The Challenges to the Independence of Official Statistics
Statistics Canada Case Study

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Pre-2010
Independence by convention

Minister, as government representative, defines the “what”
Chief Statistician defines the “how”

- Statistics Canada
  - reports to a Minister
  - is part of the Innovation, Science and Economic Development portfolio
- The Chief Statistician is the Deputy Minister
- The Statistics Act
  - sets the Chief Statistician’s mandate
  - is silent on the established convention
Impact

- Continuity and quality of data put into question
- Basis for evidence put at risk

Lesson Learned

- Need to make explicit what had been by convention
…“I will expect you to work with your colleagues and through established legislative, regulatory, and Cabinet processes, including our first Budget, to deliver on your top priorities:

- Restore the long-form census and update legislation governing Statistics Canada to reinforce the institution’s independence.” …

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
2016-2017
Formalizing independence

Legislating what was previously by convention
Preserving the integrity of the data
Retaining public trust

- Authorities
- Issuing directives
- Transparency
- Appointment of the Chief Statistician
- Canadian Statistics Advisory Council
Challenges

• Maintaining trust
  - renewal
  - democratizing data

• Independence and relevance
  finding the right balance
  - building partnerships
  - transparency and accountability

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THANK YOU!

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MERCI!

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