

Imposing Liberalism

Key Skill:

Analyzing the impact of media on information, understanding, and outcomes

Key Terms and Concepts:

- Aboriginal rights
- assimilation
- enfranchisement
- imposition
- land holding
- Indian Act
- treaty rights

Key Issue:

To what extent should we embrace an ideology?

Related Issue:

Is resistance to liberalism justified?

Chapter Issue:

To what extent, and for whom, has the imposition of liberalism been successful?

Question for Inquiry #1:

How has the imposition of liberalism affected Aboriginal groups in Canada?

Question for Inquiry #2:

To what extent does the imposition of liberalism affect various people?



◀ **Figure 9-1** Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine speaking on Parliament Hill on June 28, 2007.

🖱️ **PAUSE AND REFLECT**

Why do you think Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine chose to hold his press conference in a location where television viewers would see Parliament Hill behind him as he spoke?

“We are looking for the basic necessities of life that come with being Canadian—clean drinking water, decent housing, education and health care. We are looking for equality of opportunity so we can get good jobs and support ourselves and our families. We are looking to control our own destinies. Improving our lives will not only be good for us. It will be good for Canada.”

—Source: Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine, quoted in Jonathan Hayward, “Protests Block 401, Rail Lines.” Canadian Press, <http://www.ocap.ca/node/1191>.

June 29, 2007, was a National Day of Action for First Nations peoples in Canada. Phil Fontaine, the national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, asked all Canadians to join First Nations peoples in drawing attention to issues that concerned them. First Nations leaders wanted to use public marches and demonstrations to put pressure on the Canadian government to take action to reduce poverty and poor living conditions among First Nations peoples. With the exception of a day-long blockade of a railway line in Ontario, the protests were peaceful.

In Canada’s liberal democratic political system, citizens are free to peacefully protest when they think that they are being treated unfairly or believe that their government is not providing them with the means to address their individual and collective rights. However, while human and Charter rights are generally protected today, citizens have not always been able to exercise these rights. How important to you are clean drinking water, decent housing, education, and health care? How could the fact that some people lack these things be seen as government not fully recognizing human rights, collective rights, or individual rights for every citizen? Could liberal beliefs in individualism and self-interest, instead of beliefs in collective interest, also be affecting some government actions?

Chapter Issue:

To what extent, and for whom, has the imposition of liberalism been successful?

While some people believe that liberal ideology became dominant at the end of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, in this chapter you will look at liberalism more critically in a Canadian context.

Liberalism generally supports individual rights and freedoms. Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms is a good example of guaranteeing such rights for individuals as well as for some collectives. However, there are examples where governments in Canada have, for various reasons, not fully recognized people's individual or collective rights. Sometimes liberal beliefs in individualism and self-interest—rather than collective interest—can have an effect on governments' actions and their recognition of collective rights, such as those of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

In the first part of the chapter, you'll read about the Indian Act of 1876—a government policy designed to promote assimilation and impose liberalism instead of recognizing collective rights. *Imposition* means forcing something on people whether they want it or not. This kind of thinking especially influenced some government policies toward Aboriginal peoples during the 19th and 20th centuries.

These kinds of policies of assimilation could be seen to be based both on differences in worldview and on the values of liberalism. Policies of assimilation could be interpreted to mean a desire to have individuals become a part of the larger group in Canada instead of being recognized as different groups or collectives. People who value ideas of collectivism and see themselves as members of collectives have sometimes found themselves in conflict with the way liberal values of individualism were being practised in society.

Some people believe that a similar kind of thinking lies behind the foreign policy of some Western liberal democracies both in the past and to some extent today. Sometimes the governments of countries such as the United States, Great Britain, and Canada try to impose liberal democracy and values of individualism on countries that embrace other ideologies.

In this chapter, you will examine some past examples of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit experiences of the imposition of liberalism in Canada, as well as examples of the ways in which liberalism is imposed on people in some other countries today. Through this examination you will be able to address the Chapter Issue: *To what extent, and for whom, has the imposition of liberalism been successful?*

Aboriginal Experiences of Liberalism

Question for Inquiry

1. How has the imposition of liberalism affected Aboriginal groups in Canada?

In this section ...



In the first half of this chapter, you will explore aspects of the imposition of liberalism on Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Early relationships during the first contact between First Nations and European settlers in Canada were created by the meeting of different worldviews. Most European settlers brought with them worldviews that had been shaped by their newly acquired liberal values and beliefs, which promoted individualism through the ideas of reason; change as progress; and the acquisition of land, resources, and capital. Many First Nations believed in and still believe in worldviews based on collectivism and the Laws of Relationships among all living things, seeing people as interconnected with both the community and the natural world. Europeans who believed strongly in the values of liberalism faced challenges in their attempts to influence and, in many cases, to impose the integration of these values into First Nations ways of being.

North American First Nations Holistic Worldview

- Live in peace and harmony for survival
- Co-operation brings group strength
- Traditional territories used for the benefit of the collective
- Share land and resources, which provide the necessities of life
- Individuals are given the choice to learn to live in respectful relationships
- Each person is sacred and complete

European Liberal Worldview

- Keep the peace
- Gain allies to use strategically
- Acquire land and resources/private property
- Capitalism/Competition
- Change brings about progress
- Self-interest

▲ **Figure 9-2** Differing aspects of worldview that have influenced the relationships between Europeans and First Nations in Canada from the mid-1600s to the present. In what ways are these worldviews different? Similar? What challenges might each group have faced as they began to live and work alongside each other? To what extent have these views changed over time?

Source: *The Common Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Language and Culture Programs: Kindergarten to Grade 12*, Western and Northern Canadian Protocol, 2000, <http://www.wncp.ca/>.

Figure 9-3 The Two-Row Wampum Belt was created to mark the Treaty of Fort Albany between the English and the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy in 1664. The white (light) background represents a river. The two parallel purple (dark) rows represent two vessels travelling along that river, each in its own separate channel. In one vessel are the First Nations people. In the other are the Europeans. As time went on, the powerful Haudenosaunee Confederacy in eastern North America decided that the best way to live among the Europeans was to keep their laws, cultures, language, and spirituality as separate, distinct, and equal. How might this wampum belt reflect Haudenosaunee resistance to the imposition of liberal ideas and worldview? ▼



Different Perspectives on Historic Treaties

As time passed, many liberal thinkers came to believe that the goal of change over time was progress. Progress was seen in the advances of the Industrial Revolution and new discoveries in science and technology, which brought improvements in the standard of living for many people. For many, this liberal value of progress was behind many of the actions taken by governments in Canada, such as encouraging growth and settlement across Canada, establishing Western institutions of government, and developing industry. For many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, however, the guiding laws of relationships with the land and community were critical to thriving as a people. These values generally did not support the notions of land ownership and the exploiting of resources for individual gain.

To Europeans in Canada in the 1700s, treaties with First Nations were intended to keep the peace and to gain allies against the other colonial powers fighting for control of North America. For example, the treaty *La Grande Paix de Montréal* in 1701 was significant, as it was signed by the Governor of New France and over 40 First Nations, and resulted in long-lasting peace. Many subsequent treaties were created by governments in order to acquire land for settlers arriving from Britain.

By 1812, European settlers outnumbered First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in eastern Canada. Colonial governments decided to negotiate treaties across Canada, which, despite First Nations' understandings of the treaties, resulted in a takeover of First Nations' land in exchange for promises of compensation in the form of annual payments and other benefits. In addition, First Nations people would continue to have the use of some land and resources. Many First Nations leaders wanted peace and harmony with the European settlers who were pressing in upon them. But above all, they wanted to protect and preserve their way of life. It was agreed that First Nations people were not to be disturbed on their lands. (It is also important to note that the government did not negotiate with Inuit or Métis peoples regarding treaties or agreements until much later in Canadian history, which is why government practices largely focus on First Nations peoples in these events.)

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 was a very significant development. It helped to define Canada's relationship with First Nations peoples and is now referenced in the Canadian Constitution, and sets out the basis in law for Aboriginal land ownership and other collective rights.

Specifically, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 recognizes that:

- Aboriginal peoples of Canada (includes the Indian First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples) lived on traditional lands
- interest in those lands belonged to groups and nations, not individuals
- only the Crown (the British monarch) could buy or accept Aboriginal lands
- the Crown generally required an agreement to obtain lands from Aboriginal people
- Aboriginal people were under the Crown's protection

The Elders explained that the laws First Nations follow are given to them by the Creator and firmly emphasized their belief that the starting point of discussions on treaties is their relationship to the Creator...First Nations traditions and teachings required that the relationships they created with the Europeans be governed by the laws, values, and principles that First Nations had received from the Creator.

—Source: Harold Cardinal and Walter Hildebrandt, *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000), p. 7, <http://nwt-tno.inac-ainc.gc.ca/yb/yb-B2-eng.asp>.

The imposition of liberalism on Canada's First Nations peoples is reflected in the understandings of the treaties between the government of Canada and First Nations. When these treaties were made, there were differences in understanding between the parties, complicated by the lack of a common language and reliable interpreters. See the table below for a comparison between these different understandings.

Figure 9-5 ▼

First Nations	Government of Canada
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treaties are agreements made between sovereign nations, upheld by oral tradition • Relationship with the land is of a collective and spiritual nature; land is provided by the Creator, and people are to exist in harmony with the land • Treaties were established to share the land with newcomers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treaties are agreements made by interested parties, upheld by a written document • Land is a resource that can be owned by individuals for their exclusive use • Treaties were established to “clear the way” for European settlement

The imposition of liberal understandings of treaties by the government of Canada was compounded by some government leaders who did not honour the treaties. They believed that their European liberal ideology was superior to that of the First Nations. They did not consider First Nations peoples to be sovereign nations, so they did not consider the treaties to be valid nation-to-nation agreements. In their view, the treaties did not need to be honoured.

Some Contemporary Perspectives on Treaties

Treaty Day is the annual meeting at which treaty monies were distributed by government representatives to members of particular bands under the numbered treaties. These meetings were often attended by hundreds of First Nations people. Along with the distribution of treaty money, food and hunting or fishing equipment were also given out. Treaty Day meetings still occur in many areas, particularly in the western provinces.

Figure 9-4 By the time of Confederation in 1867, there were already 123 treaties and land surrenders negotiated in British North America. Treaty 6 was signed in 1876, Treaty 7 in 1877, and Treaty 8 in 1899. This map is of the signed historic treaty areas in Alberta. ▼



Source: “First Nations in Alberta,” Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ab/fna/fna1_e.html.



▲ **Figure 9-6** The 2002 annual Cold Lake First Nations Treaty Day celebrations

The Policy of Assimilation

Many of the values of liberalism conflicted with many of the holistic laws governing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit societies. Resistance by Aboriginal peoples to liberal values was not accepted by governments in Canada. This led to the policies of **assimilation**—a plan in part to impose adherence to these liberal goals on all Aboriginal peoples.

Liberal thought promoted the ideas of individual interests, rights, and freedoms. But in Canada, the collective identity and practices of Aboriginal peoples were negatively affected by government policies of assimilation. As a result, Aboriginal peoples did not receive full recognition of their rights or freedoms. Under these policies, Aboriginal peoples were supposed to give up their distinct cultures and traditions, such as the potlatch and the Sun Dance, and take on the Western culture and traditions. In the 1850s, the main concern of the government was to “protect the Indians and their lands until they became civil or assimilated.” Control over First Nations lands was placed in the hands of the government in Canada and in 1870, Inuit lands were sold by the British-led Hudson’s Bay Company to the Canadian government. The most significant attempts to impose liberal ideology on Aboriginal peoples are included in the Indian Act of 1876.



Memories of Treaty Day

Today, we still receive \$5. While it buys much less now, the money represents an important link to our past and reminds us that our treaties are real.

From time to time First Nations leaders point out that the treaties should be upgraded to a modern context and the \$5 brought in line with modern reality. Comparing the cost of living of the late 1800s with the present would be an interesting exercise.

More than half our people today live and work off the reserve, and it’s next to impossible for them to return home for Treaty Day. In order to accommodate this population, Treaty Day is now held in the larger cities. For me to return to the reserve for Treaty Day and collect \$5, it would cost me more than \$50 in gasoline. Somehow the economics don’t make sense.

All Canadians benefited from the treaties. Some people look at treaty rights as being exclusive to First Nations peoples, but all Canadians have treaty rights that include access to and ownership of this beautiful land.

—**Doug Cuthand, “Treaty Days reminder of how Canada was built,” The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon), June 20, 2008,**
<http://www2.canada.com/saskatoonstarphoenix/news/forum/story.html?id=f9c6544e-0947-45f0-bc68-3795ae32e57e&p=2>.

- 1 Many First Nations people will travel a great distance to attend Treaty Day meetings, and may collect only five dollars. What do you think could be the most significant reason that First Nations maintain Treaty Day meetings?



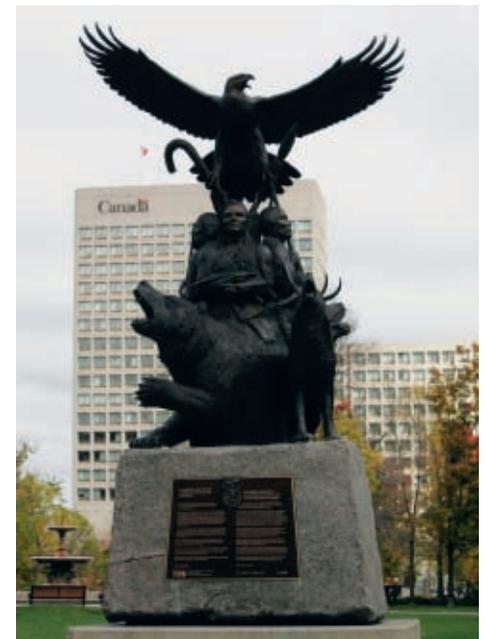
◀ **Figure 9-7** These Cree children attended the Lac La Ronge residential school in Saskatchewan in 1945. The government felt that it had to forcefully bring Aboriginal children into Western values and ways of the Europeans and that it could do so through education. One of the policies that sought to achieve this was the **residential school system**. Starting in 1883, the government's goal was to assimilate Aboriginal children into Western culture and traditions and to remove their Aboriginal culture, language, and traditions.

The Indian Act of 1876

In the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the “nations and tribes of Indians” were recognized as distinct peoples and nations. They had the right to govern themselves and negotiate with the Crown as sovereign nations. The relationship may not have been an equal one, but the Crown could not simply take First Nations land without negotiating and purchasing the land or reaching an agreement through a treaty. (No formal provisions were made for the lands of the Métis and Inuit peoples until later in Canada's history.) With the introduction of the Indian Act in 1876, however, First Nations political institutions and forms of government were ignored.

Thus, the Indian Act was used by government officials to control the behaviour of First Nations peoples and to remove their cultural traditions and customs. First Nations people were encouraged to “leave” their Indian status, identity, and traditional cultures to become full citizens of Canada. At the same time, First Nations people were viewed as children who were to be “taken care of” by the government. The Indian Act actively eroded First Nations peoples' collective rights through its policies of assimilating First Nations people into the more individualistic liberal society.

▶ **Figure 9-8** This Aboriginal War Veterans monument was dedicated in Ottawa in 2001. First Nations veterans who served in the Canadian military during the World Wars were hit hard by some provisions of the Indian Act. They lost their Indian status so they could not return to their homes and communities. After the wars, neither First Nations or Métis veterans received the same benefits that non-Aboriginal veterans received. Many Canadians began to recognize these injustices after Aboriginal men went to fight in the Second World War and returned to Canada to be treated as wards of the government.



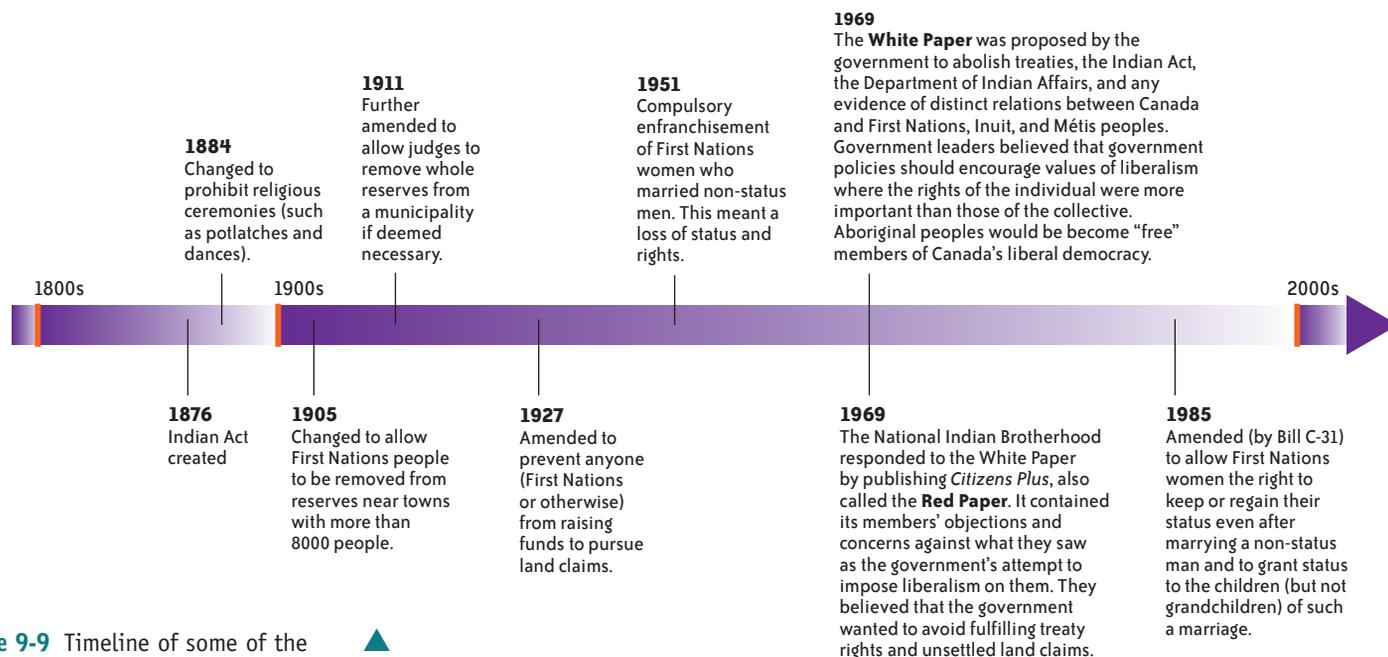


Figure 9-9 Timeline of some of the key changes to the Indian Act: Practices of assimilation and responses to it

Perspectives on the Indian Act Today

Since 1876, the Indian Act has been amended several times, but has never been abolished. The Indian Act continues to give the federal government jurisdiction over “status Indians” and governs many aspects of their lives.

First Nations peoples object to its paternalistic tone. The federal government also acknowledges the limitations of the Indian Act. While the Act was intended as an instrument of assimilation, it also provides certain protections for First Nations. These conflicting goals, along with multiple perspectives of Aboriginal self-government, make changing the Indian Act complicated.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

- How is resistance to getting rid of the Indian Act an example of challenging the imposition of liberalism? How could various amendments to the Indian Act be seen as ongoing impositions of liberalism?
- How could laws and policies affecting First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples' identities and rights be seen as examples of the imposition of liberalism?



Figure 9-10 From left to right: Harry Strom, premier of Alberta; Harold Cardinal, member of the Sucker Creek Reserve, Alberta, and president of the Indian Association of Alberta; and Jean Chrétien, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, December 18, 1970. Harold Cardinal was a founder of the National Indian Brotherhood and a major spokesperson against the White Paper.

In December 2002, another unsuccessful attempt was made to change the Indian Act. The federal government introduced the First Nations Governance Act. First Nations leaders have resisted the application of all aspects of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to First Nations. They see elements of the Charter as an imposition of Western liberal values, values that may conflict with their own and that may restrict their ability to be self-governing.



Figure 9-11 Roberta Jamieson, chief of the Six Nations of the Grand River reserve, said in July 2004 that First Nations Governance Act was “little more than a new rule book.” It failed to deal with the problems of poverty, health care, education, and housing, which she said were the issues that needed to be tackled.



The Potlatch

One of the early assimilation policies came as an amendment to the Indian Act in 1884. It banned the potlatch, the foundation of the West Coast First Nations peoples' being.

For centuries, many West Coast First Nations chiefs held potlatch ceremonies as transactions of family business. All potlatches were a private family affair hosted by an individual hereditary chief. The chief paid his guests for witnessing the business transacted at his potlatch. In accepting a gift or money as a witness, one accepted the responsibility to pass on this information as was conducted at the potlatch. The potlatch feast and gift-giving were important to the peoples' cultural, political, economic, and social lives.

The Canadian government thought that potlatches and other traditional First Nations' practices were obstacles to “civilizing” the West Coast First Nations peoples. When the government banned potlatches in 1884, participating in such celebrations became a crime. In 1951, the Indian Act ban on the potlatch was repealed. Since then, potlatch traditions have been revived by many First Nations chiefs and their families.



Figure 9-12 On November 1, 1980, opening day celebrations of the U'mista Cultural Centre located in Alert Bay on Vancouver Island, BC, took place when the confiscated artifacts were repatriated by the Canadian federal government.

Consider the following past and present views on the potlatch:

“The ‘Potlatch’ is the parent of numerous vices [evils] which eat out the heart of the people. It produces indigence [poverty], thriftlessness [carelessness with possessions], and a habit of roaming about which...is inconsistent with all progress.”

—Gilbert Sproat (British Columbia Indian Reserve Commissioner), approximately 1879, http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/decret-executif/023004-119.01-e.php?q1=13&q2=1&q3=4&page_id_nbr=108&&PHPSESSID=3ad5g48a9usujf99957smjv934.

“The potlatch is not a pagan rite; the first Christians used to have their goods in common and as a consequence must have given ‘potlatches’ and now I am astonished that Christians persecute us and put us in jail for doing just as the first Christians.”

—Maquinna (Chief of Nootka), *The Victoria Daily Colonist* April 1, 1896, p. 6, quoted in Penny Petrone, *First People, First Voices* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), p. 70.

The potlatch was so essential to maintaining boundaries, limiting trespass, and securing harvesting rights and social order that Tsimshian and other west coast peoples were willing to risk and endure imprisonment rather than give up potlatching when the practice was outlawed by an 1884 amendment to the Indian Act.

—Source: “Stage One: Separate Worlds,” *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996*, <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ap/pubs/sg/cg/cg4-eng.pdf>.

“When one’s heart is glad, he gives away gifts. Our creator gave it to us, to be our way of doing things, to be our way of rejoicing, we who are Indian. The potlatch was given to us to be our way of expressing joy.”

—Agnes Alfred (Qwiqwasutinuxw elder in Alert Bay), 1980, quoted in “The Potlatch.” U’mista Cultural Society, http://www.umista.org/masks_story/en/ht/potlatch01.html.

“The great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the inhabitants of the Dominion as speedily as they are fit for the change.”

—Prime Minister John A. Macdonald, to the House of Commons in 1887.

1 For each source listed, compare and contrast each view of the potlatch using a chart like the one below.

Source	For/Against Potlatch	Reasons	Aspects of Worldview that are Reflected

2 How could the banning of the potlatch by the government be seen as an imposition of liberal worldview and values of individualism?

3 Which source and point of view most strongly aligns with your own worldview or ideology? Why?

READING GUIDE

When you are evaluating the power and impact of media sources, use the following questions to help you analyze information and suggest likely outcomes:

- Have you determined the source type (for example, television ad, blog), its creator, and its purpose?
- Have you assessed the reliability of the facts and ideas communicated in the source?
- Does the author or creator have the authority to create this source (that is, does the author describe what he or she knows personally, or cite research that can be verified)?
- Have you identified the viewpoint, bias, motive, and message? Is there more than one possible meaning?
- Based on your analysis, what conclusions can you draw about the validity of the source and the outcome it could have for readers and viewers?

Attempts to Assimilate the Inuit

One example of an attempt by the government of Canada to apply policies of assimilation to the Inuit is revealed in the ongoing investigation into the killing of thousands of Inuit sled dogs, known as *Qimmiit*, between 1950 and 1970. The Inuit say that their dogs were systematically destroyed by the RCMP under orders from the governments of Canada and Québec. The following perspectives provide viewpoints on the issue.

When Pita Aatami was growing up in Fort Chimo, now called Kuujjuaq, in northern Québec in the 1960s, he would walk with his family to a local lake to go fishing. It was a long way.

“I always thought it was because we were poor and we couldn’t afford a snow machine,” he says. “But my uncle told me we had to walk because my grandfather’s sled dogs had been shot. A lot of other people had their sled dogs shot, too.” Today, Aatami is president of Makivik Corporation, an Inuit development company based in Québec’s Arctic. “I want to know who gave the orders to kill the dogs,” he says.

Inuit lore holds that between 1950 and 1970, the Canadian government carried out a deliberate slaughter of sled dogs, allegedly to encourage natives to settle in communities, buy snowmobiles and avail themselves of federal social programs. A House of Commons committee last year heard a series of horror stories from Inuit elders detailing a massive dog pogrom...Ottawa subsequently ordered the RCMP to investigate these explosive claims.

Late last month the RCMP unveiled its 750-page final report. The Mounties claim their investigation is a full exoneration. Aatami and other Inuit argue it’s a whitewash. The validity of native oral history is thus pitted against archival history from white government institutions. Does it matter where the truth lies when competing histories clash?

—Source: Peter Shawn Taylor, “The myth of the sled dog killings,” *Maclean’s*, January 1, 2007, http://www.macleans.ca/canada/national/article.jsp?content=20070101_138986_138986.

The [RCMP] review team did not uncover any evidence to support the allegations, within the large volume of information collected, of an organized mass slaughter of Inuit sled dogs by RCMP members in Nunavik and Nunavut between 1950 and 1970, carried out at the direction of the Government, or on the RCMP’s own initiative...The review team did find evidence that Inuit sled dogs were destroyed by members of the RCMP. The destruction of Inuit sled dogs, and other dogs, was undertaken by RCMP members for public health and safety reasons, in accordance with the law, to contain canine epidemics, and at times, at the request of the dogs’ owners.

There was also a startling drop in Inuit sled dog populations, particularly during the 1960s; this decline can be associated with a number of factors, including devastating canine epidemics, the collapse of the fur trade, the introduction of the snowmobile, the migration of the Inuit people into



▲ **Figure 9-13** An Inuit hunter with one of his sled dogs in Nunavut, 2000. It’s been said that “the *Qimmiit*...were survival tools. In a blizzard, where you can’t see anything, they could bring their master home. They are the real reason why people survived...the *Qimmiit* were the first ones to realize when the ice was dangerous, the first ones to recognize danger...the *Qimmiit* are the reason why I am alive today.”

Source: Mark Uninnak, Aupaluk, <http://homepage.mac.com/puggiq/V7N2/V7N2Nunavik.html>.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

- How might the destruction of the Qimmiit have resulted in an eventual assimilation of many Inuit?
- In future inquiries on this issue, what might investigators determine is the most critical information needed to resolve this issue?

settlements, and the participation in the market economy rather than living on the land.

—Source: *Final Report: RCMP Review of Allegations Concerning Inuit Sled Dogs* (Ottawa: Royal Canadian Mounted Police, May 30, 2006), p. 7, <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ccaps-spcca/reports-rapports/sled-traineau-dogs-chiens-final-eng.pdf>.

Female Identity and the Indian Act

As a result of the imposition of government policies of assimilation, particularly the Indian Act, many First Nations people were stripped of their identities. First Nations women faced the most significant impacts to their roles and identities. Until 1985, the Indian Act had discriminated against women by stripping them and their children of their Indian status if they married a man without Indian status.

Under the Indian Act, the role and worth of a woman was measured only in terms of her relationship to a First Nations man. Women were removed from their traditional positions of power and importance. This led to the devaluing of women and the erosion of any matrilineal (female-led) societies and practices. It is also important to note that while not all Aboriginal societies were matriarchal (female-dominated), they all believed and practised great measures of respect for their daughters, mothers, and grandmothers. The Indian Act supported patriarchal (male-dominated) models of governance.

The removal of the power and role of the women has led to significant gender inequality. This inequality was partially removed with the passage of Bill C-31 in 1985, an Act that reinstated the rights of First Nations women. Today, while the roles and conditions for Aboriginal women may be much better than they were in the 19th and 20th centuries, outstanding issues still exist, such as the matter of equal voices for women in all First Nations and their governments and organizations, as well as women's freedom from socio-economic issues. Some Métis and Inuit women also face some of these same challenges.

Métis Scrip

As you read earlier, differences in worldviews between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and Canada's government were often reflected in the different perspectives regarding land and ownership.

The Métis were offered scrip, legal documents either in the form of land or money, to compensate them for loss of their original territory. Many Métis in the late 1880s faced challenges to their way of life as a result of the end of the fur trade and the greatly reduced numbers of buffalo in the West.

With the decline of the fur trade and buffalo hunt, many Métis were in a desperate need for money. Scrip was often sold by its holders to keep families from starving.

—Source: *Government of Saskatchewan, Métis History*, <http://www.fnmr.gov.sk.ca/community/metis-history3>.



▲ **Figure 9-14** Between 1885 and 1925, under the provisions of the Dominion Lands Act, land grants and scrip were given to the Métis of the North-West Territories (consisting of most of Saskatchewan and Alberta until 1905). Many Métis were convinced to part with their land for a fraction of its true value. In addition, many Métis later felt forced to sell their money scrip notes for less than their worth to buy goods needed for survival.

From the Métis perspective, scrip represented the imposition of liberal policies, which treated them as individuals instead of as distinct groups of Métis people. This was done in order to further the goals of a federal government in creating its vision for a country stretching from sea to sea.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

As you may have learned in previous grades, the Canadian government formed the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1991 to examine “government policy with respect to the original historical nations of this country.” (Source: *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, Volume 1, 1996.) After five years of inquiries and public hearings, the Royal Commission issued a report on its findings.

One of the main conclusions of that report was that “the main policy direction, pursued for over 150 years, first by colonial then by Canadian governments, has been wrong.” (Source: quoted in “Speaking Notes for Assembly of First Nations National Chief at the RCAP Anniversary Reception.” Assembly of First Nations, <http://www.afn.ca/article.asp?id=3143>, November 21, 2006.) The writers of the report said that Aboriginal peoples in Canada must have the right to decide for themselves what they need. They said that Aboriginal peoples and the government of Canada must work together with mutual respect to rebuild Aboriginal communities and improve the economic, social, and cultural well-being of those communities and the individuals who live in them.

The Commission’s recommendations included the creation of

- legislation that recognized the sovereignty of Aboriginal peoples
- institutions of Aboriginal self-government
- initiatives to address Aboriginal peoples’ social, education, health, and housing needs

In the years since the publication of the Royal Commission’s report in 1996, many people, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit leaders, have been critical of what they see as a lack of government action to address some of the Royal Commission’s recommendations.

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation

One positive result of the Royal Commission recommendations was the creation of the **Aboriginal Healing Foundation**. The motto of the foundation is “Helping Aboriginal People Heal Themselves.” Its mission is to encourage and support Aboriginal people as they create healing processes to address the legacy of physical and sexual abuse that many suffered in the residential school system.

To accomplish this mission, 1345 grants totalling \$406 million were awarded to various programs in communities across Canada, using funding from the Canadian government. The Assembly of First Nations has called the Aboriginal Healing Foundation a success.



▲ **Figure 9-15** On April 13, 2000, Gary Alexcee, chief councillor of the Nisga’a from Gingolt, British Columbia, celebrated the passage of the Nisga’a Final Agreement outside the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa. This is an example where recognition of collective rights was achieved through a contemporary land claims agreement between the government and an Aboriginal group—the Nisga’a Nation.

According to many Aboriginal leaders, however, much more needs to be done before the recommendations of the Royal Commission are put into practice and Aboriginal peoples in Canada have the equality, freedoms, and opportunities that they have a right to in a liberal democracy such as Canada. On the National Day of Action in 2007, Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine, speaking about government inaction on Aboriginal issues, said that Canadians are fair-minded people. He said, “They know the situation as we’ve described in our communities is simply unacceptable.” (Source: Phil Fontaine, quoted in “Aboriginal Canadians: Voices in Action.” CBC News, June 29, 2007, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/aboriginals/action-day-quotes.html>.)

Summary

Over the years since first contact, the **imposition** of liberalism on Aboriginal peoples in Canada has affected them in many ways. Early on in the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and Europeans, both sides agreed to live together in peace and to respect each other’s cultures and values. But as more settlers came to Canada from Europe, greater efforts were made by colonial and then Canadian governments to impose their brand of liberalism and individualism on Aboriginal peoples.

Differences in attitudes, values, and worldviews led to conflicts over issues such as land ownership and honouring of treaties.

The government tried to assimilate Aboriginal peoples as individuals into what it perceived as mainstream Canada. Under these various assimilative policies, Aboriginal people were expected to give up their distinct cultures, traditions, and ways of knowing, learning, and being. These kinds of policies of assimilation could be seen to be based both on differences in worldview and on the European beliefs in liberalism, which values self-interest more than collective interest, and that sees people as individuals instead of recognizing their collective identities. The Indian Act further limited Aboriginal people’s freedom and control over their own lives. Various amendments have been made to the Indian Act, reflecting a range of impositions on First Nations collective identity, while First Nations peoples have demonstrated a continued resistance to many of these practices. Positive outcomes, such as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, have resulted in opportunities for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples to work with the government to bring about change.

Knowledge and Understanding

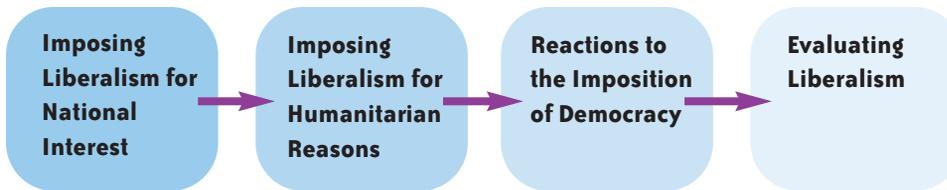
- 1 How are Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ideas about land holding different?
- 2 Write a definition of assimilation in your own words. Describe three of the ways that the Canadian government tried to assimilate First Nations people through government policies from the late 19th to the 20th centuries.
- 3 List two ways that the Canadian government has tried to impose liberalism on Aboriginal peoples over the years. Then explain what Aboriginal peoples’ response has been in each case.
- 4 If a liberal democracy is a form of government in which the rights and freedoms of the individual are guaranteed, then how does imposing liberalism contradict that ideal? How might a representative in a liberal democracy respond to this question?

Promoting Liberalism in the World

Question for Inquiry

2. To what extent does the imposition of liberalism affect various people?

In this section ...



◀ **Figure 9-16** In 2007, protestors in Peru rally during the summit meeting of the G8 leaders. They were expressing their discontent with modern liberal economic policies practised by G8 member countries that impact their well-being. Protesters were calling for gender equality rights, fair trade, and social development. In this photo, the flag the boy is holding reads “Hunger does not wait; the economy in the service of the people.”

Some people doubt that any one political ideology will work for all people in all countries in the world. They believe that liberalism, like any other ideology, has to adapt to the culture, history, and circumstances of the community on which it is being imposed.

Bhikhu Parekh, a professor of political philosophy in Britain, believes that liberalism and all political ideologies are rooted in specific cultures. Each ideology represents just one specific—and limited—view of how people should live. Parekh says that while liberalism does stress human dignity, freedom, and equality, those values can be expressed in different ways by different peoples.

He also says that sometimes liberalism ignores other values that are important to individuals and communities; values such as human solidarity,

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Under what circumstances, if any, is a country justified in imposing its political ideology on another country?

community, a sense of belonging, concern for others, humility, and contentment. He warns that “liberalism, socialism or for that matter any other political doctrine cannot provide the sole basis of the good society.” (Source: Lord Bhikhu Parekh, “What is multiculturalism?” [Multiculturalism: A symposium on democracy in culturally diverse societies, University of Westminster, December 1999], <http://www.india-seminar.com/1999/484/484%20parekh.htm>.)

Imposing an Ideology on Canada

Imagine that Canada has experienced a decade of political and social unrest. Several governments have fallen. There have been political demonstrations in the streets, some of them violent. For a period of time, the Canadian Forces take over the country, claiming that public safety is seriously in danger.

Finally, after a series of short-lived civilian governments and military coups, an international force of peacekeepers, led by the United States, invades and occupies your country. A panel of international advisors decides that an unelected government should rule the country until law and order are restored. When this has been achieved, the advisors say that the Canadian political system will need to be significantly restructured. How would you react to such a situation? What would be the reasoning behind your reaction?

Such a situation sounds unlikely, yet millions of people around the world have experienced a similar situation. Some of those people welcome foreign peacekeepers, others do not. In this section of the chapter, you will explore the reasons that explain why some countries try to impose liberalism on other countries, and what can happen when their attempts fail. You will also consider the reasons why liberalism may fail when it is brought in by a foreign power.

Two of the main reasons that explain why one country may try to impose liberalism on another country are the following:

- **National interest**, which is imposing liberalism to eliminate or reduce terrorist threats or for reasons of economic interest
- **Humanitarianism**, which is imposing liberalism for moral or ethical reasons, such as to improve living conditions or to stop human rights violations

Imposing Liberalism for National Interest

The idea of liberal democratic countries imposing liberalism on another country—by force, if necessary—is not new. At the end of the First World War, American president Woodrow Wilson insisted that Germany and its allies had to agree to establish democratic governments as a condition of the peace treaties. In 1918, Wilson told the United States Congress that democracy and self-determination had to be established in Europe as a basis for peace. Otherwise, there could be no peace in Europe or the world.

By 1998, protecting national interests in an increasingly globalizing world had become an important part of US foreign policy. Sean M. Lynn-Jones, of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, said that spreading democracy around the world served the interests of the United States. Lynn-Jones said that countries such as the United States had to be more concerned about what happened in other countries. He said that “widespread misery abroad may create political turmoil, economic instability, refugee flows, and environmental damage that will affect Americans.” (Source: Sean M. Lynn-Jones, “Why the United States Should Spread Democracy” [John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, discussion paper, March 1998], http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/2830/why_the_united_states_should_spread_democracy.html.)

PAUSE AND REFLECT

What justifications does this statement by Lynn-Jones give for spreading and imposing liberalism?

Attempts to Impose Liberalism by Use of Force

Some supporters of liberal democracy believe that if more countries embraced their ideology, the world would be a safer place. Following the terrorist attacks on the United States on September, 11, 2001, this belief was used to justify the “war on terror.” In an attempt to fight terrorism and to establish a democratic government, the United States and other democratic countries—including Britain and Canada—invaded Afghanistan in 2001. Afghanistan’s authoritarian Taliban regime, which had aided the 9/11 terrorists, was removed from power and democratic elections were held in 2004. Attempts at establishing a democratic government in Afghanistan continued amid fighting between NATO and Taliban forces.



▲ **Figure 9-17** Canadian soldiers in Kandahar, Afghanistan in 2002

Referring to the 9/11 attacks, British prime minister Tony Blair explained Britain’s involvement in the US-led invasion of Afghanistan on October 7, 2001: “This atrocity [the 9/11 attacks] was an attack on us all, on people of all faiths and people of none...So we have a direct interest in acting in our self-defence to protect British lives. It was an attack on lives and livelihoods.” (Source: Tony Blair, speech to the British people, October 7, 2001, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/combating/diplomacy/blair_10-7.html.)

In Canada, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien said the attack was not just against the United States, but also “against the values and the way of life of all free and civilized people around the world.” Canada’s Minister of Foreign Affairs John Manley said, “Canada has soldiers that are buried all over Europe

because we fought in defence of liberty and we're not about to back away from a challenge now because we think somebody might get hurt." (Sources: Jean Chrétien, in transcript of his address to Canadians, October 7, 2001. CTV News, http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/1025062429054_20471629; and John Manley, quoted by Lee Parsons, "Canada joins war in Afghanistan." World Socialist Web Site, <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2001/oct2001/can-o16.shtml>, October 16, 2001.)

The United States extended the "war on terror" to Iraq in 2003, arguing that Iraq was a threat to the United States because that country could begin to use weapons of mass destruction to aid terrorist groups. Unlike the Afghanistan invasion, the war in Iraq did not receive international approval. Kofi Annan, secretary general of the UN, said the war was "illegal" from the point of view of the UN.

But American president George W. Bush explained that the invasion of Iraq was justified. In April 2006, he compared the "war on terror" to the Cold War.

"It is an ideological struggle with an enemy that despises freedom and pursues totalitarian aims. Like the Cold War, our adversary is dismissive of free peoples, claiming that men and women who live in liberty are weak and decadent—and they lack the resolve to defend our way of life. Like the Cold War, America is once again answering history's call with confidence—and like the Cold War, freedom will prevail."

—Source: George W. Bush, quoted in "Remarks by President Bush on the Global War on Terror" (White House press release, April 10, 2006), <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/wh/rem/64287.htm>.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

How can meeting the requirements to gain EU membership be considered to be imposing liberalism for economic reasons?

Imposing Liberalism for Economic Reasons

Recall that economic expressions of liberalism focus on the individual's right to property and the removal of government intervention in economic markets. People who believe in liberal economic values think that individuals or individual companies, not governments, should have the freedom to decide the value of goods and services.

International organizations can use various methods to impose economic expressions of liberalism on countries. For example, in 2005, Turkey began negotiating membership into the European Union (EU), a political and economic association of countries, in the hopes of obtaining economic benefits. Conditions required by the EU to become a member include embracing values of liberalism such as democracy, rule of law, human rights, and a free-market economy. Turkey has faced challenges in meeting some of these criteria. The EU has concerns over Turkey's respect for freedom of expression, women's rights, and the rights of minorities. Meeting these criteria will require fundamental changes in the country and many of Turkey's citizens oppose making these changes.



Canada's Involvement in Afghanistan

Canadian troops have been fighting and providing humanitarian support in Afghanistan since 2001, when Canada joined the United States and other countries to try

to destroy al Qaeda and remove the Taliban regime from power.

In October 2004, media outlets around the world reported from Afghanistan as the country held its first democratic elections. Many Afghan men and women voted in the election that took place, for the most part, peacefully.

In 2008, the world media continued to report on the fighting in Afghanistan and the number of NATO soldiers that were injured or killed. But fewer media stories reported on the effect that the conflict was having on the Afghan people. While you may have seen television reports on a battle in one or another region of the country, you may not have seen reports on the fact that Afghanistan had more refugees than any country on earth. As of the end of 2007, there were almost 3.1 million Afghan refugees, or 27 per cent of the global refugee population. (Source: The UN Refugee Agency, "2007 Global Trends: Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons," June 2008, <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/STATISTICS/4852366f2.pdf>.)

Consider the viewpoints of two Canadian political cartoonists on Canada's participation in the war in Afghanistan.

- 1 Which of the viewpoints shown in these cartoons do you agree with most? What reasons and evidence from the source do you have for your choice?
- 2 What potential biases or motives for the author's creation of the source can you identify? What impact do you think each of these media sources would have had on its viewers? Would they have made convincing arguments for their messages?
- 3 How do you think most Afghan citizens view the presence of foreign troops in their country? How often do you hear accounts of Afghans' opinions about the UN mission in news reports?
- 4 Do you think Canada has a responsibility to protect the new democratic system in Afghanistan? If so, what limits, if any, should be placed on that responsibility?



▲ **Figure 9-18** This cartoon by TAB (Thomas Boldt) appeared in *The Calgary Sun* on September 19, 2006.



▲ **Figure 9-19** This cartoon by Cam Cardow appeared in *The Ottawa Citizen* on May 25, 2006.

Imposing Liberalism for Humanitarian Reasons

Humanitarianism is another common argument for imposing liberalism on a foreign country. Humanitarianism is an ideology that advocates promoting human welfare. Humanitarians try to improve the lives of others and reduce their suffering, and they often try to do this by reforming societies.

Some people who believe in liberalism argue that liberal countries should not tolerate non-liberal countries that deny their citizens' human rights. Intervention may be justified in such cases. John Rawls, an

influential political thinker of the 20th century, believed that liberal democracies should not intervene in other countries just because those countries do not embrace liberalism. He said “liberal peoples must try to encourage [non-liberal] decent peoples and not frustrate their vitality by coercively [with force] insisting that all societies be liberal.” (Source: John Rawls, *Law of Peoples*. [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999], quoted in “Liberalism.” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/liberalism/#LibJusAllPolCom>.)

The humanitarian argument is sometimes used in combination with an argument of self-interest to justify US foreign policy. The “war on terror,” for example, was partly based on human rights issues. Under the Taliban, Afghan women were denied basic human rights, and Saddam Hussein’s reign over Iraq was characterized by fear, crimes against humanity, and brutal torture tactics. However, forceful intervention in a foreign country does not always result in improved living conditions for the citizens of that country, regardless of the good intentions of the countries who intervene.

Reactions to the Imposition of Democracy

Promoting liberalism in countries that have not been accustomed to the ideology is not always successful. Some political leaders in liberal Western countries say that democratic elections have to occur before a country can experience peace and good governance. When such elections are held in an unstable political climate, however, they may not improve a country’s situation.

Democratic Elections in Rwanda

In Rwanda, Major General Juvénal Habyarimana ruled the country after taking over in a military coup in 1973. Western governments insisted that the country needed to have democratic elections. In 1992, the Rwandan regime established a multi-party system, which resulted in a coalition government, partly in response to pressure from Western governments.

Some observers, such as journalist Robert Kaplan, believe that this coalition government, which was made up of conflicting ethnic groups, eventually created the circumstances that allowed the 1994 Rwandan genocide to take place. During that genocide, approximately 800 000 people died in ethnic violence.

In his 1997 article “Was Democracy Just a Moment?”, Kaplan says that the new political parties in Rwanda “became masks for ethnic groups that organized murderous militias, and the coalition nature of the new government helped to prepare the context for the events that led to the genocide in 1994.” He compares Western countries’ efforts to impose liberal democracy on other countries to the colonial rulers who forced Aboriginal peoples to replace their own governing systems with colonial systems. (Source: Robert D. Kaplan, “Was Democracy Just a Moment?” *The Atlantic Monthly*, December 1997, <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/97dec/democ.htm>.)

Democratic Elections in Indonesia

Indonesia, a country of over 240 million people, is home to the world's largest Muslim population. For several decades after the end of the Second World War, Indonesia was ruled as a military dictatorship under General Suharto. In 1998, Suharto's government faced an economic crisis that hit several countries in Southeast Asia. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) demanded that Suharto comply with measures to get Indonesia's economy back on track. Later that year, when the IMF suspended its financial support to Indonesia, Suharto resigned. The country's first free parliamentary election was held in 1999, and its first democratically elected president came to power in 2004, making Indonesia the world's third-most populated democracy. Canada's foreign affairs minister, Pierre Pettigrew, congratulated its new president:

“Canada congratulates Indonesia and its people on the successful completion of their historic first-ever direct presidential elections. As the world's largest Muslim democracy, Indonesia is a model for many countries. This success is an indication that the Indonesian democratic process is strong.”

—Source: Foreign Affairs Minister Pierre Pettigrew, quoted in “Canada congratulates Indonesia on historic election.” Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada news release, October 4, 2004,

http://w01.international.gc.ca/MinPub/Publication.aspx?isRedirect=True&publication_id=381592&docnumber=115&bPrint=False&Year=2004&ID=135&Language=E.

While the country faces ongoing challenges such as corruption and ethnic, political, and religious tensions, most political observers expected Indonesia's 2009 general elections to be relatively peaceful. In the 10 years following the end of an authoritarian regime, Indonesians seem to have embraced the values of liberal democracy.

Evaluating Liberalism

Since you live in Canada—a country with a long history of liberal democratic institutions—you may find it strange that some other countries cannot maintain similar institutions once they have a freely elected government in power; however, as you have seen in past chapters, liberalism was not adopted overnight by countries such as Canada or the United States. As an ideology, it has evolved over a long period of time, and certain aspects of it have changed as historical circumstances have changed.

As the example of post-First World War Germany shows, liberal democracy has difficulty surviving conditions such as unemployment,



▲ Figure 9-20 Map of Indonesia and surrounding countries



▲ Figure 9-21 On April 9, 2009, a voter casts his ballot at a polling centre in Jakarta, Indonesia, to decide who will run for president in the country's July 2009 elections.

inflation, and civil unrest in a country without an existing liberal democratic tradition. When the right conditions for success are not present, some argue, it may even be harmful to another country's security to try to promote liberal democracy.

In countries where there is intolerance and ethnic conflict, people may find it difficult to arrive at the kind of consensus that democracy needs in order to work. These kinds of conflicts are part of the story in countries such as Afghanistan and Rwanda. Competing economic interests and competition for power can also affect the likelihood that liberal democracy can work.

As Tom Keating, a political science professor at the University of Alberta, points out, many of the violent conflicts in the world since the First World War have occurred *within* countries such as Rwanda, Bosnia, Somalia, and Haiti, rather than *between* countries. In many of these countries, people have little freedom, few rights, and even little safety. While some people advocate greater liberalism for those countries, others say that the people have a greater need for social and economic security.

Referring to Canadian foreign policy, Keating argues that ultimately, the health of a country's political institutions depends on its own citizens, not on foreign intervention.

Summary

Liberalism has been promoted in, and sometimes imposed on, countries around the world. Sometimes liberal democratic countries have imposed liberalism for **national interest**, either to protect themselves from possible attack or to protect their economic interests. Sometimes liberalism is imposed for **humanitarian** reasons, for the good of others. Canada's involvement in Afghanistan, for example, is viewed by some people as being in our national interest and by others as humanitarian. When democratic elections are imposed on a country, they do not always bring equality or stability; however, in some countries democratic elections do move a country and its people closer to achieving peace and stability.

Knowledge and Understanding

- 1 In your own words, explain how national interest and humanitarianism are used as reasons for promoting or imposing liberalism.
- 2 Describe one situation where liberal democracy has been imposed. Was it a success? Provide evidence for your answer.
- 3 Are democratic elections always successful for the people of a country? Describe one situation where elections brought peace to a country and one situation where they did not.
- 4 Brainstorm as many reasons as you can to explain why Canada and other liberal democracies promote liberalism as a solution to problems in non-democratic countries.
- 5 Do you think there are circumstances in which a country's stability and public security are more important than its citizens' right to democratic self-determination? Why or why not?

Haiti's Troubled Democracy

Something to Think About:

Many citizens of liberal democracies are comfortable with the idea of providing aid to other countries during humanitarian crises, such as famines or earthquakes. But the citizens' opinions and the media reports that influence or reflect those opinions tend to be more divided when governments consider intervening in a foreign political crisis.

Should countries such as Canada avoid getting involved in foreign political situations unless Canada's own security is threatened? Or do countries with political stability and available military resources have a responsibility to maintain or restore liberal democracy in countries where the political system has collapsed?

What role do the media in various countries play in swaying public opinion on such issues? What role should the media play?

An Example:

Haiti declared its independence from France in 1804 after a successful slave revolt. Throughout Haiti's history, the country has had a series of democratically elected presidents and military takeovers. Some of those democratically elected presidents became dictators. For example, Haitians elected Dr François Duvalier president in 1957. He declared himself president for life in 1964 and ruled as a dictator until his death in 1971. His rule was brutal and corrupt, as were those of many of the other elected and military rulers of Haiti.

Since June 2004, the UN has had an international peacekeeping mission in Haiti. This mission includes soldiers and police officers from 41 countries, including Canada. In January 2008, there were 9000 UN peacekeepers in Haiti.

According to the UN Security Council, intervention was necessary for security and protection during the electoral period, beginning in 2004. The UN mission was also intended to help Haitians restore and maintain the rule of law, public order, and public safety in their country.

In 2006, Haiti held its first presidential elections in six years, and René Préval returned to power due to voting that, according to observers, was marked by fraud.

The following excerpts from articles were written on February 8, days after the 2006 election.



▲ **Figure 9-22** What do you think this cartoonist's opinion is on the Haiti issue? What do you think this cartoonist is saying on the issue of successfully establishing democracy in Haiti?



◀ **Figure 9-23** Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and neighbouring countries

Fernández hopes Haiti's elections bring stability

This article appeared in *Dominican Today*, a news source from the Dominican Republic, which shares an island with Haiti. Leonel Fernández is the president of the Dominican Republic. Its form of government is a democratic republic.

President Leonel Fernández said yesterday that if Haiti obtains its stability through democratic elections that were held yesterday in that nation, it would be a positive impact for his country, because peace is the first factor a nation requires to reach production until reaching economic growth, as well as to create jobs.

Fernández, referring to the elections in the neighboring country, said that that climate also would contribute to creating social peace that must exist jointly with political stability...

"We wish that the Haitian people according to their best desires choose whom [sic] will lead the destinies of their country for the next four years. So we wish that they transpire peacefully, in harmony and that [this] is the start of that great impulse towards democracy and development that the Haitian people demand and require," he said.

—Source: "Fernández hopes Haiti's elections bring stability."

Dominican Today, February 8, 2006.

<http://www.dominicantoday.com/dr/local/2006/2/8/10135/>

Fernandez-hopes-Haitis-elections-bring-stability.

Little Solved by Haiti's Election

This article appeared in *The Calgary Herald*, a newspaper published in Calgary, Alberta. The "transfer of political power" mentioned in the first paragraph is the Canadian federal election of January 2006.

Canadians witnessed a peaceful transfer of political power last month. If only Haitians could be so lucky.

Haiti's instability concerns Canada, and not just because Haiti's poverty is the shame of the Western Hemisphere. Canada has a lot invested in Haiti, from aid money to the safety of Canadian police officers keeping the peace there.

Chief electoral officer Jean-Pierre Kingsley heads the international monitoring mission for Haiti's elections. Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean was born in Haiti. Canada must be patient and keep working to create security and the conditions for long-term reform...

—Source: "Little Solved by Haiti's Election."

The Calgary Herald, February 9, 2006.

Questions for Reflection

- 1 Should foreign countries under the leadership of the United Nations have intervened in Haiti to maintain liberal democracy? Please explain and support your answer with evidence.
- 2 Depending on the ideology and values of the media owners and reporters, media stories of an event can present different viewpoints of that event. Create a Venn diagram to show what is the same and what is different in the *Calgary Herald* and *Dominican Today* articles about the elections in Haiti.
- 3 What biases and points of view exist in each of the media messages from these sources? Do you think one source is more reliable or valid than the other? Do you think one source is more effective at communicating its message? Please explain and support your answers with details from the sources.
- 4 View the map in Figure 9-23. Then review the article from *Dominican Today*. What physical geographic features of Haiti and the Dominican Republic may have influenced the president's words and the media report?
- 5 What do these two reports say about the success of the promotion of liberalism and liberal democracy in Haiti? In your opinion, has the promotion of liberalism and liberal democracy been successful for Haitians? Explain and support your answer with evidence from the sources and reasons for your argument.

FURTHER EXPLORATION

- 1 What circumstances do you think would prompt one group of people to impose their ideology on another group? Why do you think Canadian governments tried for so long to impose some aspects of liberalism on Aboriginal peoples in Canada? Did they sometimes use liberalism as a justification to cover other motives? If so, what might those other motives have been?
- 2 Create a graphic organizer to compare the positive and negative aspects of the Canadian government's policies toward First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. What conclusions can you draw from this comparison about the imposition of liberalism on Aboriginal peoples?
- 3 Make a list of actions undertaken by First Nations, Métis, or Inuit peoples to resist the policies and practices of successive Canadian governments. Assess to what extent these forms of resistance to liberalism were or are justified.
- 4 a) Find a news story or political cartoon related to one of the issues discussed in this chapter. Analyze the intended message of the news story. Find a second story or political cartoon about the same issue that presents a different view of the situation. Research both the origins of each story and the background of their authors or creators. What ideological bias can you find in each of these news stories or cartoons? Which source do you believe most effectively and authentically demonstrates its message about the issue? How do the type of source and the details the author included play a role in its ability to effectively communicate its message?
 - b) Determine to what extent your views on the issues presented so far in this chapter are a reflection of your own values, beliefs, and ideology.
- 5 a) In this chapter, you have read about situations where governments have tried and failed to impose liberal democratic practices on the people of a nation or a country. Compare two or more of these attempts and identify the reasons that explain why liberalism failed. What similarities and differences can you see between the situations?
 - b) Identify one or more situations in which some or all of the values of modern liberalism have been successfully introduced. Compare these with the situations you described in question a). What role did local resistance to the imposition of modern liberalism play in each situation?
- 6 How do people judge whether a particular country's political system is a success or a failure? To what extent do media accounts of such situations influence our thinking? What role does ideological bias play in media reporting? Support your answer with examples of media sources that illustrate different messages about the same issue and event.
- 7 Choose a contemporary situation involving the imposition of liberalism in which Canada is involved. For example, you could choose the war in Afghanistan or a specific First Nations land claim. Consider the extent to which the actions of the Canadian government represent your own beliefs and values. Write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper, or create a video opinion piece, expressing your position on the situation and how you think Canadians should respond to their government's actions. Include reasons and sources to support your position.

Chapter Summary and Reflection

According to many Aboriginal leaders, the imposition of liberalism and a liberal democratic system in Canada have created lasting challenges and issues for Aboriginal peoples in Canada. In the past, colonial and Canadian governments forced their liberal ideology on all people living in Canada. Canadian government leaders felt that if Aboriginal people would not adopt the ideology willingly, then it should be imposed on them through policies of assimilation, residential schools, enfranchisement, and the Indian Act. Aboriginal peoples have fought against such policies and values being imposed on them.

Liberal democracies, including Canada, have tried to impose liberalism in other countries for different purposes.

Sometimes liberalism is imposed for reasons of **national interest** and security. Other times it is imposed for **humanitarian** reasons or to support democratic changes and the will of the people of a country. No matter what the reasons, efforts to impose liberalism, liberal democratic systems, and values of individualism have succeeded in supporting desired changes for citizens in some countries while creating issues for others.

Using what you have learned, reflect on the Chapter Issue: *To what extent, and for whom, has the imposition of liberalism been successful?* This will help you form a response to the Related Issue: *Is resistance to liberalism justified?*