

I EXPECTED TO HEAR THE PEOPLE WERE
HUNGRY AND HUNGRY PEOPLE WERE DESPERATE
BUT INSTEAD WHAT I HEARD WAS DIFFERENT.

ONE RESPONDENT TOLD ME THAT THE
RIOTS WERE CAUSED WHEN:

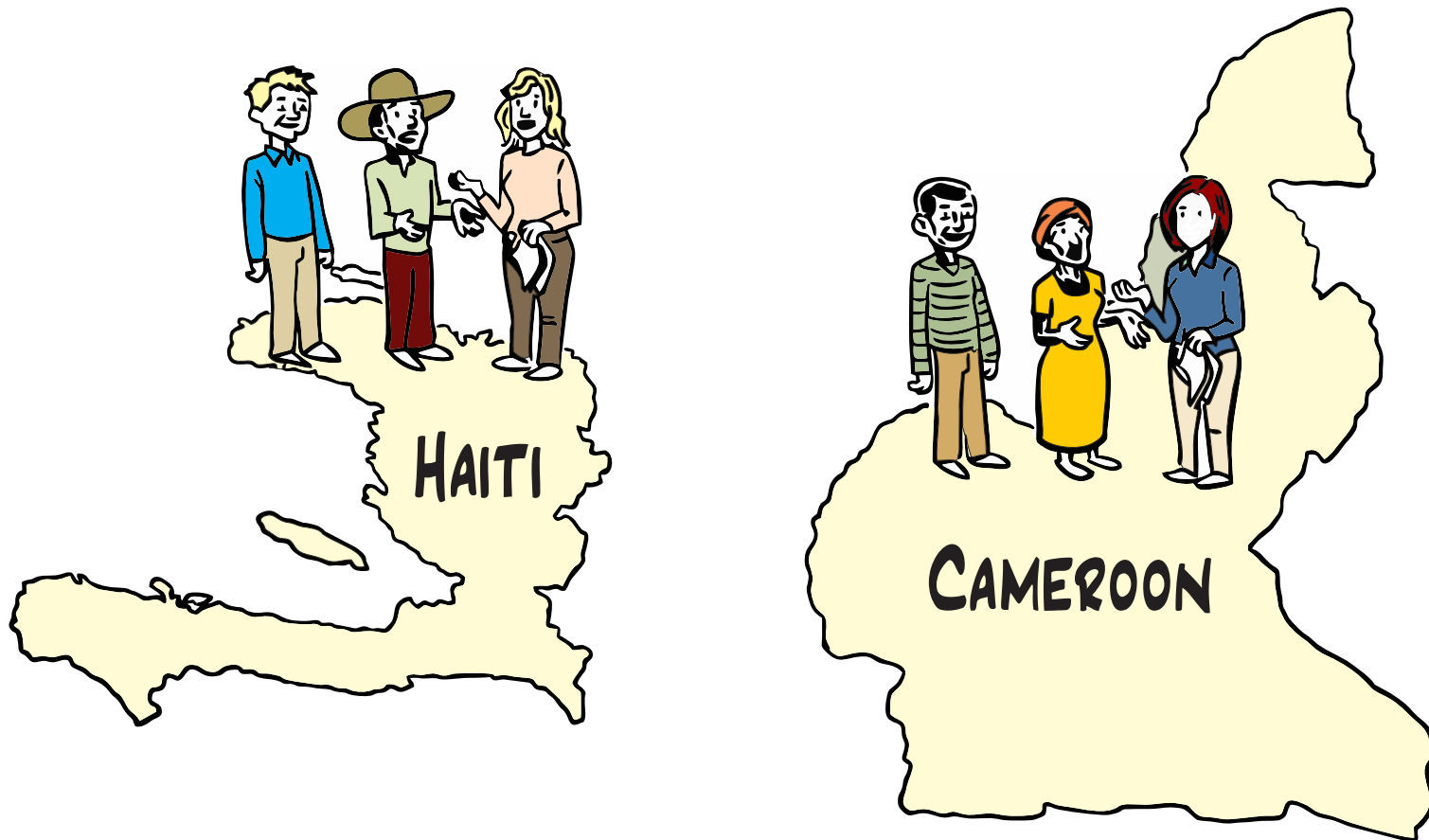


A GROUP OF MERCHANTS TOOK
ADVANTAGE OF EVERYONE ...
CUTTHROAT BUSINESS GUYS WHO
DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT PEOPLE.



WHAT STRIKES ME AS INTERESTING ABOUT THIS COMMENT IS THAT THE SPEAKER IS NOT
LINKING DESPERATION AND RIOTS BUT RATHER IS SAYING THAT THE RIOTS WERE CAUSED BY
MORAL OUTRAGE AND ANGER.¹²

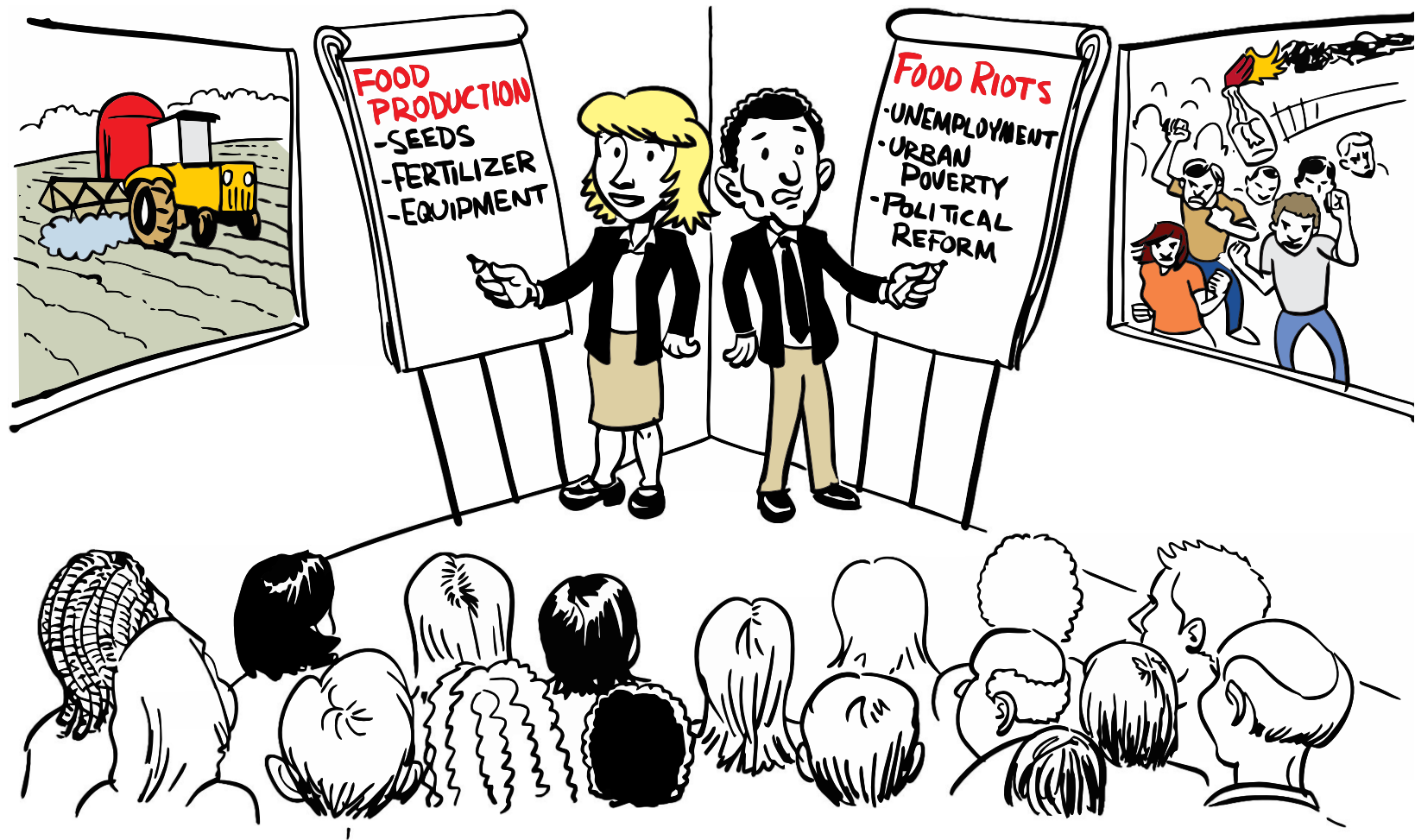
OUR TEAM THEN CONDUCTED EXTENSIVE INTERVIEWS IN BOTH HAITI AND CAMEROON, BOTH COUNTRIES THAT EXPERIENCED BAD RIOTS IN 2008.¹³ AND IN BOTH COUNTRIES WE SAW A NUMBER OF SIMILARITIES.



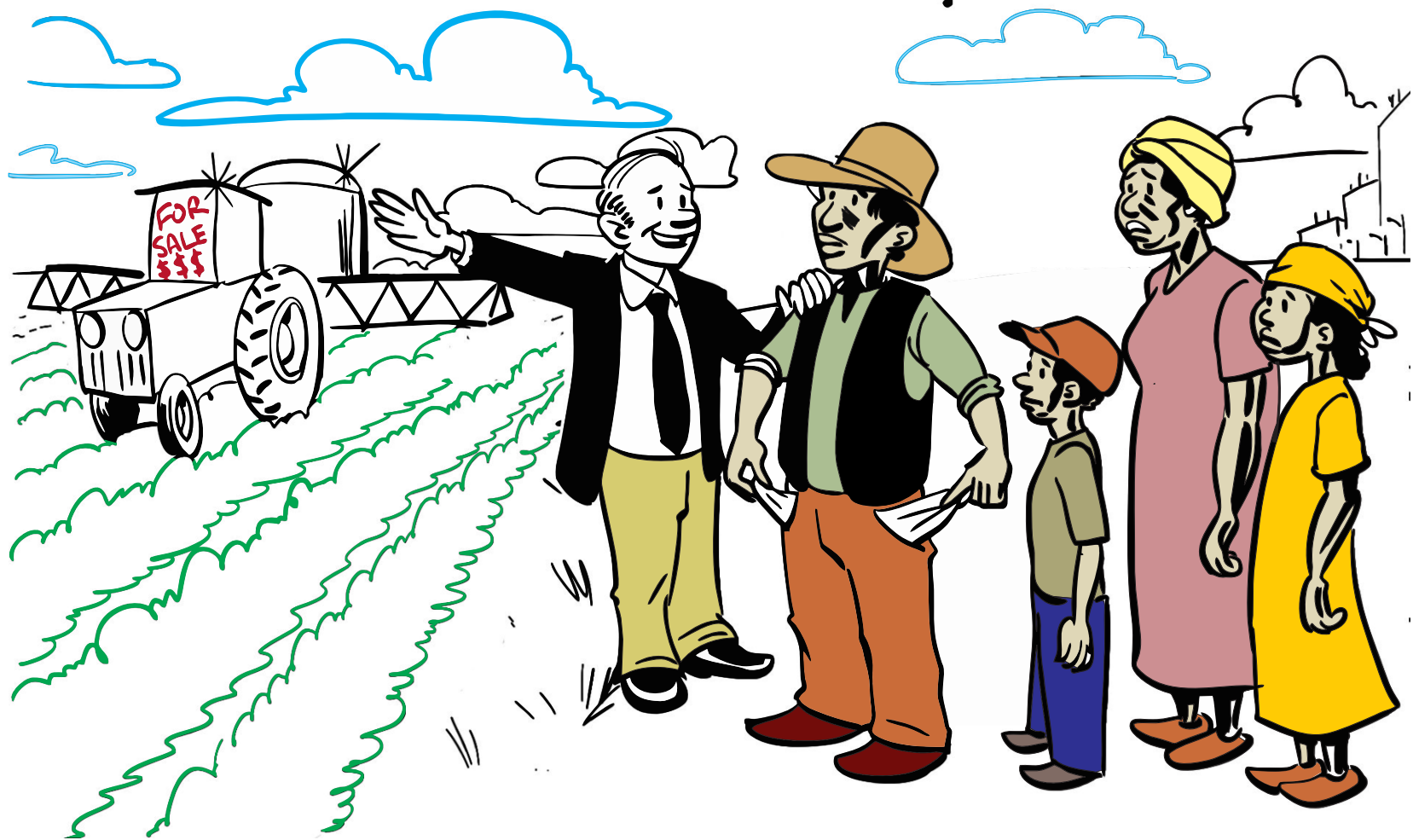
FOR INSTANCE, IN BOTH PLACES CORRUPTION, POVERTY, URBAN UNEMPLOYMENT, GLOBALIZATION AND POLITICAL MARGINALIZATION WERE KEY FACTORS THAT LED PEOPLE TO RIOT OVER FOOD PRICES. NOT FOOD SHORTAGES.¹⁴



THESE RESULTS ARE IMPORTANT BECAUSE THE SORT OF POLICIES THAT THE EXPERTS OFTEN BELIEVE WILL STOP FOOD RIOTS NORMALLY FOCUS ON PROMOTING HIGH-QUALITY SEEDS AND OTHER MODERN AGRICULTURAL TOOLS TO BOOST PRODUCTION.¹⁵



BUT THE POOR CANNOT AFFORD THESE^{16.}





SO PROMOTING THESE OF TOOLS MAY DISPLACE POOR PEOPLE FROM THEIR LAND . . .

FORCING THEM TO MIGRATE TO CITIES WHERE THEY BECOME THE URBAN POOR –



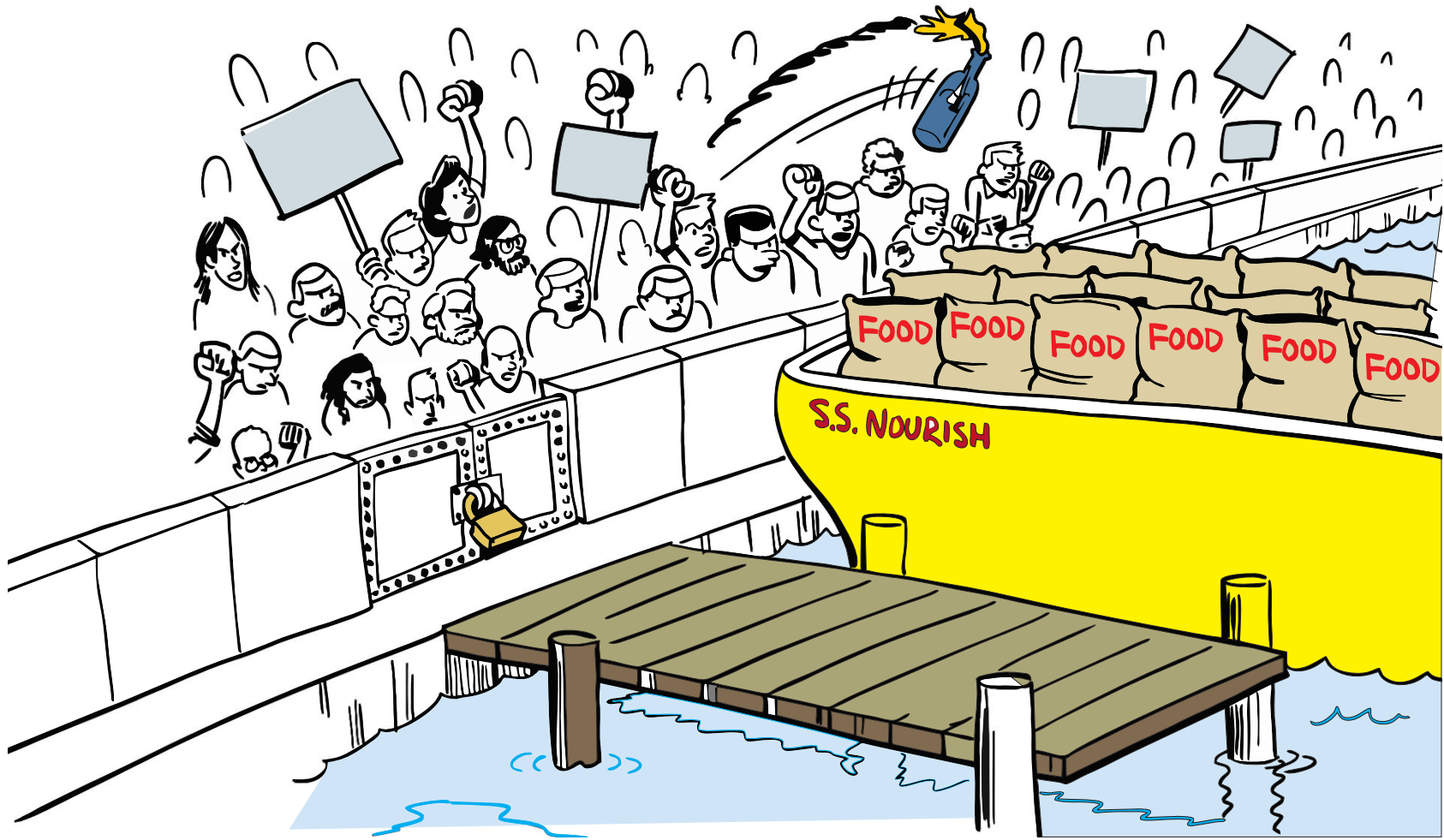
– DISENFRANCHISED AND ALIENATED FROM THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM – AND LIKELY TO RIOT.



WE ALSO OBSERVED THAT FOOD PRICE RISES CAN BE USED AS A POLITICAL TOOL TO BRING DOWN ENTRENCHED AND POWERFUL GOVERNMENTS.



AND WE SAW EVIDENCE THAT POLITICAL OPPONENTS ORGANIZED FOOD PROTESTS EVEN WHEN THERE WAS ACTUALLY ENOUGH FOOD.

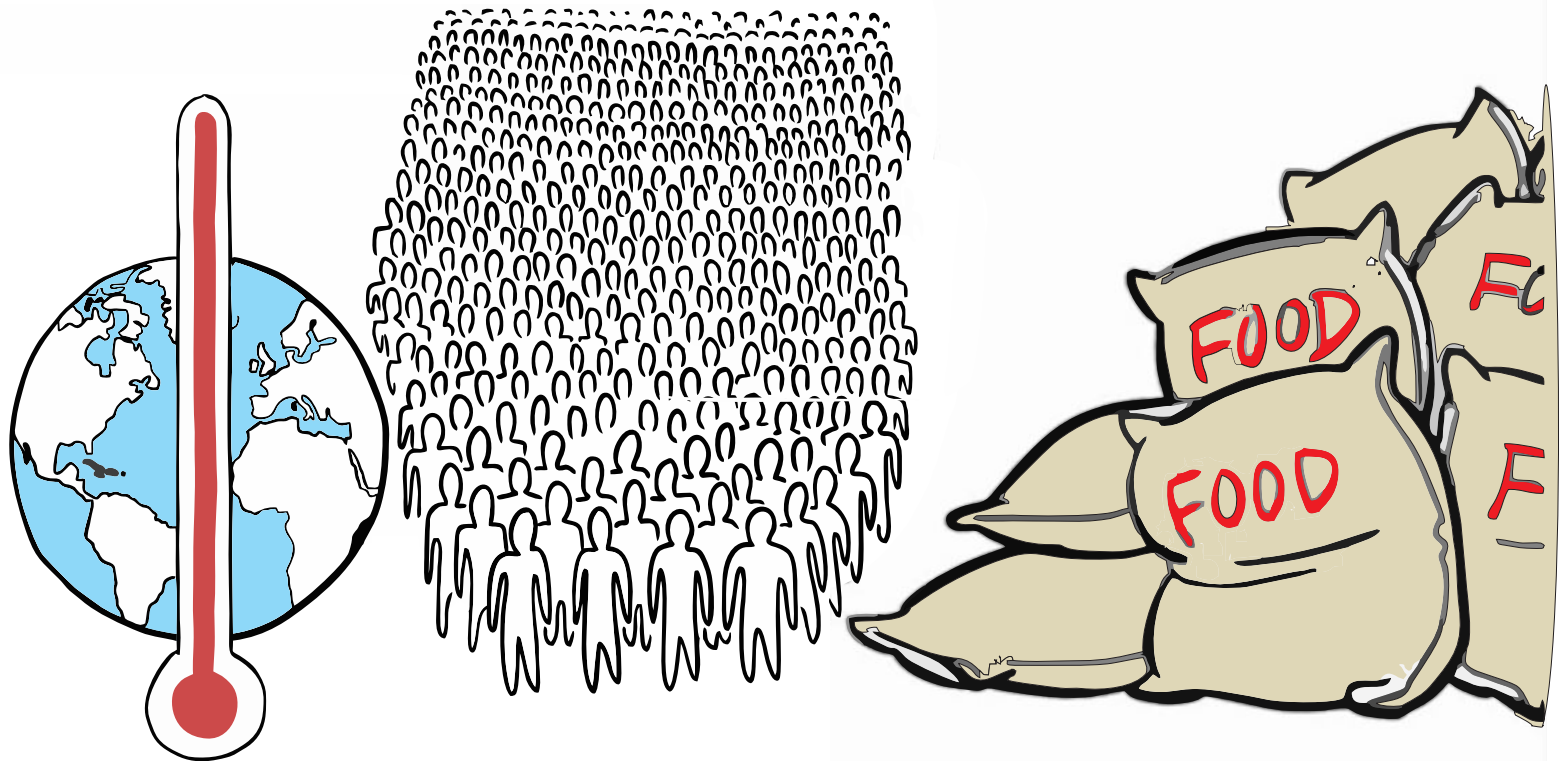


DOES THIS MEAN WE DON'T NEED TO PROMOTE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY?

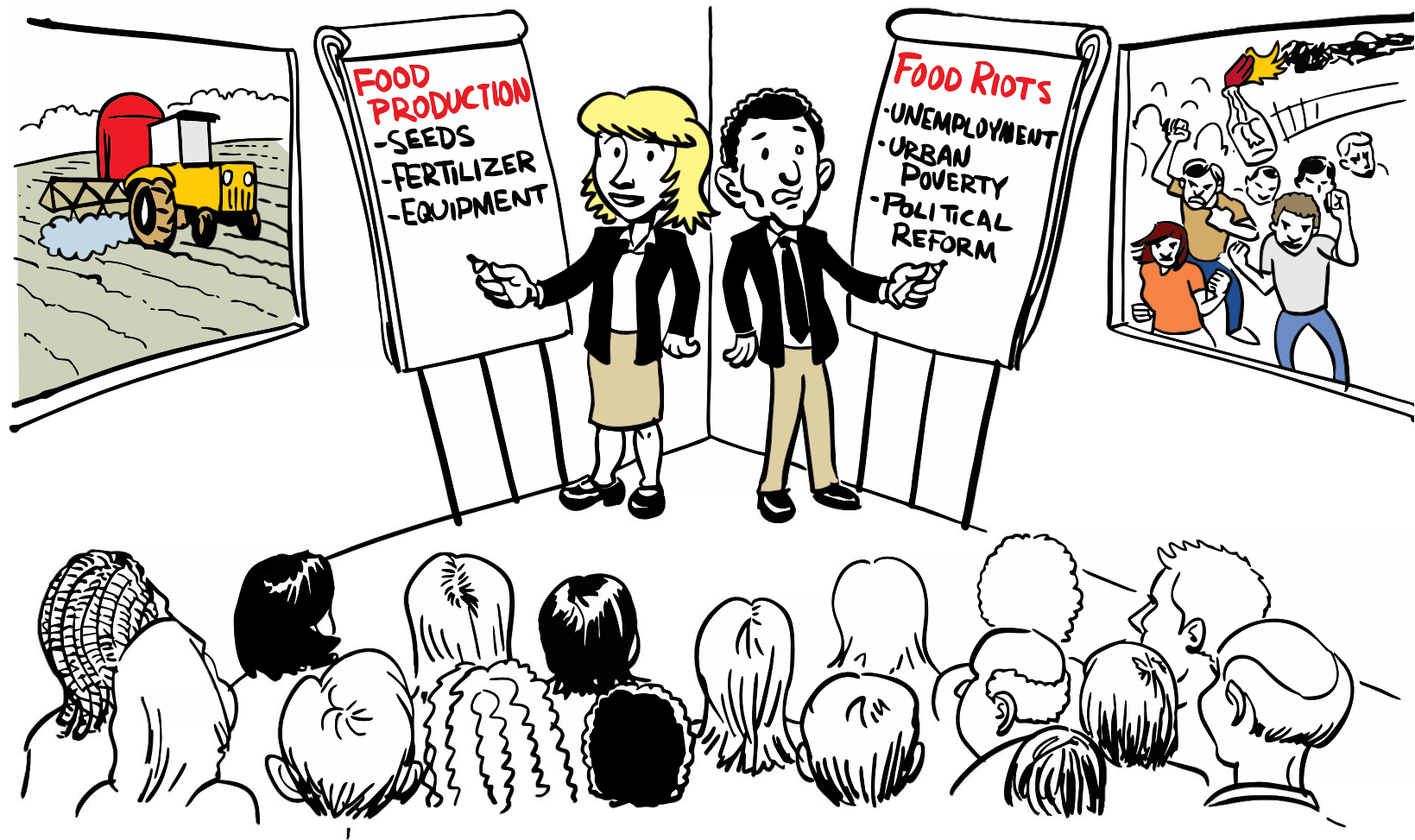


I DON'T THINK SO.

INDEED, AS WE FACE WORLD OF 9 BILLION PEOPLE AND CLIMATE CHANGE WE ARE GOING TO NEED TO PRODUCE ALL THE FOOD WE CAN.



BUT THE POLICIES THAT LEAD TO GREATER AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION MUST BE SEEN IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT TO POLICIES GEARED AT REDUCING FOOD RIOTS.



IF POLICYMAKERS IN THE FUTURE WANT TO AVOID A REPEAT OF FOOD RIOTS . . .



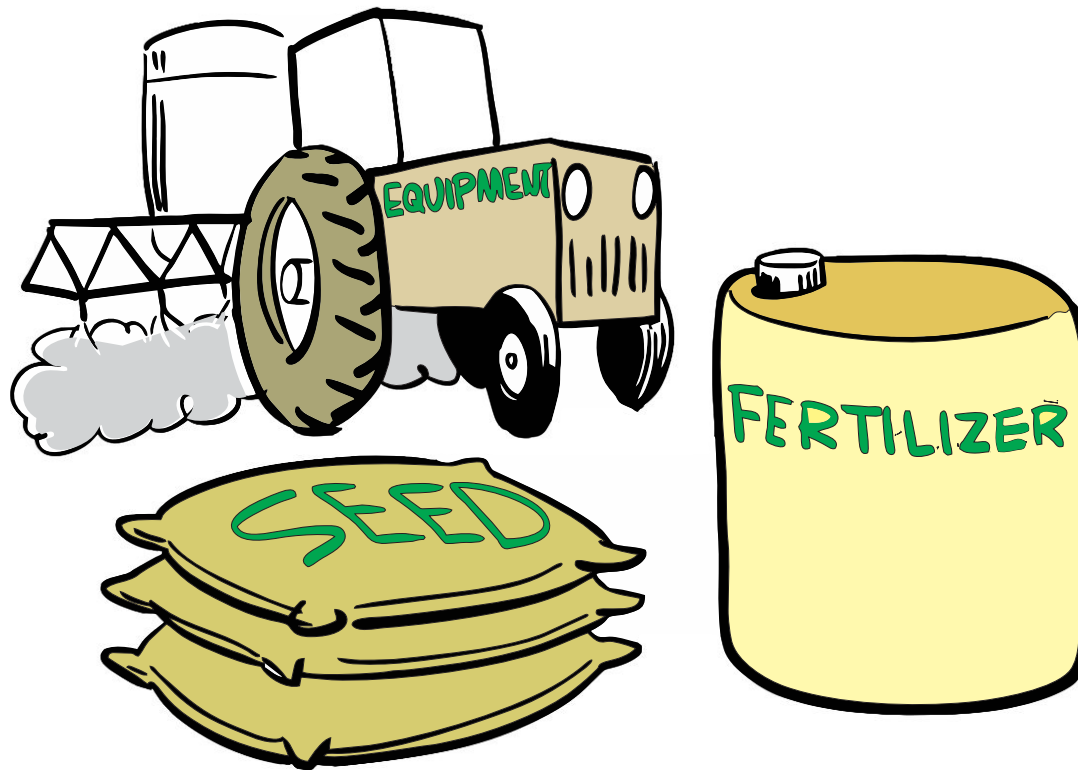
THEY NEED TO ADDRESS UNEMPLOYMENT, URBAN POVERTY AND POLITICAL REFORM.

☒ Urban Unemployment

☒ Poverty

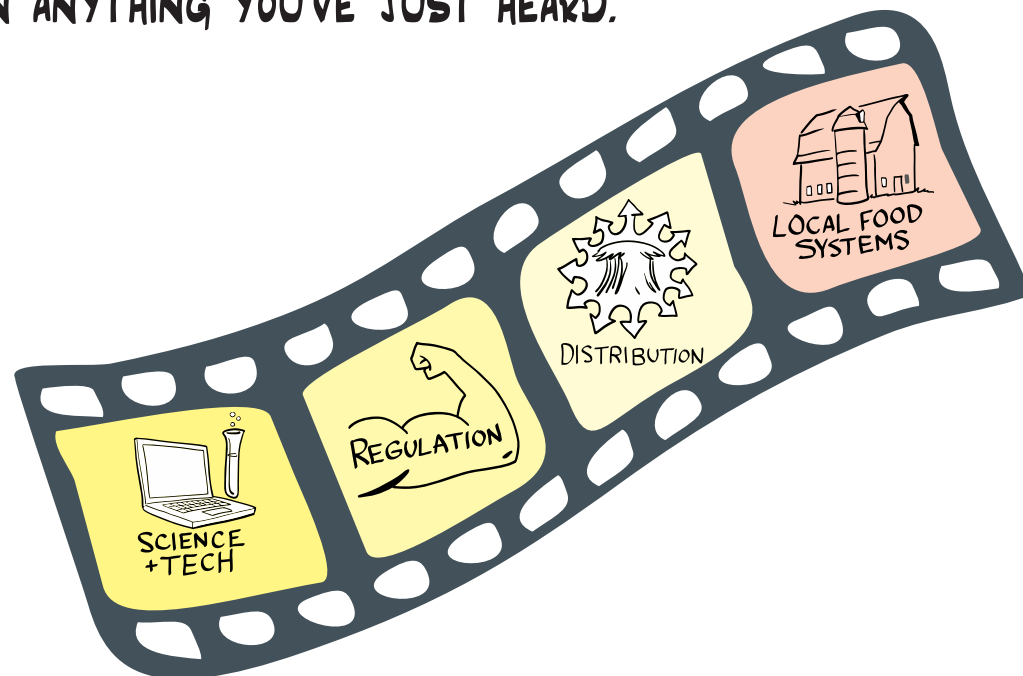
☒ Political Marginalization

BUT THIS IS A SEPARATE ACTIVITY FROM POLICIES TO INCREASE FOOD PRODUCTION THAT COULD FOCUS ON SEEDS, FERTILIZER AND EQUIPMENT.

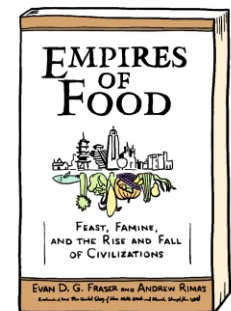


IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT THIS AND OTHER TOPICS ON FEEDING NINE BILLION YOU CAN CHECK OUT OTHER VIDEOS IN THIS SERIES, YOU MIGHT BE KEEN TO CHECK OUT MY RECENT BOOK EMPIRES OF FOOD.

ALSO, YOU CAN FIND ME ON YOUTUBE, FACEBOOK AND TWITTER WHERE I REGULARLY POST ABOUT ISSUES RELATING TO GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY. AND THE WEBSITE WWW.FEEDINGNINEBILLION.COM HAS ANNOTATED SCRIPTS ALONG WITH REFERENCES AND OUR BLOG AND AN ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUM WHERE YOU CAN WAIT IN WITH YOUR OWN THOUGHTS ON ANYTHING YOU'VE JUST HEARD.



FeedingNineBillion.com



ENDNOTES

¹Prompted by extreme climate events that decimated Russian agriculture in 2010, the government made the decision to halt grain exports in an effort to stabilize domestic grain and meat prices. This report examines the effects of this decision on both national and international scales.

Welton, George. The Impact of Russia's 2010 Grain Export Ban. Rep. OXFAM, 28 June 2011. Web. 14 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/rr-impact-russias-grain-export-ban-280611-en.pdf>>.

²Due to the combination of poor Russian and Canadian wheat harvests, as well as prolific wheat rust throughout Europe, 2010 saw wheat prices rise 90% over a period of just five weeks. Dwindling wheat supplies and rapidly rising prices then led to threats of dire food shortages throughout the Middle East.

Garrett, Laurie. "Wheat Supplies and Food Fears." Council on Foreign Relations. Council on Foreign Relations, 09 Aug. 2010. Web. 31 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.cfr.org/food-security/wheat-supplies-food-fears/p22774>>.

³In this article published by the Council on Foreign Affairs, Dr. Evan Fraser argues that rapid increases in food prices, due largely to the Russian grain export ban, are connected with the rise of civil unrest in the Middle East and Northern Africa in 2008.

Fraser, Evan, and Andrew Rimas. "The Psychology of Food Riots: When Do Price Spikes Lead to Unrest?" Foreign Affairs. Council on Foreign Relations, 30 Jan. 2011. Web. 14 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67338/evan-fraser-and-andrew-rimas/the-psychology-of-food-riots>>.

⁴In this publication, the FAO Assistant Director-General argues that food insecurity poses a significant safety risk, as it often initiates dangerous protests and food riots.

María Sumpsi Viñas, José. "A Hungry Man Is an Angry Man." Food and Security. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, n.d. Web. 28 Mar. 2014. <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2008/05/FS_HUNGRY/EN/index.htm>.

⁵In his book about how rising oil costs will end the economic expansion of the world's most industrialized nations, Jeff Rubin argues that we can expect further social unrest in the Middle East as rising food costs outpace growing revenue from the region's oil exports. Rubin, Jeff. The End of Growth. Toronto: Random House Canada, 2012. Web. 28 Mar. 2014.

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=y4oCqP_yY4EC&pg=PT75&lpg=PT75&dq=%22Nothing+sends+a+person+into+the+street+quite+like+an+empty+stomach%22&source=bl&ots=r6BoNaHfu5&sig=jDgcS9vQ3_XtBm6NOTbu4h1z8C8&hl=en&sa=X&ei=al01U7O3E_SzsATYjID4Cw&ved=0CC0Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22Nothing%20sends%20a%20person%20into%20the%20street%20quite%20like%20an%20empty%20stomach%22&f=false>.

⁶During the 2008 global food crisis, international leaders feared that intense food riots and protests could escalate into civil wars in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Latin America. "UN Agency Chief Warns of Food Crisis 'civil War'" AFP. Agence France-Presse, 25 Apr. 2008. Web. 28 Mar. 2014. <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5j48T5A6_pDx-VazuHrBdgmjEC-YQ>.

⁷There are numerous factors that will lead to rising food costs over the next few decades. This article published by National Geographic cites increased meat consumption, climate change, and population growth as three major pressures that will have global food price repercussions – this is linked to the potential for increased food riots and violence.

Bourne, Joel K., Jr. "The Global Food Crisis: The End of Plenty." National Geographic Magazine. National Geographic Society, June 2009. Web. 28 Mar. 2014. <<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/print/2009/06/cheap-food/bourne-text>>.

⁸This article about the recent increase of food riots includes a world map that identifies nations in which food riots have occurred. These are not the only regions where there is food insecurity, highlighting that citizens around the world react differently to the pressures of rising food costs.

Dyer, Gwynne. "The Future of Food Riots." CrisisBoom. N.p., 9 Jan. 2011. Web. 30 Mar. 2014. <<http://crisisboom.com/2011/01/12/the-future-of-food-riots/>>.

⁹The FAO reports that food production has been increasing globally, in both developed and developing nations, since the early 1990s.

Feeding the World. Rep. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, n.d. Web. 30 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.fao.org/docrep/015/i2490e/i2490e03a.pdf>>.

¹⁰This report from 1996 summarizes the long-term increase in calorie-per-person-per-day availability and makes predictions for future global food security. "The Situation Today- Hunger Amid Plenty." Agriculture and Food Security. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1996. Web. 30 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.fao.org/docrep/x0262e/x0262e05.htm>>.

If you are interested in researching this topic further, the FAO has an excellent database for food security information, including global food production and food supply data for all of the world's nations.

"FAOSTAT Gateway." FAOSTAT. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2014. Web. 28 Mar. 2014. <<http://faostat3.fao.org/faostat-gateway/go/to/home/E>>.

¹¹During the global food price spikes of 2007-2008, the food riots were most prevalent in urban Africa. This paper compares the international and local media representations of these events; the study finds that international sources suggested that these riots were caused by advanced poverty and hunger. In contrast, local media found that there were much more complex factors at work in leading to this level of violence. Sneyd, Lauren Q., Alexander Legwegoh, and Evan D. G. Fraser. "Food Riots: Media Perspectives on the Causes of Food Protest in Africa." *Food Security* 5.4 (2013): 485-97. Springer. Web. 30 Mar. 2014. <<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs12571-013-0272-x#page-1>>.

¹²Injustice and a sense of having been wronged are crucial elements leading people to riot in the name of food security. This connection between "moral outrage" and food riots is explained in an article published in *Foreign Affairs*, by Evan Fraser and Andrew Rimas. Fraser, Evan D. G., and Andrew Rimas. "The Psychology of Food Riots." *Foreign Affairs*. Council on Foreign Relations, Inc., 30 Jan. 2011. Web. 30 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67338/evan-fraser-and-andrew-rimas/the-psychology-of-food-riots>>.

¹³Alexander Legwegoh, a Cameroonian academic and an expert on urban poverty and food security, argues that the serious food riots experienced in Cameroon in 2008 were caused in large part by retailers who stockpiled grain during the shortage, forcing prices to climb. Fraser, Evan D. G., and Andrew Rimas. "The Psychology of Food Riots." *Foreign Affairs*. Council on Foreign Relations, Inc., 30 Jan. 2011. Web. 30 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67338/evan-fraser-and-andrew-rimas/the-psychology-of-food-riots>>.

¹⁴In their study of recent food riots in Cameroon, Evan Fraser and Andrew Rimas found that factors such as people's perceptions of the fairness of food prices and concerns over profiteering were more important causes of food riots than physical food shortages.

See also:

McDonald, Bryan. "Food Price Shocks and Instability Highlight Weaknesses in Governance and Markets." *New Security Beat*. Environmental Change and Security Program, 9 Feb. 2009. Web. 30 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.newsecuritybeat.org/2011/02/food-price-shocks-and-instability-highlight-weaknesses-in-governance-and-markets/#.Uzi3hK1dX-Y>>.

¹⁵Technological advancements in agriculture have kept food production rising over the past century, however the rate of progress may be slowing. Rather than investing only in agri-technology, the UN states that progress will come from "multi-functional" agriculture, which will include poverty reduction, water conservation, and climate change adaptation. Clover, Charles. "Food Shortages: How Will We Feed the World?" *The Telegraph*. Telegraph Media Group Ltd., 22 Apr. 2008. Web. 31 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/science-news/3340417/Food-shortages-how-will-we-feed-the-world.html>>.

¹⁶Many worry that recent development in the agribusiness industry has put new agricultural technologies and seed varieties out of reach of smallholder farmers. No longer encouraged to save seeds, and unable to purchase expensive equipment, smallholders struggle to increase yields.

"Challenges Facing Smallholder Farmers." *South Africa Changemakers*. Southern Africa Trust, Jan. 2013. Web. 31 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.southernafricatrust.org/changemakers/january2013/page4.html>>.

CREDITS

ILLUSTRATION: SCOTT MOONEY (SCOTTMOONMAN@GMAIL.COM)

FILM EDITING: DAVID WOODSIDE

TEXT: EVAN FRASER (FRASERE@UOGUELPH.CA)

LAYOUT AND COLOURING: MARIE PUDDISTER

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