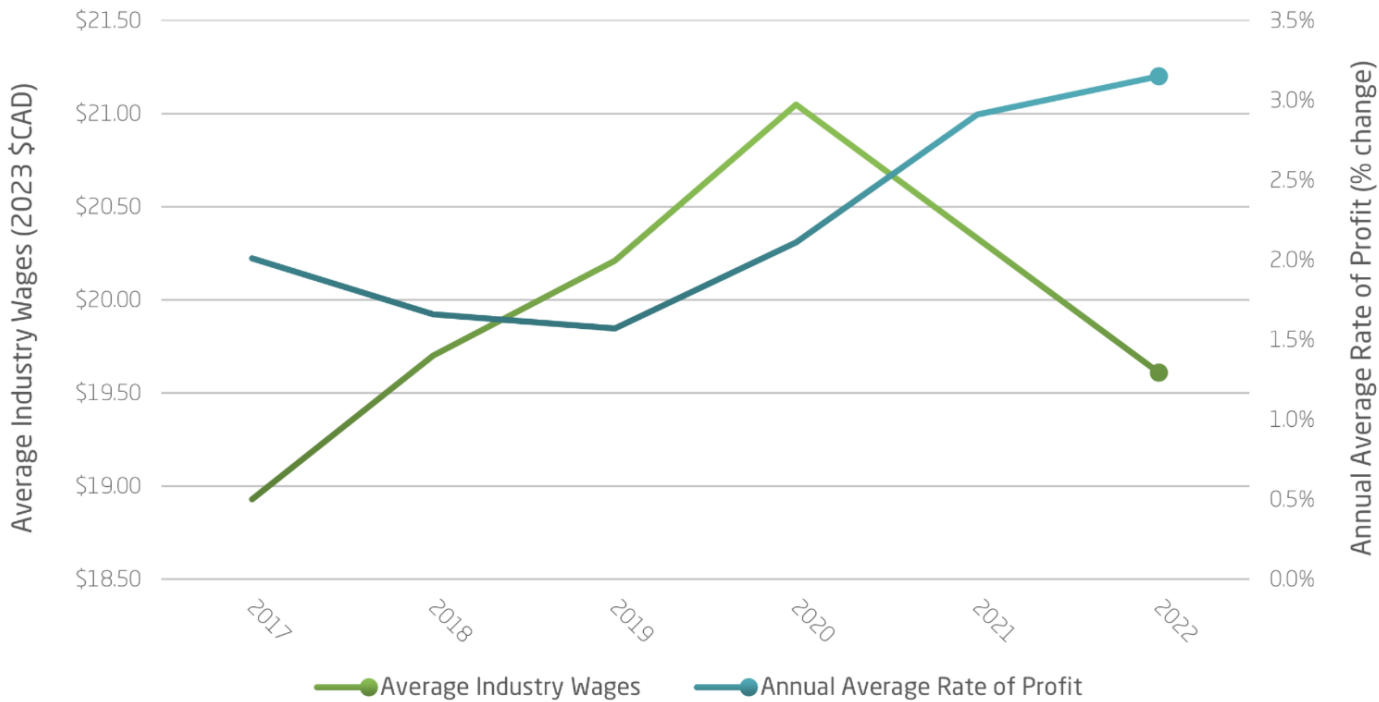
Food and Beverage Stores Quarterly Average Rate of Profit Across Canada, 2010-2023



FOOD PRICE INFLATION

Statistics Canada. [Table 33-10-0225-01](#) quarterly balance sheet, income statement and selected financial ratios, by non-financial industries, non seasonally adjusted (x 1,000,000). Chart from *Canadian Grocery Profitability: Inflation, Wages and Financialization*, Broadbent Institute, 2023.

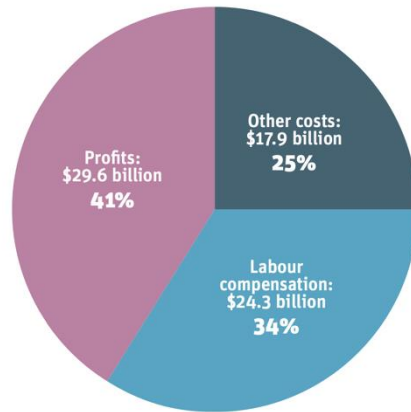
Chart 3 – Food and Beverage Stores: Annual Real Wages (2023 \$CAD) vs. Annual Rate of Firm Profits Across Canada, 2018-2022



FOOD PRICE INFLATION

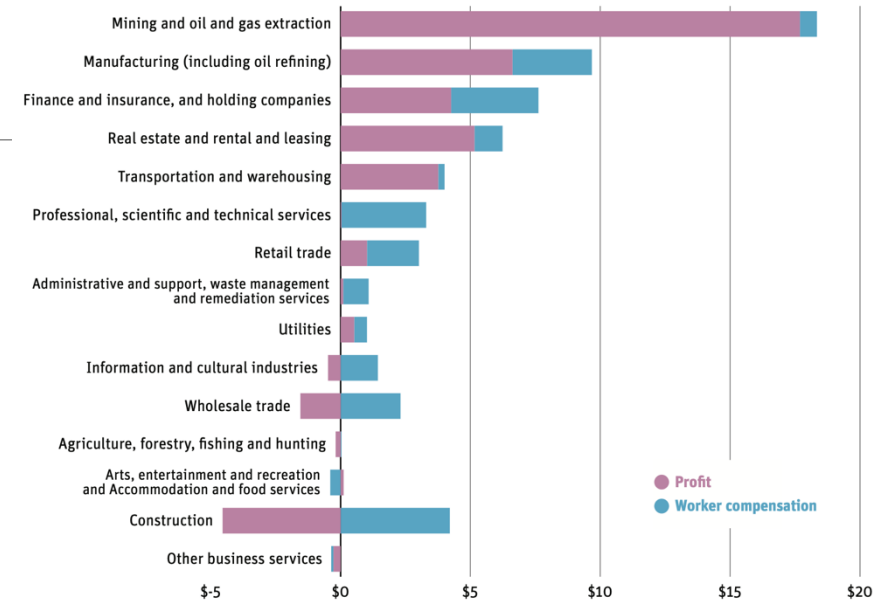
Statistics Canada. [Table 14-10-0209-01](#) Average hourly earnings (including overtime) for salaried employees, by industry, monthly, unadjusted for seasonality; Statistics Canada. [Table 18-10-0004-13](#) Consumer Price Index by product group, monthly, percentage change, not seasonally adjusted, Canada, provinces, Whitehorse, Yellowknife and Iqaluit; Statistics Canada. [Table 33-10-0225-01](#) Quarterly balance sheet, income statement and selected financial ratios, by non-financial industries, non seasonally adjusted (x 1.000.000)

FIGURE 2 Where inflation dollars paid to the corporate sector went (\$bil, Q3 2020 vs Q3 2022)



Notes Includes only the business sector. Represents the increase in costs in each category after adjusting for real GDP growth in the business sector through the creation of unit labour costs, unit profits and unit other costs. See the methodology section. Dollar figures represent the cumulative percentage change in prices on a quarterly basis. Time frame goes from the third quarter 2020 through to the third quarter 2022.
Source See Table 2 for Statistics Canada table sources and the methodology section for calculations.

FIGURE 4 Where inflation dollars in third quarter 2022 ended up, by industry and type (\$bil, Q3 2020 vs Q3 2022)



Source See Table 2 for Statistics Canada table sources and the methodology section for calculations.

CONNECTING TO THE BIGGER PICTURE

Basic needs take bigger bite of household budgets in 2024

Average spending as percent of household disposable income
HOUSING, WATER, ENERGY, FOOD/DRINK **ALL OTHER SPENDING**

Lowest quintile (Average monthly income in 2024: \$2,510)



Second (\$4,835)



Third (\$6,688)



Fourth (\$9,207)



Highest (\$17,122)

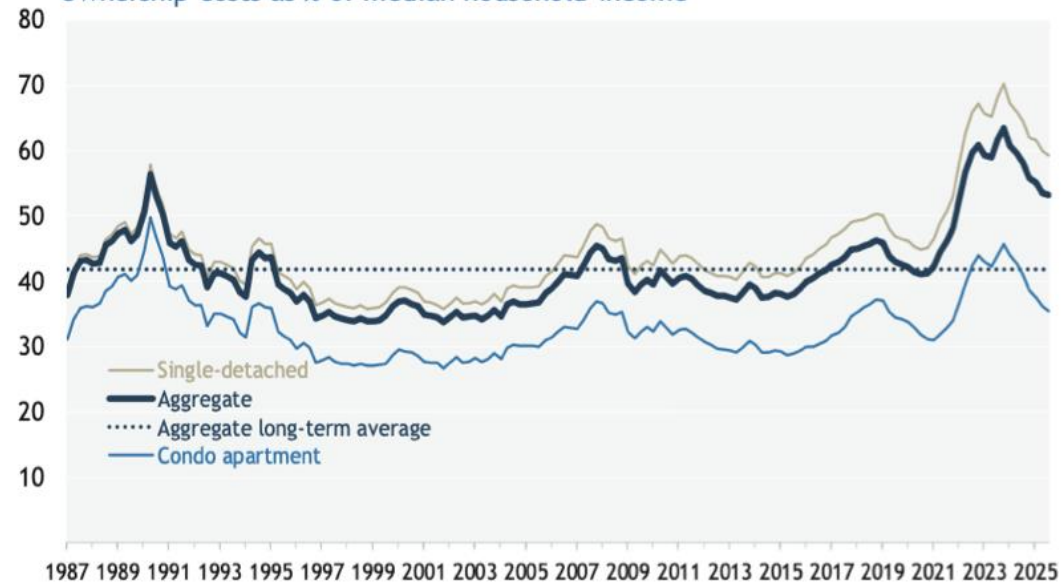


Essentials are sum of (1) Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels; (2) Food and non-alcoholic beverages; (3) Food, beverage and accommodation services

Chart: Ryan Romard • Source: [StatCan table 36-10-0663-01](#) • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

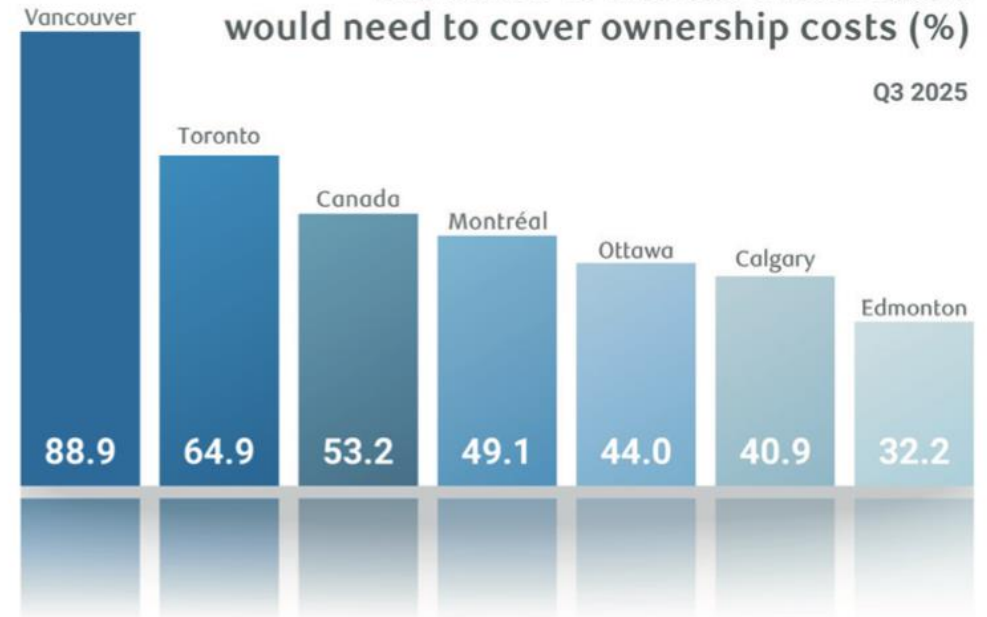
RBC Housing Affordability Measures - Canada

Ownership costs as % of median household income



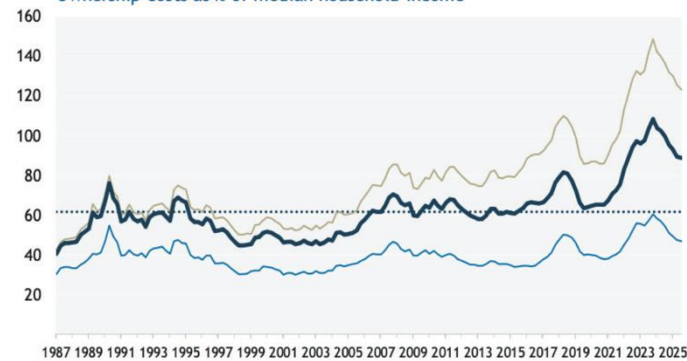
The share of income a household would need to cover ownership costs (%)

Q3 2025



Vancouver Area

Ownership costs as % of median household income

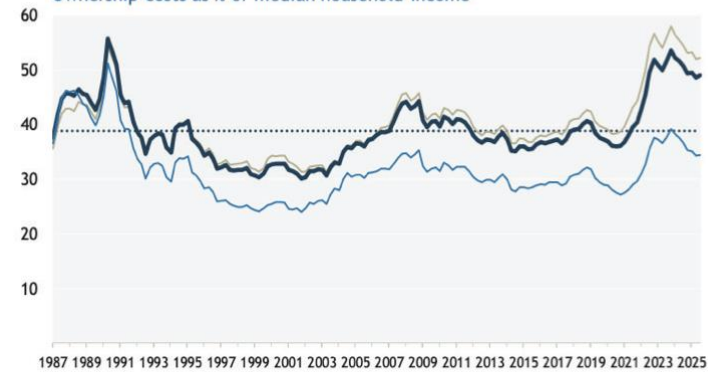


— Single-detached — Aggregate
 Aggregate long-term average — Condo apartment

Source: RPS, Statistics Canada, Bank of Canada, Royal LePage, RBC Economics

Montreal Area

Ownership costs as % of median household income

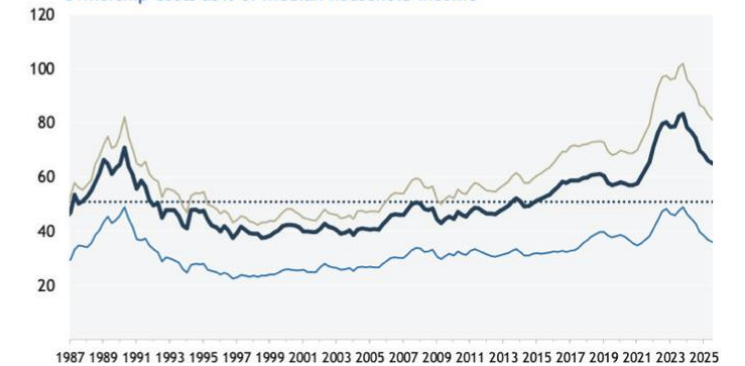


— Single-detached — Aggregate
 Aggregate long-term average — Condo apartment

Source: RPS, Statistics Canada, Bank of Canada, Royal LePage, RBC Economics

Toronto Area

Ownership costs as % of median household income



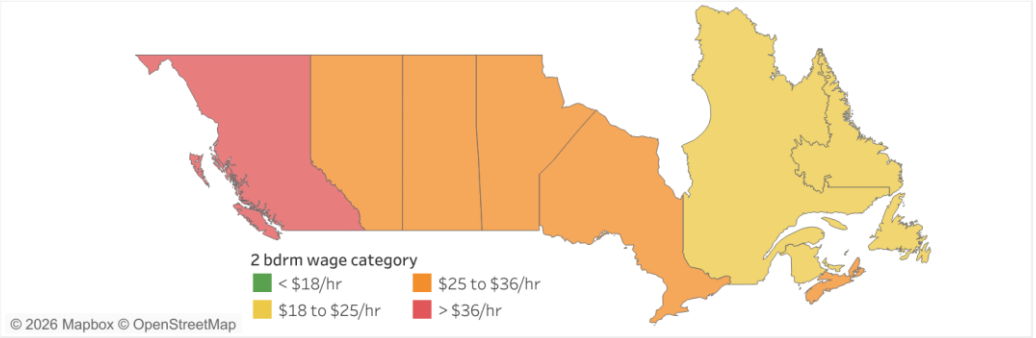
— Single-detached — Aggregate
 Aggregate long-term average — Condo apartment

Source: RPS, Statistics Canada, Bank of Canada, Royal LePage, RBC Economics

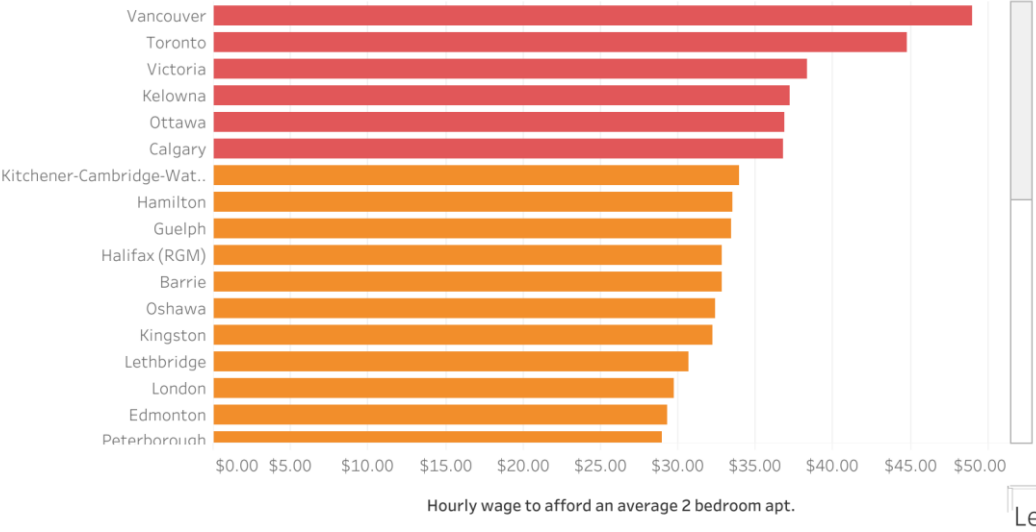
Rental Wage in Canada 2024



Click on a province:

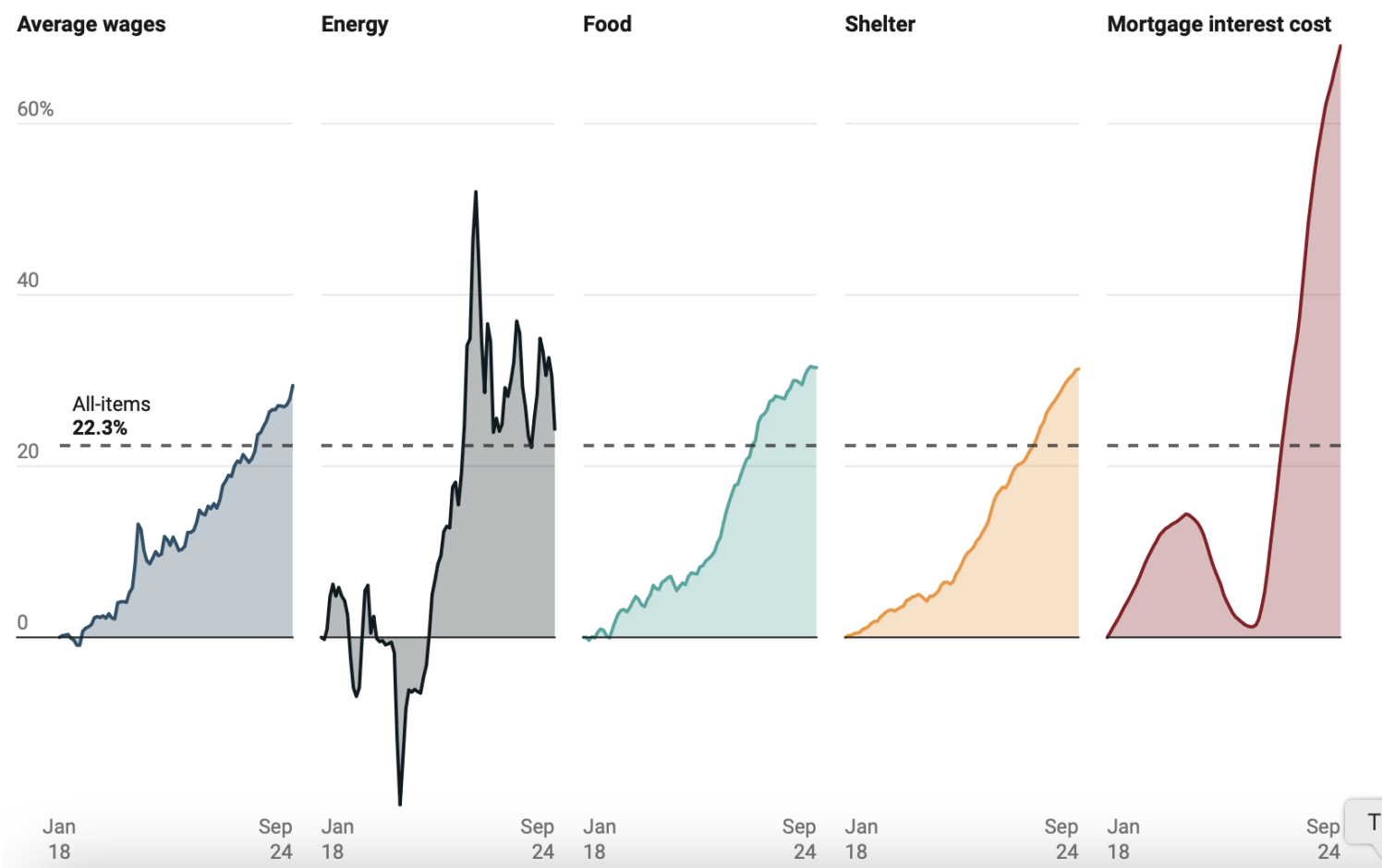


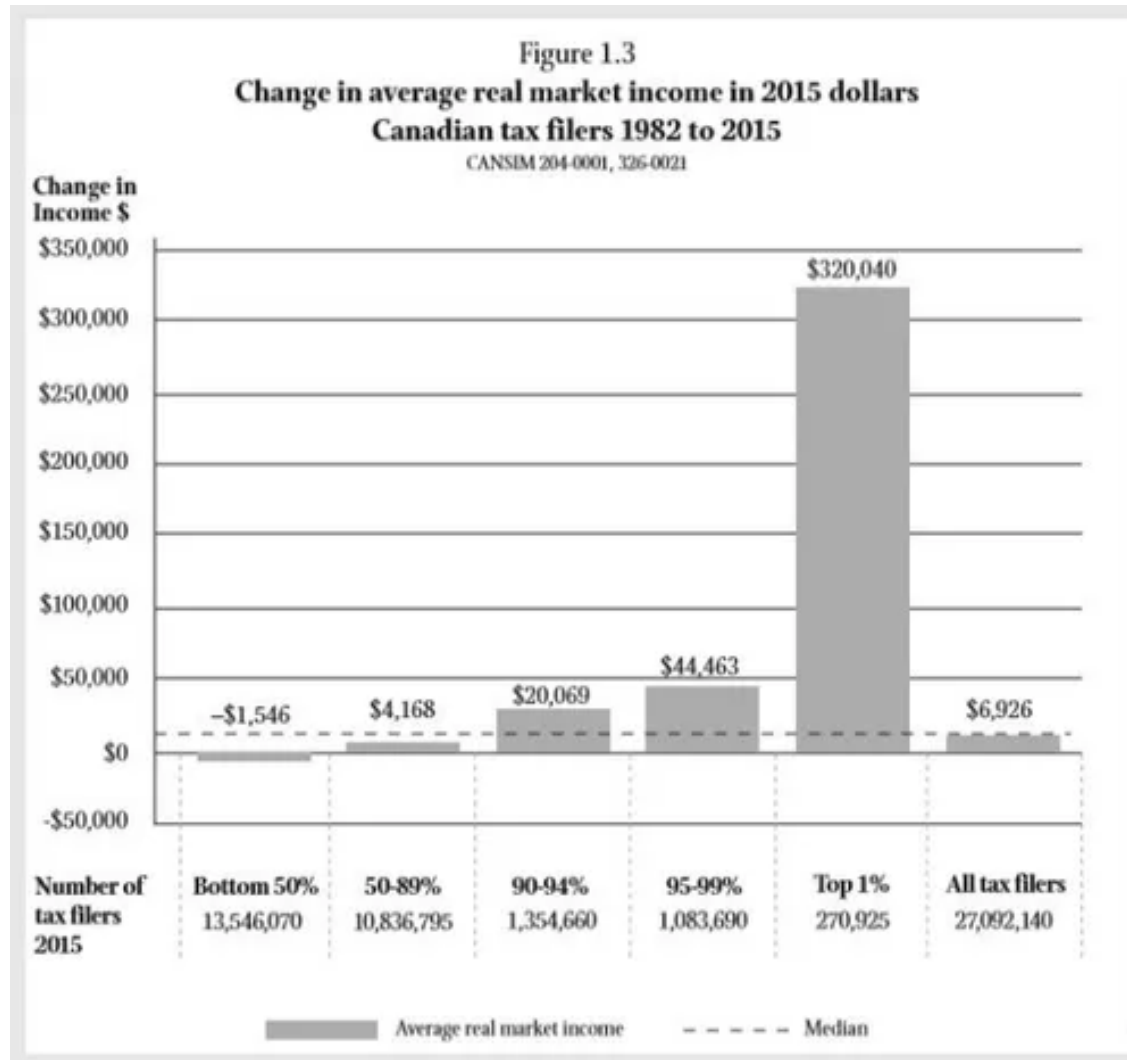
Click for detailed city map



Food, rent, energy keep pace with wages, mortgage costs crushing

Average hourly wages versus CPI products, percent change Jan 2018 to Sep 2024





Real vs Market Income
Osberg, L. (2018) The Age of Increasing Inequality – The Astonishing Rise of Canada’s 1%, James Lorimer and Company.

Table 2.1
Hourly Real Wage among Full-Time Workers (2015\$)

	Average	10th Percentile	50th	90th	99th	99.9th	\$GAP 99.9th -50th
1980	25.73	11.64	23.37	41.50	71.93	150.99	127.61
1985	25.15	10.23	22.97	41.22	71.19	156.2	133.23
1990	25.64	10.16	23.29	42.24	75.69	170.47	147.18
1995	25.21	9.64	22.65	41.69	76.19	190.52	167.87
2000	26.52	9.79	22.97	44.03	91.87	265.53	242.56
2005	28.31	10.31	23.67	46.64	102.64	372.16	348.49
2010	31.00	11.40	26.07	52.06	112.04	340.52	314.45
Compound annual growth rates							
1980-2010	0.62%	-0.07%	0.36%	0.76%	1.48%	2.71%	3.01%
1980-2000	0.15%	-0.87%	-0.09%	0.30%	1.22%	2.82%	3.21%
2000-2010	1.56%	1.52%	1.27%	1.68%	1.98%	2.49%	4.81%

Source: Duclos and Pellerin (2016-Table 3) plus author's calculations

Figure 2.1
Real Average Canadian Hourly Wage in 2015 dollars 1914-2000
CANSIM ii V I603501 ; Urquhart et al "Historical Statistics of Canada"



Sources: Statistics Canada, CANSIM ii V I603501 and Urquhart et al., "Historical Statistics of Canada."

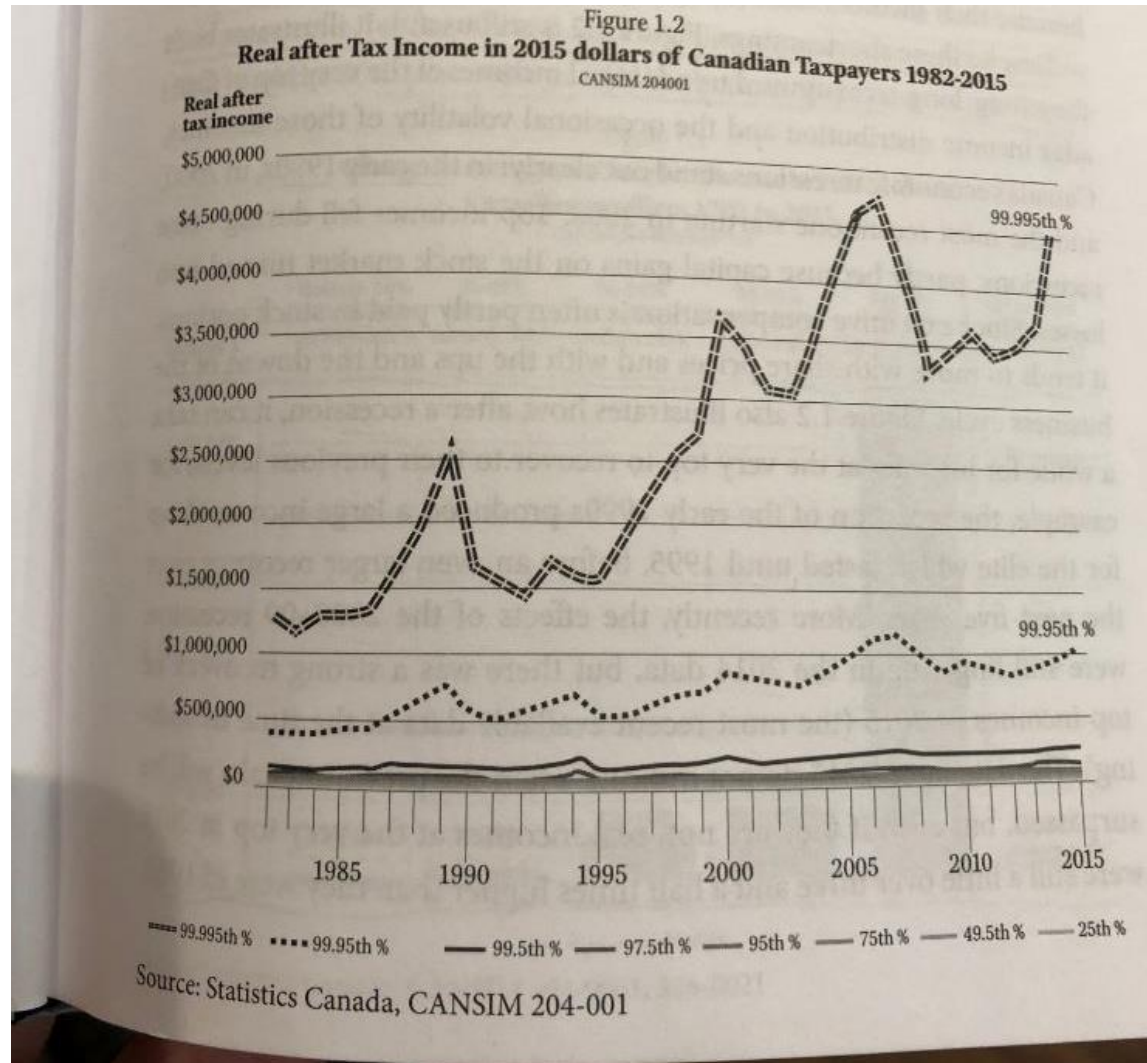
CONNECTING TO THE BIGGER PICTURE

Table 2.2
Growth Rates of Real Market Incomes of
Canadian Taxpayers

Percentile	Income 2015 \$	1982–2015	1982–2000	2000–2015
99.995th	6,722,900	3.75%	6.01%	1.04%
99.99th	4,270,400	3.41%	5.71%	0.66%
99.95th	1,507,500	2.78%	4.41%	0.83%
99.9th	972,500	2.49%	3.90%	0.80%
99.5th	368,000	1.65%	2.26%	0.91%
99th	251,400	1.33%	1.57%	1.06%
95th	121,700	0.75%	0.48%	1.07%
90th	92,500	0.56%	0.27%	0.92%
75th	56,100	0.22%	-0.23%	0.76%
50th (median)	26,800	-0.07%	-0.96%	0.99%
25th	6,500	-1.06%	-2.42%	0.57%

Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM 204-0001 + Author's calculations

Growth Rates of Real
Market Incomes
Osberg, L. (2018) The
Age of Increasing
Inequality – The
Astonishing Rise of
Canada's 1%, James
Lorimer and Company.



Real Income
Osberg, L. (2018)
The Age of
Increasing Inequality
– The Astonishing
Rise of Canada's 1%,
James Lorimer and
Company.

Figure 1: Average and minimum pay for the 100 highest-paid CEOs

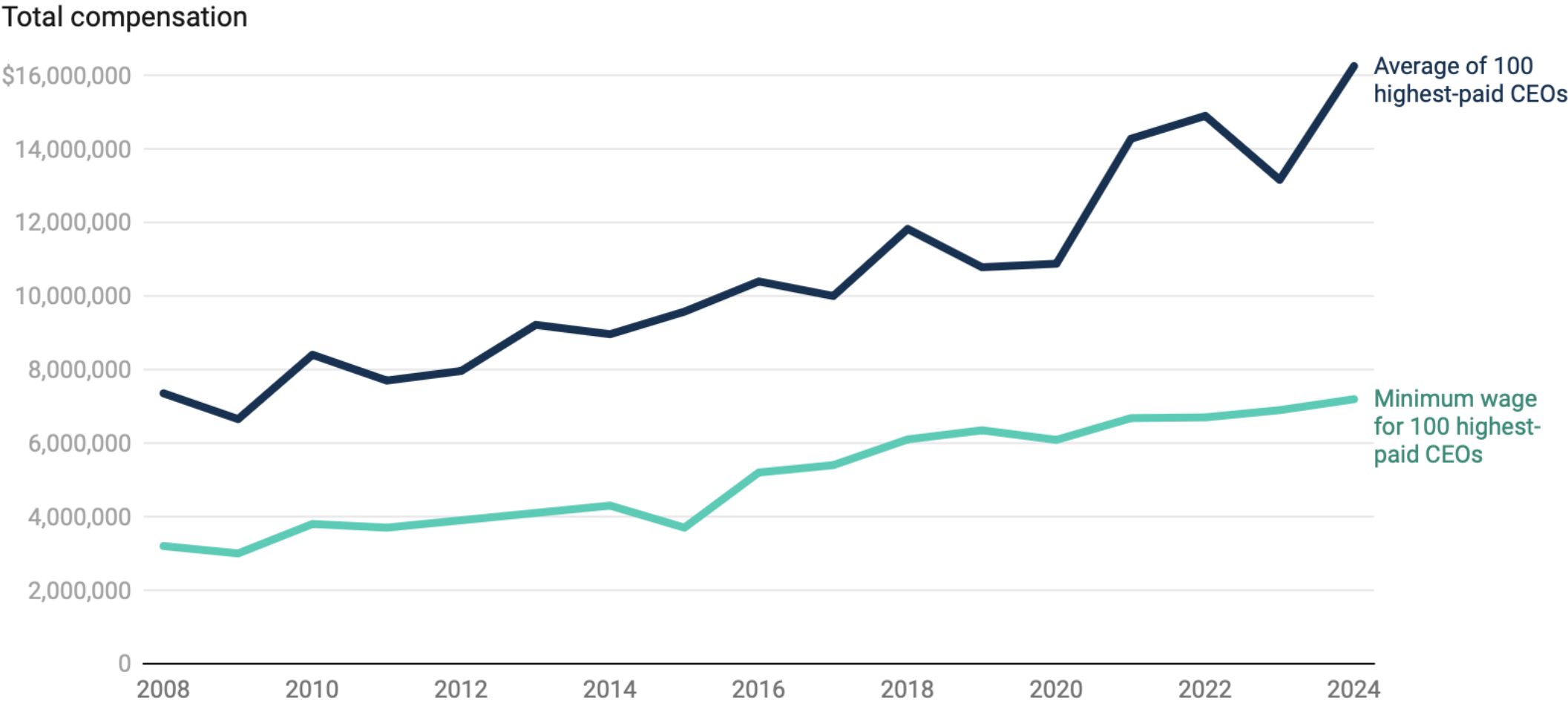


Figure 2: Ratio of CEO pay to average worker pay

Canada, 100 highest-paid CEOs

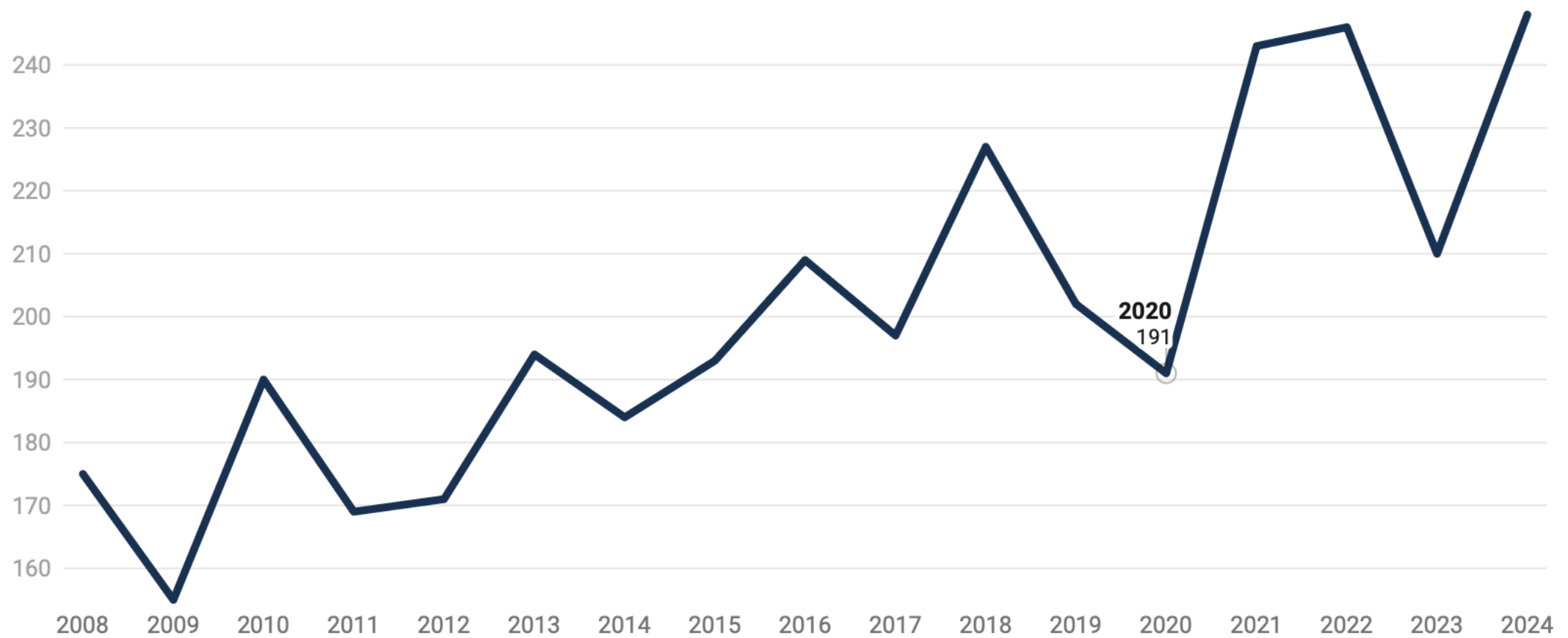
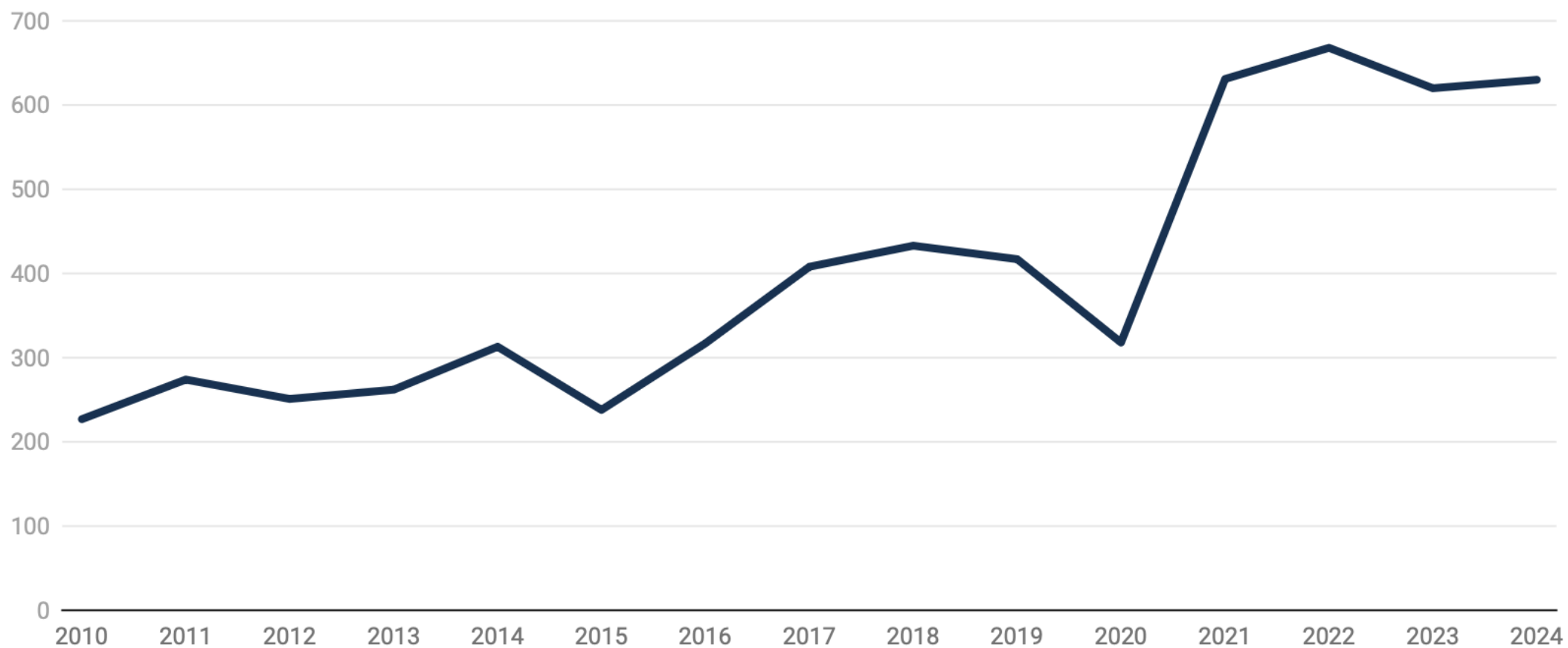
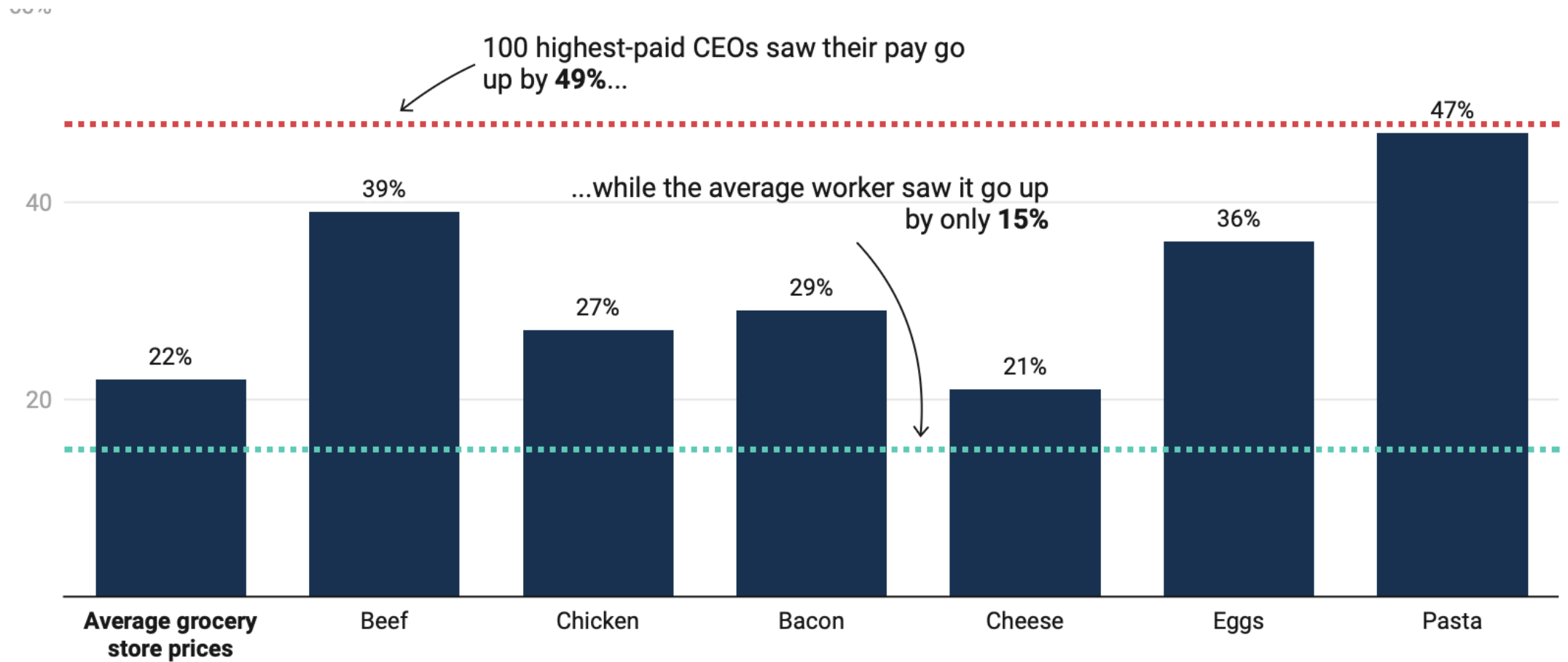


Figure 7: Net pre-tax corporate profits

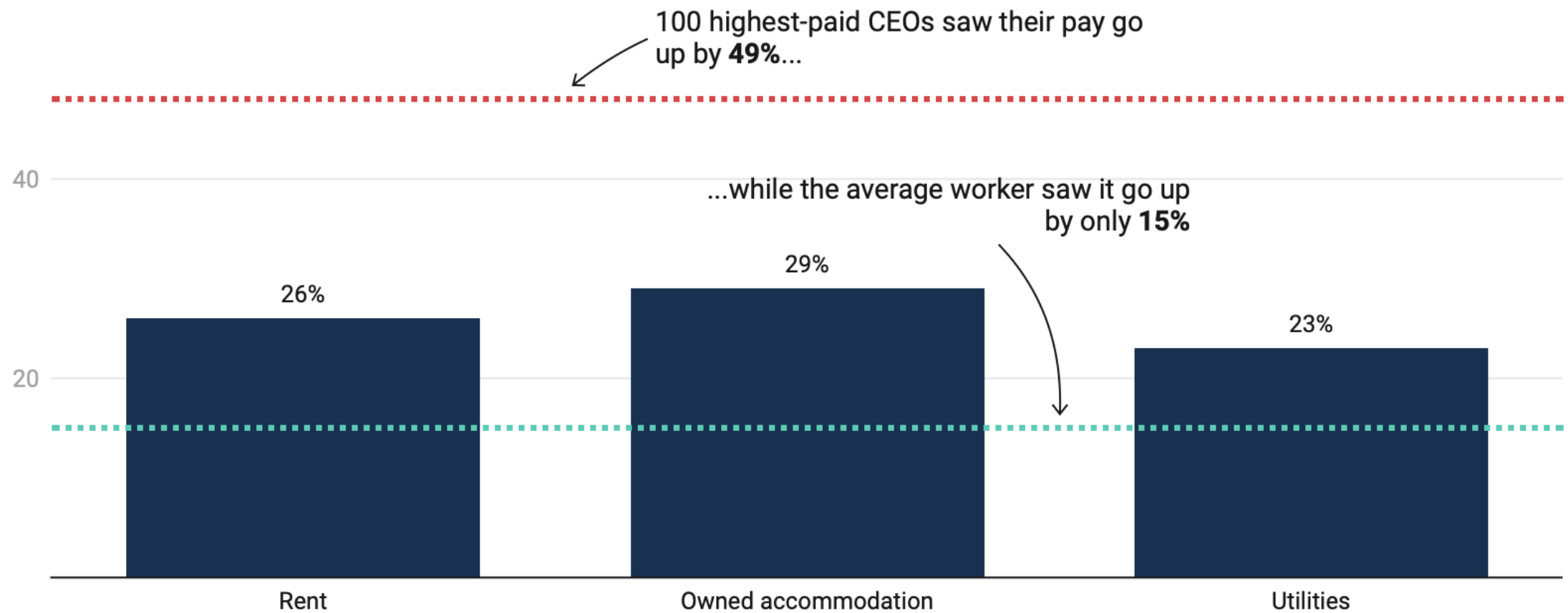
\$billions





Change in CPI index value between January 2020 and January 2024

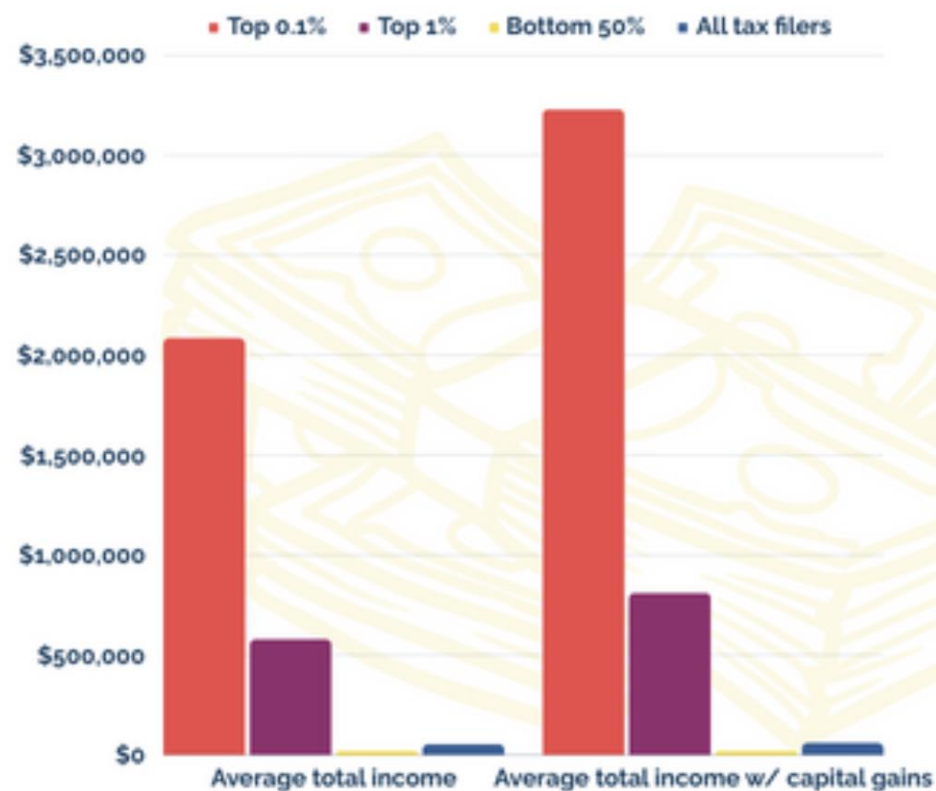
Source: Statistics Canada table 18-10-0004-01 and author's calculations • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)



Change in CPI index value between January 2020 and January 2024

Source: Statistics Canada table 18-10-0004-01 and author's calculations • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

Average total income with and without capital gains by income group, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Table 11-10-0055-01, Longitudinal Administrative Databank

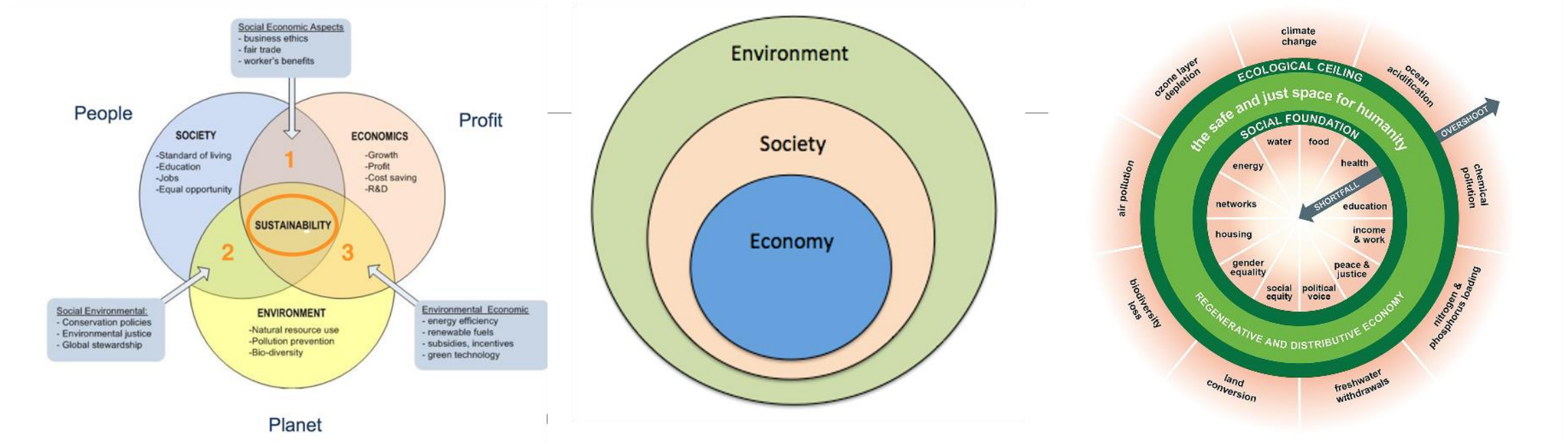


How Can We Solve These Food Related Crises?





Figure 1. Food System Sectors

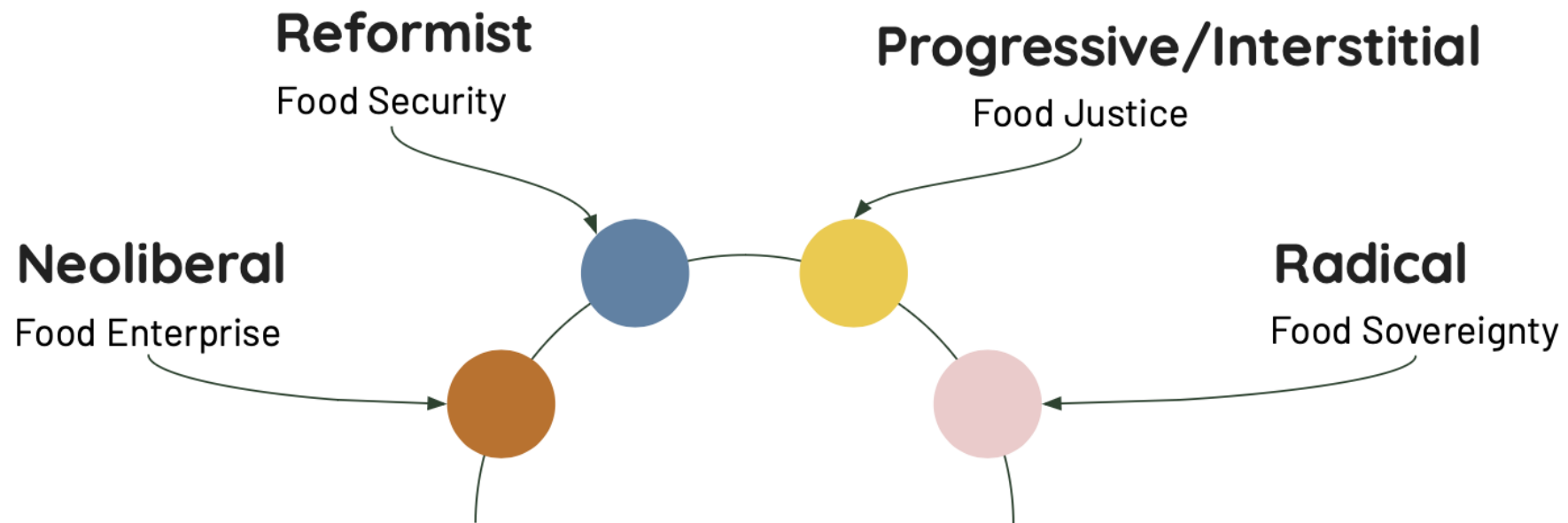


From Weak Sustainability to Food Sovereignty

Food System Change

CORPORATE FOOD REGIME

FOOD MOVEMENTS



Holt-Gimenez, E. (2017) A Foodie's Guide to Capitalism: Understanding the Political Economy of What We Eat, Monthly Review Press, New York.

Discussion

How can we use our understanding of food systems, doughnut models and food movements to develop better foodscapes that have positive impacts on our communities?

Aristotle

Aristotle in 23 Volumes, Vol. 21, translated by H. Rackham.
Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William
Heinemann Ltd. 1944.

Chrematistics – art of
acquisition – limitless
accumulation unnatural and
problematic

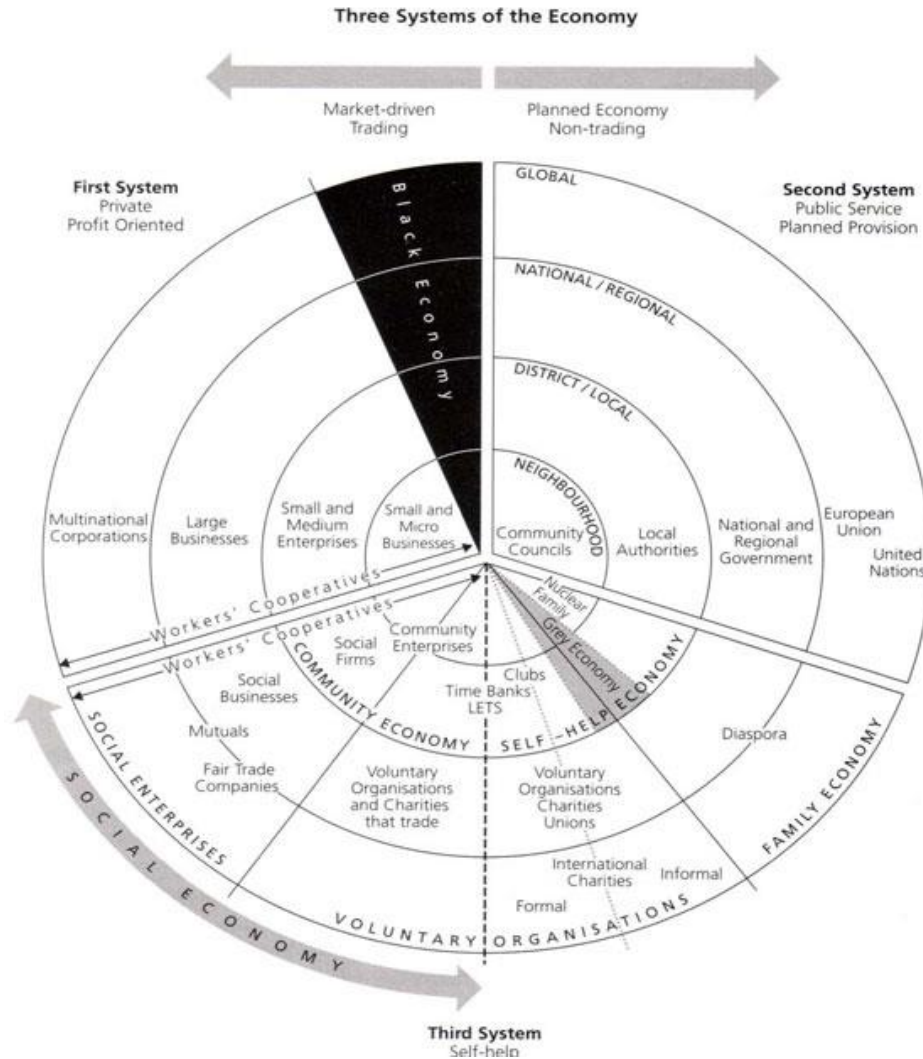
Oikonomia – management
of the household – true
form of an economy

Karl Polanyi

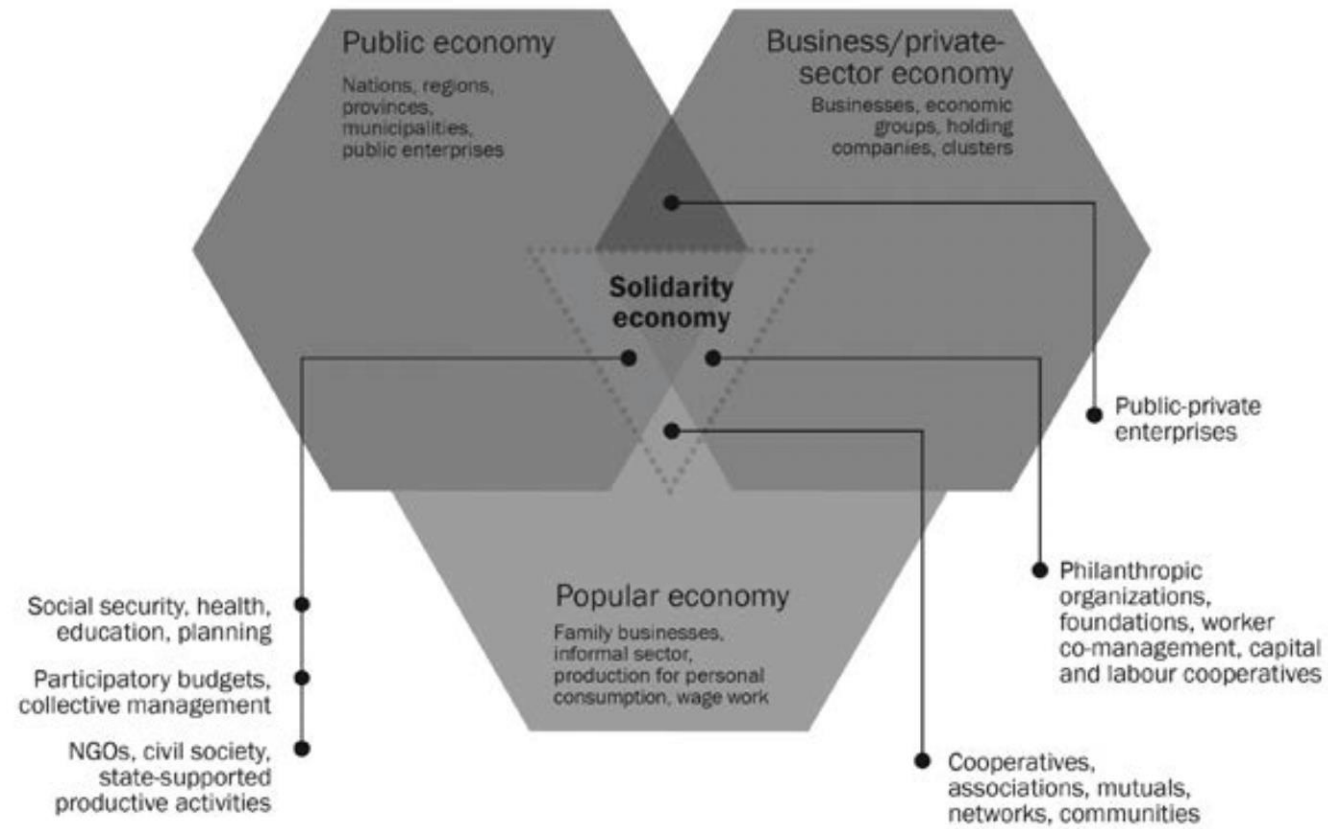
Polanyi, K. (2001) The Great Transformation; The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time, Beacon Press

Types of economic practices:

- Markets (exchange)
- Household economy
- Redistribution
- Reciprocity

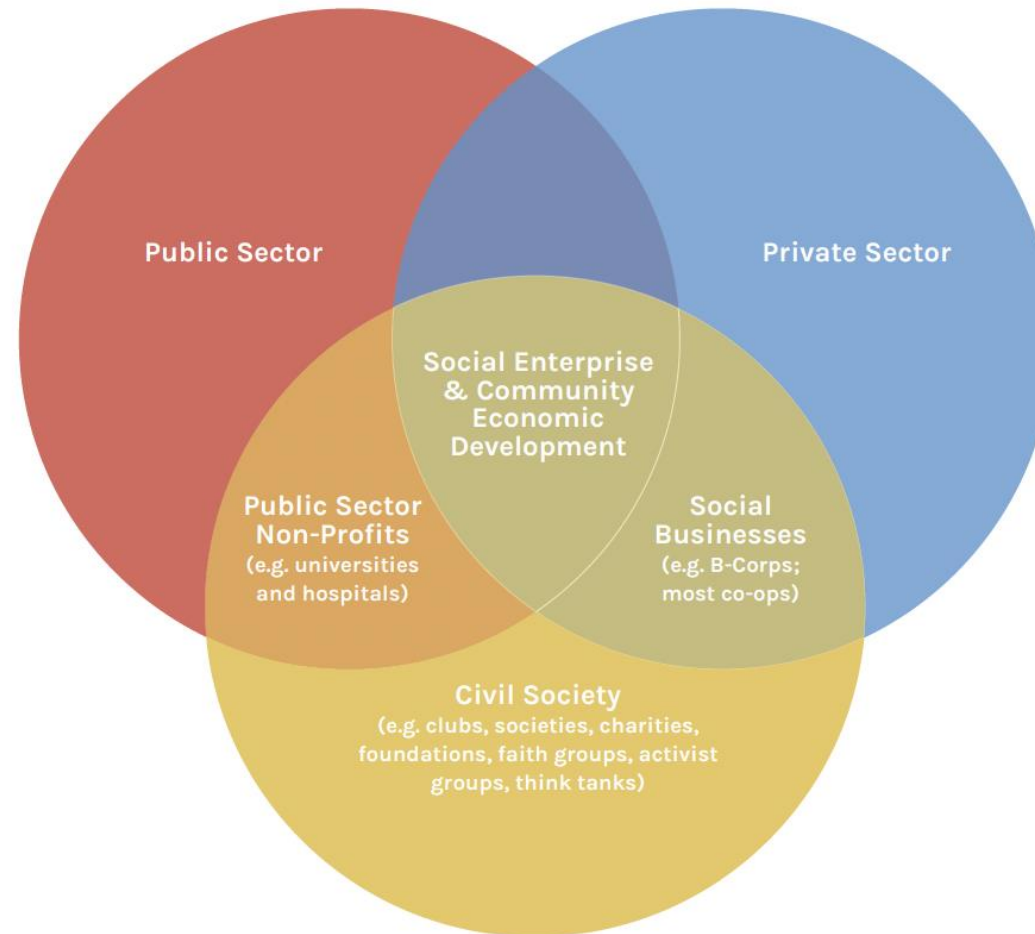


Three Systems of an Economy
 Pearce, J. (2009) Social Economy: Engaging as a Third System, In Amin, A. The Social Economy; International Perspectives on Economic Solidarity, p. 26.



Source: Based on Coraggio (2015), published in UNRISD (2016, 121).

Figure 3.1 The solidarity economy within the broader economy



Gibson Graham – Take back the Economy

Gibson-Graham, J.K., Cameron, J., Healy, S. (2013) Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Communities, University of Minnesota Press

LABOR	TRANSACTIONS	PROPERTY	ENTERPRISE	FINANCE
Wage	Market	Private	Capitalist	Mainstream Markets
ALTERNATIVE PAID Self-employed Reciprocal labor In-kind Work for welfare	ALTERNATIVE MARKET Fair trade Alternative currencies Underground market Barter	ALTERNATIVE PRIVATE State-managed assets Customary (clan) land Community land trusts Indigenous knowledge (Intellectual Property)	ALTERNATIVE CAPITALIST State owned Environmentally responsible Socially responsible Non-profit	ALTERNATIVE MARKET Cooperative Banks Credit unions Community-based financial institutions Micro-finance
UNPAID Housework Volunteer Self-provisioning Slave labor	NON-MARKET Household sharing Gift giving Hunting, fishing, gathering Theft, piracy, poaching	OPEN ACCESS Atmosphere International Waters Open source IP Outer Space	NON-CAPITALIST Worker cooperatives Sole proprietorships Community enterprise Feudal Slave	NON-MARKET Sweat equity Family lending Donations Interest-free loans

Discussion – Diverse Economy

What Diverse Economy Food Practices Do You Have In Your Community?

More Links and Sources

Sources

[World Inequality Database Canada](#)

[Where are your inflation dollars going?](#)

[Canadian Grocery Profitability: Inflation, Wages and Financialization](#)

[Canada Food Price Report 2024](#)

[Inequality in Canada](#)

[Inequality in Canada](#)

[Bank Bailouts During Economic Crisis](#)

[Rent Affordability Statistics](#)

[Canadians Spending](#)

[Canadian CEOs](#)

[RBC Housing Affordability December 2025](#)

Thank You!

Questions, concerns, comments?