

## Environment and Neo-colonialism: Two Immigration Issues Involved In the Canadian Neoliberal Project

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**Abstract** - This article discusses two perspectives that have so far been overlooked in the debate on immigration in Canada and worldwide. The first exposes immigration policy as an essential element in the neoliberal policy of unlimited economic growth, which is unsustainable in the face of the impending ecological crisis. The second demonstrates that this immigration policy, which is similar in all OECD countries, favours the selection of the best educated, most experienced and often the richest individuals from the countries of origin, and is thereby building a new colonialist policy of the West towards developing countries.

**Keywords:** Immigration, environment, neocolonialism, development, capitalism

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### Introduction

#### The Issue of Immigration Must Be Readdressed

That Canada is a country of immigration is a cliché. All immigration policies since Champlain (1604), whether French or English, colonial or industrial, have aimed to promote the development of the country: increasing its population to demonstrate the greatness of the motherland and national sovereignty, while developing the wealth which needs to be exploited. This is how the idea of progress took shape, which was subsequently transformed into the notion of national development and industrialisation, which have today been replaced by a vision of development that would be sustainable in the global context of market liberalisation. These policies are still largely dependent on immigration to achieve their objectives.

But anybody who talks about immigration with an eye on the future, progress, development and economic growth here, must also be talking about emigration from somewhere! In this way, any discussion on immigration also presupposes glancing back to the countries of origin to understand the effects there. Moreover, emigration must be considered globally, to see whether its impact has remained constant on all the countries of origin throughout the course of immigration to Canada, and in relation to these countries' particularities over the course of history.

About half a millennium ago, at the dawn of the European colonial expansion, immigration to America derived entirely from Europe, which Pierre Chaunu (1974) described elegantly as a "full world" containing too many peasants for the available land, emigration from Europe was a continuation of the policies of the motherland. These colonies all bearing the prefix "New" (New France, New England, Nova Scotia and New Caledonia, etc.), allowed the countries of origin to affirm and extend their power abroad and thin out their excessive peasant population. At the time, the earth had approximately 500m inhabitants.

That the world has changed a lot since then is hardly worth pointing out. The Earth's total population exceeds 7 billion inhabitants, 14 times more than 500 years ago and four times more than in 1900. The "World" is no longer relatively uniform, based on a traditional agricultural way of life. It is currently polarised between rich, developed and influential countries, and poor ones, undergoing development and without real influence (Milanovic, 2005), while a number of other countries are "on the way to becoming developed". Canada no longer accepts peasant immigrants, as had been the norm until the First World War. In fact, it chooses its future citizens with increasing precision, according to an "objective" selection grid that generally favours the most highly educated people, with actual work experience that meets very precisely the country's needs and shortages in the labour force. These new arrivals are among the best or most competent citizens of their countries of origin and if they generally improve their social, political and economic condition here, the countries of origin lose a precious part of their human capital. In this way, 17th, 18th and 19th Century Europe has no equivalent as a source region for immigration from 21st Century Africa, Latin America and Asia.

This paper aims to link apparently unrelated issues to clarify certain aspects of immigration from the angle of its place in a world system. We seek to demonstrate that Canada's current objectives for immigration must be understood in the much wider context of renewal of the neoliberal project for continuous economic growth on a global scale (Freitag and Pineault, 1999); that Canada's current immigration policy conforms to the guidelines put forward by the OCDE; and that the liberal project of continuous economic growth is

extremely successful in its material attainments, thereby leading the world to a major crisis of civilisation, including the destruction of the planet's ecology; and that the OECD and Canada's current immigration policy is in contradiction to social workers' ethical considerations and provides a basis for one of the forms of contemporary colonialism. In brief, we seek to demonstrate that the epistemological premises of this immigration policy make it complicit with notions leading to an unprecedented ecological crisis, which threatens the entire human race and countless life forms on the planet, taking the form of neo-colonialism which is as subtle as it is brutal towards the new countries which are sources of immigration. We will conclude this paper with series of alternative proposals to the current, liberal-dominated approach to resolving social relations, which move towards social democracy on a world scale.

### **A Brief History of Immigration to Canada**

To simplify the story, we will say that from the final third of the 19th century onwards, the debate about immigration already confronted the two main political visions which broadly correspond to the two opposing ideologies when traditional, agricultural Canadian society was evolving to become industrial and modern. Expressing the traditional notion of an homogenous nation, Frederick Monk declared in 1906 that the new nation should "preserve the institutions of a free people. I absolutely refuse to support the principle that our only ambition should be to populate the country" (quoted in Knowles 2000, 24). Opposing him, W.M. German, the member of Parliament for Welland, was inspired by the experiences of Canada's closest neighbour and expressed the liberal view: "The United States wanted to populate their country and they have done so; we wish to do the same [...] Let the people in" (ibid). It was this vision of a homogenous nation that would mark immigration policies during Canada's first century of existence.

The industrialisation of Canada took place in the same general manner as in other Western countries. After the Second World War, it was accompanied by universal education for women, which put back women's average age for having their first child. In the wake of the major cultural transformation of the sixties, the wide availability of contraception gradually releases more and more women from their traditional constraints facing their sexuality. Throughout the Western world, women have ceased to be just wives and mothers, and are now active citizens who enter the labour market on a massive scale; the modern family is undergoing profound change (Dagenais 2000). The decline in the fertility rate has certainly been spectacular: between 1850 and 1950, it fell from 7 to 3.5 children for all women between 15 and 50 years of age (Nadot 2009, 567). After 1965, the rate fell to less than three children per woman, and to less than two children per woman after 1972 (Perspective monde 2009), being below the replacement level for the population. This rate declined to 1.49 children per woman in 2006 (ibid).

Now that the fertility rate had fallen below the replacement level of the population in all of the Western hemisphere, immigration policies had to be assessed under a different angle than from the maintenance of a homogenous population, an objective which was liable to decrease economic growth.

Firmly anchored in the capitalist economy, the economic-demographic dilemma was rapidly resolved. As the traditional sources of immigration had dried up, there was no choice but to seek the sources of demographic growth outside Europe.

This led to the debate about the *Immigration Law*, prepared by a White Paper in 1962 and instituted in 1967 with the *Immigration regulations* and its points system to permit an "objective" assessment of potential immigrants, irrespective of country of origin or race. The cultural and social corollary of this immigration policy was the adoption of the multiculturalism policy in 1971. Immigration between 1967 and 2007 represented more than half of Canada's total immigration since 1608 (HRSDC, 2009).

Canada's current immigration policy has been finalised with the 1976 *Immigration Law*, following the consultations over the 1974 Green Paper. This had been based around the question "Why have immigrants in Canada?" After two years of wide-ranging consultations, the response of the law was the following: "For the promotion of Canada's demographic, economic, cultural and social objectives" (Knowles 2000, 68). The law is very clear, and the immediate demographic and economic objectives are growth, while the cultural and social aims are the development of diversity and tolerance.

So in a single century, Canada's immigration policy has evolved from preoccupations about the country's homogeneity to the pursuit of economic growth. The racism in Canada's immigration policies was suppressed from the texts of the law in 1967. After the new law, immigration was no longer at the service of the nation but of the economy, its growth and competitiveness. Firstly until the mid-1980s, this new policy favoured the entry of a labour force needed to meet growth targets for infrastructure and industry, still in line with the industrial objectives of post-war development. Subsequently, in response to the "new economy", economic growth requires specialized knowledge and skills, as well as investment, so this kind of immigrant was needed for Canada (Abu-Ladan and Gabriel 2008). Canada's policy corresponded to the OECD's directives: all developed countries favoured the unification of families, the selection of educated immigrants to answer precise, specialised needs in the labour market, and the recruitment of investor-immigrants.

Today Canada is recognised as the world's multicultural country par excellence, officially open and tolerant, offering specific policies to affirm each of the communities which make it up, which corresponds with the social and cultural objectives of the 1976 law. If it is important to maintain efforts for the inclusion and integration of the new immigrants, which was initiated over a generation ago, build on achievements and improve current performances, it is also vital to undertake more wide-ranging reflection about the global meaning of immigration, linked with world demographic growth, continued economic growth, ecological issues and the geo-political phenomena of "minorisation" between countries "associated" in population migration for the new "world society" being created before our eyes<sup>19</sup>.

### **Immigration and the Problem of Economic Growth**

The benefits of economic development or growth in the subsistence economy based on agriculture, such as in rural areas of underdeveloped countries in Africa, Asia or Latin America, are absolutely legitimate and rational. Everything that economic development can imply in terms of scientific, medical and sanitary advances, life expectancy, the quality of food and education, the improvement of living conditions, transport systems, communications, clothing, leisure, gender equality and many other factors are intrinsically linked to development, and together they have significantly reduced the suffering of humanity. The problem with economic growth lies elsewhere. The problem arises from the moment when development becomes the objective "in itself", from the moment it is envisaged as being continuous and infinite (Freitag 2007; Freitag 2008), from the time it is dominated by financial capital (Freitag and Pineault 1999) and when it relies on private appropriation of what is produced collectively. Thereafter, glaring social and ecological contradictions emerge, such as the polarization of wealth, exclusion and idleness, global warming or the scarcity of water. This is what the deregulated liberal social system under which we exist has given us. This is the development model proposed by the G8, which has further extended its influence over the planet with the G20, the Davos summit, NAFTA, APEC and other organisations and associations aiming to promote business and free trade.

Capitalism is in fact the economic dimension of liberalism, understood as a system of political economy, and Marx was its principal critic during the 19th Century while Freitag refocused and deepened the systematic criticism during the late 20th Century. We can very superficially define liberalism as being a way of organising society, or a form of regulating social relations, which gravitates around two institutions: the freedom of the individual and private property. The idea of freedom has given its most impressive developments in the legal and political spheres. Representative democracy and its corresponding institutions are liberalism's most obvious form.

We cannot in this text criticise all the traps inherent in the liberal conception of freedom, which always retains the "laissez-faire" principle of the sovereign individual. Let us merely emphasise that freedom should always be maximised, but within a framework of dependence on all society. In other words, freedom must never be understood as an abstract objective aiming at the total emancipation of the individual from all social, cultural, historical and collective restrictions, which are always a necessary part of social life. Liberalism's version of freedom poses problems insofar as the system asserts the total (abstract) autonomy of the individual from the whole of society, in their individual search for happiness. This social model does not propose collective welfare as the purpose of its existence: it proposes the interests of the individual against the solidarity of the group. In the history of liberalism, the freedom of the individual has always been the freedom of the owner-entrepreneur, who expresses their freedom in civil society by organising it in accordance with their own interests, based on their own premises. (Pinard 2000). All contemporary law most strictly reflects this fact.

It is in this manner that in the post regulation contemporary liberalism, the neoliberalism, all society, including its political institutions, functions for the market. This is what, for

instance, economic recovery plans put forward by the governments of developed countries demonstrates. Societies mobilised to save banking or finance institutions, automobile manufacturers and other large capitalist institutions in the United States and throughout the world, following the financial meltdown that began in spring 2006 with the "subprime" loan crisis (Ehrenreich and Muhammad 2009) and led to the stock market crash in autumn 2008. All this was done to "save jobs and stimulate the economy." The whole of society is therefore mobilised for the market, for profit, production, consumption, and so on. All society is mobilised for a system that functions only in the context of uninterrupted economic growth. However, the Earth's resources are finite, and their quantity is limited, although the system is based on continuous, infinite economic growth. There is an insurmountable contradiction here.

The capitalist system, the economic expression of liberalism, is also based on the private appropriation of collectively produced wealth. This system stands at the opposite pole from the values of the social work profession: in itself it is incapable of positing collective welfare, just because it is based on private interest. It is certainly true that this system favours entrepreneurial spirit, private initiative, the production and development of material wealth, as well as consumption, but always for specific, private interests, which are not always tied to the real needs of populations or real world conditions.

The Greeks of the Classical period (5th and 4th Centuries BC) in their democratic wisdom forbade citizenship of the city to merchants simply because merchants generally perceive only their own interests, and are incapable of considering collective welfare. Since the 16th Century, the West has entrusted merchants and entrepreneurs with the responsibility of developing society (Freitag 2008, 71-73). But if Adam Smith's invisible hand was capable of functioning during the 18th and 19th Centuries on the simpler scale of industrial towns and national states, it has regularly demonstrated its incompetence since 1929, and is incapable of understanding the needs of the "global village" of McLuhan's famous formula. The current financial crisis, the changing climate, the environmental degradation, the African national debt, the arms proliferation and the rise of religious fundamentalist, are all examples of crises that shows liberalism's incapacity to take care of the development of the planet and the welfare of the greatest number.

Therefore the idea of continuous growth must be asked anew. How many cars must we own, how big and powerful must they be and how often must we change them to be happy? How many square feet of houses, cottages and chalets do we need to live adequately? How many motorbikes, snowmobiles, jet-skis, mountain bikes and motorised lawnmowers do we need to increase our happiness? How many flat screen televisions of what size do we need to maximize our wellbeing? How many screen-telephone-camera-text-message-hard-drive-infinite memory-USB keys, how many latest all-in-one gadgets do we need to fulfil our role as citizens? And the available resources will exist for how many people; and for how long? Finally, how long can development last (Freitag 2007, 211)? Will another planet be needed to fulfil the dream of capitalism for all? Can a frog really become as big as an ox?

Canada is currently pursuing a policy of continuous economic growth. As we have seen, its immigration policy is clearly part of this objective. Canada's demographic policy, including immigration, envisages a total population of approximately 42.5m inhabitants by 2056 (Statistics Canada, 2008, 3). In this context, the country receives on average 240,000 immigrants every year, or nearly a million people every four years (ibid, 20). We could ask ourselves how far demographic growth should be pursued? To date, this kind of growth cannot be quantified over time and towards a fixed, specific target, as the target numbers can be identified only annually, based on the precise needs for national economic growth, and taking the unemployment rate as well as the international economic context into account (Abu-Laban and Gabriel, pp. 55 and 169).

Apart from knowing who, other than economic managers, government officials and university researchers, really participates in the debate on the country's demographic objectives, what precisely is this growth policy aiming at? A Canadian population of 100 million? Or even more? Is it signing up for a world with 15 billion inhabitants? Or yet more? And will this world be developed, industrialised, dominated by the liberal project of the commodification of all resources, forms of life and forms of social relations? Does this project aim for demographic growth to increase production, sales and profits? Is the clinching argument really that demographic growth will fund our pensions?

So if the proposed model for regulating social relations is not liberal, what should it be like? Should it still go in the direction of continued growth? Should demographic growth be pursued against, in conjunction with or independently of a policy to redistribute collective wealth, whose objectives and methods remain to be specified? Or does demographic growth rather favour the private accumulation of wealth? Does it presuppose an endlessly increasing polarisation between the richest and the poorest? Where are we debating the links between economic and demographic growth and their impact on climate change, a phenomenon which seems to acclimatise very badly to continuous growth?

If the Earth boasted 15, 20 or 35 billion people consuming the quantity of food, energy and water necessary to live well, what would be the social and political implications for organization, for the regulation of social relations and for the continued availability of resources? A bold demographic projection study by a team of UN demographers, intended to incite discussion among social planners, shows that "the most simple [demographic] scenario, which consists of freezing the current fertility levels, produces "extravagant" results: 36.4 billion inhabitants in 2300 (ONU 2005)". The authors highlight the absurdity of this scenario. To do nothing and let go leads to an absurd, unsustainable situation. This is why more reflection is needed, taking in other related questions, to grasp the implications of "our" social choices more globally.

All reflection about immigration to Canada and on worldwide migration processes must also address the objectives or purposes of immigration as envisaged by, and in, the liberal model for economic growth. Ultimately, immigration is not a threat for Canada. The real threat is the manipulation of immigration, and the objective of unlimited demographic

growth conceived as a support for infinite economic growth. Its impact on the environment makes this target unsustainable. This liberal vision of demography and immigration tied to economic growth as an end in itself is a challenge and a pressing issue for the social work profession, as ultimately social welfare on a global scale is at stake.

### Recalling a Few Facts about the Ecological Context

So there are numerous problems with this conception of continuous or infinite development. Let us focus for a moment on the ecological challenge that it sets. We have already mentioned how the planet had 500 million inhabitants in 1492. In four centuries, this population had doubled to 1 billion people. In the last hundred years, the population has grown exponentially, reaching more than 7 billion people. This sudden population growth, paralleled with accelerated industrialisation in nearly all regions of the world, has had significant consequences for our planet, such as global warming.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has indicated that an increase in the planet's average temperature of only 3°C by the late 21<sup>st</sup> Century would mean the disappearance of entire ecosystems, lower yields for all cereal crops, extensive coastal erosion and a marked increase in sea level, higher mortality from extreme heat, migration and a spread in organisms which transmit infections (IPCC 2007, 10).

A more recent study by the *Massachusetts Institute of Technology* (MIT) now anticipates a rise in the planet's average temperature of up to 9°C by the end of this century, with a 90% probability that the average increase will be of between 3.5°C and 7.4°C (MIT 2009). The IPCC catastrophe scenario set the critical threshold at 3.5°C. We are now moving cheerfully over this threshold, but do not discuss the accumulated effect of billions of additional humans on the planet's ecological condition, or the impact of this mass of people consuming food, energy and water, while the supporters of continued development continue to advocate this policy, underlining its supposed benefits!

The world as we have known it, best understood as a mass consumer society and a world of continuous growth, is unsustainable. This way of life is under threat, but so is civilization itself, through by an excessively rapid and excessively radical transformation of the living environment which supports it (McKibben 2010, 16). Currently observed climate change goes beyond the catastrophe scenarios projected three years ago. The question is no longer about the possibility of climate disasters, but rather how best to prepare for them (Monbiot 2006, McKibben 2010).

We Westerners possess considerable means for adaptation, both in human resources and technical capacity. And it is very likely that we are greatly overestimating our technical capacity to adapt. But what about developing countries? *The Royal Society*, the national academy of sciences in the United Kingdom, recently published a report, which mentioned that:

the impacts of climate change will fall disproportionately upon developing countries and the poor those who can

least afford to adapt. Thus a changing climate will exacerbate inequalities in, for example, health and access to adequate food and clean water (Royal Society 2009).

We could consider Bangladesh, where 150 million inhabitants live literally in a delta, which, with rising ocean, could disappear almost entirely. We could also ponder the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, with their population of 1 billion individuals, half of whom live on a dollar a day, and which are already severely affected by droughts and food shortages. The essential point remains that by recruiting the best elements of human capital from the countries of immigration to Canada and the West – the most educated, the most experienced and richest elements – to contribute here to the project of continuous economic growth and unlimited consumption, we are not truly helping the countries most threatened by the impending ecological crisis. By favouring immigration policies that target the countries' most skilled personnel, we are greatly hindering these countries' capacity to deal with the challenges ahead. This recruitment of the best citizens from developing countries to serve the cause of economic development for the countries in the OECD, which champions the liberal cause, is certainly not the most enlightened policy for the future of humanity!

### A New Form of Colonialism

Let us get back to the categories of immigrants sought by current immigration in all OECD zones. As we know, "there is a shortage of health professionals in developed countries. This shortage is increasingly offset by the migration of nurses and other professionals from developing countries" (OIT 2007). Although this special shortage of health professionals is the most severe, it is not the only professional or specialised work category affected by shortages. Shortages reach into all the important sectors of social life, all the professions, including executives, artists and sportsmen. This is how and why the OECD has harmonized migration policy for all member countries, so that the international migration of specialist workers and professionals has become an accepted characteristic of the labour market (OECD 2009).

In the case of Canada, the immigration categories targeted include management (all sectors); business, finance and administration (all sectors); natural and applied sciences (including geologists, geochemists, biologists, engineers, programmers, etc.); health (all kinds of doctors, nurses, audiologists, midwives, etc.); social sciences, education, the services (including teachers, counsellors and therapists); art, culture, sport, sales and services; transport and heavy machinery operators, etc. (Immigration Canada, 2008). The federal government just recently decided to accelerate the immigration process for 38 categories of professional workers in high-demand posts (Maurino 2008).

According to the Canadian Labour and Business Council, an organisation committed to economic growth, "out of the 707,000 immigrant who arrived in the three years between 2000 and 2002, over half (61%) were in the economic category of qualified workers [...], who are selected as their knowledge, skills and experience considered appropriate and necessary for the Canadian labour market, as well as

investors, entrepreneurs and independent workers" (CSPC 2004, 8). Subsequently, this trend has continued and become more marked.

Several organisations and researchers are considering the consequences of these major movements of specialized workers. "The health professionals who migrate send money to their family and their country, but migration affects the nations they come from, which lose qualified and experienced workers, weakening the ability of national health systems to provide quality healthcare" (ILO 2007).

In its June 2007 report on international migration, the OECD declared that "in the year 2000, 11% of the nurses and 18% of doctors employed in the OECD zone were born abroad" (cited in JIM 2007). According to the communiqué of the 59th world assembly of the World Health Organisation (WHO), "Certain countries suffer disproportionately from the consequences of migration" (cited in JIM 2007). Despite these warnings, the situation continues to worsen: an increasing number of health professionals leave poor countries to practice in rich countries. "For every 100 doctors working in Sub-Saharan Africa, there are 23 doctors trained in Africa working in OECD countries" (cited in JIM, 2007). The number of doctors in OECD countries who trained abroad "has tripled in the last 30 years" (JIM, 2007).

How can we evaluate, through these statistics, the effect that these professionals and specialists leave behind them? For example, a doctor from Burkina Faso (a country with 0.1 doctors per 1000 inhabitants) who emigrates to an OECD country, or one from Morocco (0.5 doctors), from Pakistan (0.9 doctors), from India (0.7 doctors), from Senegal (0.1 doctors), from Mali (0.1 doctors), from the Philippines (0.8 doctors) or from Ethiopia (0.03 doctors), who emigrates to an OECD country. The ratios of doctors per 1 000 inhabitants in OECD countries are for Canada 2.9, for Switzerland 3.8, for Greece 4.9, for Spain 3.59, for Norway 3.7, for Germany 3.45 or for the United States 2.4 (World Statistics, 2009).

The situation is similar with medical schools in poor countries, which objectively finance medicine in rich countries.

The WHO indicated on 15 May last that according to the British organisation Save the Children, "the recruitment of Ghanaian health professionals has allowed Great Britain to save 65 million dollars in training costs between 1998 and 2005." Similarly, the government in Quebec has just provided major donations to various professional associations so they can better inform foreign health professionals about the regulations for practicing in Quebec, rather than focus on means to achieving "self-sufficiency", the term employed by the WHO and the World Medical Association (WMA). In France, the dogma of "selective immigration" favoured by the new government could also lead to such a policy, which hardly contributes to mastering the migration of health professionals (JIM 2007).

According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), approximately 10% of highly specialized workers from developing countries live in North America or Europe. "But

many Latin American, African and Caribbean countries have a much larger share of their highly skilled nationals living abroad, which poses a serious challenge to their own socio-economic development" (WMR 2008, 51-52). This organization estimates that since 1990, approximately 650,000 specialised workers immigrate every year to OECD countries. (WMR 2008, 56).

Furthermore, the IOM remains concerned about the education policies of the OECD countries, which target foreign students. These policies effectively not only favour an influx of foreign students into OECD member countries, whose fees finance the public universities of the host countries, but also encourage them to stay once they finish their studies. According to the IOM, there were 2.7 million foreign students in the universities in OECD countries in 2004. "The origin and destinations of students are broadly similar to that of all tertiary educated migrants, but they are even more likely to come from Asia or Africa. The reason why student mobility is important is because it may be the leading edge of increased migration by highly skilled people from these source regions" (WMR 2008, 56-57).

More generally, how can the impact of the young people who leave developing countries to study in developed countries, and do not return to their country of origin, be assessed? More often than not, these young graduates, postgraduates or doctors have been able to study abroad because their education system had determined that they were among the best in the country. So these young people benefited from their state's investment in the country's educational system and from their teachers involvement, often also having enjoyed direct investment from their community and family before obtaining a study grant. When they go to a developed country for higher education and do not return home to live and work, this represents a net transfer of wealth in the form of knowledge and know-how, which amounts to a transfer of human skills from a developing country to a developed country. In this way, the countries with the fewest specialised professionals and workers in the world finance from their meagre local resources their best human elements, for the benefit of countries, which are already developed. This process of recruiting the brains of the best-qualified citizens of immigration source countries derives from a conscious agreement between developed countries, implicitly with our complicity.

In the context of the American educational system, Goldin and Katz (2008) have showed that it is the individuals with the highest level of education who facilitate the introduction, adoption and dissemination of the technologies best adapted to local needs. Post secondary education permits the reading of technical textbooks and plans, the use of algebra and mathematical formulas, all necessary for the development of rational solutions appropriate to local problems. The work by the African Institute of Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) and its director, Neil Turok is along the same lines, affirming that Africa's development will come through extending its human skills, particularly in mathematics. An older work (Bugnes, 1989) described universities as a political project and a

strategy for rooting a people's autonomous identity in four developing nations.

All of these works explain the close links between economic development, human capital and increasing inequality in their historical context, bringing together both the lessons of the past and the implications for the future.

As already mentioned, it was estimated in 2001 that nearly 10% of adults born in developing countries and benefitting from higher education are living in North America, Australia or Europe. The IOM also estimates that between 30% and 50% of the population of developing countries with a scientific education live in the developed world (Lowell, Findlay and Steward, quoted in WMR 2008, 61). This is how the immigration policies of OECD countries, of which Canada is a founding member, favour the maintenance of minority status among developing nations. This amounts to the "development of underdevelopment", to borrow the title of a venerable work of political sociology (Gunder-Frank, 1969). According to Milanovic (2005, pp. 31-81), this tendency to polarisation between rich and poor countries still exists. Though all world relationships are very complex, it seems that the immigration policies of OECD countries maintain the marginalisation of developing countries. These policies institutionalize the marginalisation of countries of emigration on an international scale. What does the profession have to say about it?

### **Social Workers' Ethics and the Issue of Immigration**

By working diligently on the effects of the question of immigration and the most effective strategies to integrate the country's immigrants into the host country and community, social workers are putting certain important values of the profession into effect. But the problem encountered here is that immigration is generally considered in its local dimension and in the antiracist component linked to multiculturalism in the reception of immigrants (Michaels 2006). We have aimed to draw attention to other implications of the question, making reflection more global, more complete, more true to reality and also more faithful to the values of the profession. Social workers and the rest of society must also reflect and act pre-emptively on this question, of the social implications of emigration derived from the foundations of contemporary society's political philosophy. The importance of this reflection lies in the fact that emigration is closely linked to problems of underdevelopment, inequalities between countries and the vulnerability of countries of origin to the ecological crisis, when faced with political domination (for instance of the OECD and its promotion of liberalism), economic domination (of G8 financial capitalism) or technological domination (medicine, IT, arms, nuclear technology, telecommunications, etc.). Immigration and emigration must be viewed in the same normative framework as reflection on liberalism, based on their planetary reality.

Immigration and emigration, countries of origin and host countries, are partners in an infernal dance, which is more beneficial to developed countries and their system of economic growth than to anyone else. This vast movement of population, within the liberal ideology and its continuous or

even infinite economic and demographic development, is currently placing the viability of civilisation and of numerous forms of life in jeopardy. All this is contrary to the fundamental values of social workers.

The following is the definition of social work provided by the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW):

*Social work promotes social change, the resolution of problems arising from human relationships, and making people autonomous and free to improve their wellbeing. Social work is based on theories of human behaviour and social systems so it can intervene wherever humans interact with their environment. The principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental for social work (IASSW 2009).*

We believe that our criticism of liberalism and of Canada and the OECD's immigration policies expressed in this article 'unveils' with more depth certain themes identified in this definition, and develops the specific social implications about how to live in the world today. Moreover, we also believe that article 3 (distributing resources fairly), 4 (contesting unfair rules and practices) and 5 (working in a spirit of solidarity) of IASSW's definition of social justice (IASSW 2009) must today be understood in the context of the "global village" and no longer in the strict framework of national sovereignty and local situations. This "updated" conception of collective life for the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century therefore implies rethinking immigration based on a new, more complete perspective, with greater solidarity, better reflecting the values of the profession and the scope of the problems we are facing. This requires that individual freedom be reconsidered in a framework of dependence to the whole of society, and that the relationship between the economy and politics be reformulated, placing the latter at the service to real humanity rather than to *entrepreneurship*. This would also involve reflection about the policies to pursue and the institutions through which these policies should be promoted.

### **The Need to Better Understands and Binds the Whole of Society When Reflecting the Welfare of the Majority**

Just when we need a form of world organisation "for everyone", as we are facing challenges on a global scale, and just when we need to reflect about a new method of regulating social relations, the liberal system continues to operate, in the course of the most severe economic crisis in a century, based on the idea that the individual and their personal wealth are the fundamental values to be preserved. But the notion of continuous growth of the system is already confronted with the fact that we are already making excessive and misguided use of available resources. Reflection about immigration must therefore take into account the double context of a rising world population (7,145,394,000 inhabitants on 18th July 2013, and a net addition of 232,000 more people every day throughout the world), who aspire (quite legitimately for those who possess nothing) to live a lifestyle based on unlimited mass consumption.

However, faced with the impending environmental crisis, global warming, the continued introduction of new chemical products every year, the pollution of groundwater and the erosion of soils and coasts, these objectives of continuous

growth have become unrealistic. Aid for development and achieving a decent life for everyone in a global context must be rethought. First we must realize that the "full world" of the 15th Century that unloaded its excess population into the colonies of a "virgin" New World, does not have the same meaning at all as the "full world" of the 21st Century. Then we must realise how the idea of continuous demographic and economic growth, associated with the idea that the consumption of material goods is the source of self-fulfilment, is no longer viable as a social project.

Immigration therefore poses this general problem of the world ecological crisis by the framework into which it is placed, being a system of demographic growth supporting infinite economic growth. Immigration also poses a general problem linked to the system of world domination, and so to the underdevelopment of many countries, because the growth policy of rich countries is founded on a more or less systematic pillaging of human capital, in addition to the plundering of natural resources from developing countries. This is made possible by the enduring network of ideological and political alliances between developed countries, which are materially and militarily linked to keep this system in place. This system is also facilitated by the organisation of "democracy" and the "free market", in accordance with the OECD's liberal mission. Finally, immigration reveals the problem for developing countries of satisfying their own development needs and facing the impending ecological crisis. But what can be done about it? And where can we begin?

We could consider emigration as a consequence of the attraction felt in developing countries for the living conditions in developed countries. So the quality of life and dignity of life are at issue here. We could consider this attraction to be a direct consequence of the inequality in the countries' development. But we could also reverse the deliriously intoxicating perspective of liberalism and reflect on economic overdevelopment as a sickness of our civilisation. We could cease to consider the immigration of the world's best brains as a solution to our economic growth. We could question how pertinent competition is as a motor for development and basis for relations between peoples.

We must find an alternative relation to the world to what liberalism currently offers. As we have already said, an ever increasing population, living in a world where everyone has a big car, big house and all the gadgets offered by the free market means living a relationship with the world which will eventually destroy the earth. The alternative consists of reflection that goes beyond taking problems one by one, which goes beyond the absolute freedom of the individual who finds self-fulfilment in the unlimited consumption of material goods, and beyond the idea of national sovereign states. Expressing a global alternative project for society, on a human scale and with humanitarian objectives for every inhabitant of the planet, and which respects the ethics of the social work profession, would require a renewed reflection on the meaning of "living together", collectively with all other species, including animals, insects, coral and plants, and asking the question from the perspective of international institutions with real power to promote life, civilisation and social justice for all. Whether or not based on the United

Nations (Freitag 2003), there are at least four major institutions to consider.

A first institution, specialising in the management of armed conflicts, would also have the task of developing and managing a global disarmament policy for all kinds of weapons, including the suppression of the arms industry itself. This seems to us a simple and logical idea to consider: war has a very negative effect on the quality of life and creates large numbers of refugees. A second institution would specialise in the management of emergencies resulting from natural phenomena, and would also have a mandate to produce measures for the conservation of nature and for the management of mankind's adaptation to climate change. A third institution would specialise in the management of all chemical products such as fertiliser, medicine and genetically modified organisms which are harmful to health or the environment. This institution would manage global pollution and would be responsible for putting a real ecological policy into effect; an ethos for life with nature, which supports it, conforming with the possibilities the planet offers. A fourth institution would ensure the balanced development of all the world's regions and see to a fair distribution of wealth and an equitable access to resources, especially food, water and energy. It would contain a demographic section which would better plan and answer the necessary, available resources for each specific population group. This institution would also ensure that the market was repositioned as a tool for society, coordinating with national political institutions the regulation of the economy, not "free" but at the service of mankind.

We must continue our reflection about the meaning the word "freedom" should have in the sphere of social life. Freedom as pure apprehension of a single individual act implies disregard for the meaning of collective life. The individual should certainly enjoy the greatest possible freedom, and the State should guarantee "rights and freedom for everyone", even surpassing certain restrictive traditions (Boudreau 2007, 195-198), but still as part of social solidarity, solidarity with nature and respect for global human culture, being the solidarity of the entire group. Liberal freedom has led to individualism, although the freedom of individuals must be understood as the historical outcome of the struggles of people who bring their "being" to its individuality: freedom as an affirmation of a collective mode of life, a possibility for the individual affirmation of the potential of each being, accessible to everyone. The freedom of the individual should be understood as a particular affirmation of everyone, circumscribed by their relation to all forms of life, and not as the absolute affirmation of an individual who is the master of himself and his destiny in the world, above and outside his dependency to the whole of society.

We must also continue reflection about the meaning we give to the word "development". It should perhaps be understood more spiritually, as wellbeing and serenity of the whole person, of all humanity, certainly including a material dimension which would respond to the basic and secondary needs of everyone, but not in the sense of an infinite accumulation of material wealth. As early as the mid-19th Century, the liberal reformist economist John Stuart Mills declared that capitalism should ensure the development of wealth to satisfy needs, and thereafter humanity would be confronted with the development of its real personality (Mills 1848). This is still the task that

awaits us: satisfying everyone's needs and reflecting about the world outside a market-orientated conception, to ensure the development of true Man!

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Aurélie Lacassagne, Anne Watelet and Fatimata Pichodot-Lee for their valuable comments.

<sup>2</sup> From the time of Christopher Columbus's voyages of discovery, the New World embodies a vision of progress which has emerged since the Renaissance and the Reformation, and is one of the rationales for modernity. The basic ideas of progress as applied in Europe can be summarized as the projection of a better future (with a linear view of time), for the entire human race ("humanism"), supported by the human ability (autonomous subjectivity) to transform the world (technology) by acquiring real knowledge (science). Let us note that modernity is not the same thing as capitalism. Capitalism is a means for achieving a practical relationship with nature, and finally took off as a "system" under the conditions which modernity provided, which means being based on the "legitimacy of an individual's transcendent autonomy" (Freitag 1987, 102). In this way, the New World to which we belong but whose ideology refers exclusively to the United States ("America") is also or above all the space where an inexplicit perversion of European modernity developed (Freitag 1994, 11). This space made possible the total domination of practical rationality over all other forms of rationality. The idea of progress subsequently mutating into a "development operation" was evoked in the famous title of J. Habermas's work "Technology and science as ideology" (1971), but was better analyzed by M. Freitag as a decision making and operating mode of reproduction (1986b). The foregoing

indicates that our analysis is indebted to the theoretical framework developed by a group of researchers gathered around the work of Michel Freitag. We refer the reader to his works, which are listed in the bibliography.

<sup>3</sup> Consider the building of the "coast to coast" railroad " as strongly emblematic of Canada's national development.

<sup>4</sup> See the documents from the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), in which Canada strongly and vehemently participates, to be found at the following link: <http://www1.oecd.org/daf/mai/index.htm>. The MAI project is essentially intended to free the economic sphere from political constraints. If the MAI was defeated by alter-globalisation protestors in Seattle in 1999, this affected only the form it took and not its essential targets. In fact, nowadays we can observe this project being implemented piecemeal, sector by sector. See Freitag 2003.

<sup>5</sup> The works by Abu-Ladan and Gabriel (2008) accurately analyze this tendency in Canada's current immigration policy.

<sup>6</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). "The OECD replaced the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), created in 1947 to manage American and Canadian aid within the Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe after the Second World War. The OECD succeeded the OEEC in 1961. Since then it has aimed to help governments to achieve a sustainable growth of the economy and employment, and favor the improvement

of living conditions in member states, while maintaining financial stability, thus favoring the development of the global economy." (<http://www.OCDE.org>). Its mission is to help countries following the principles of democracy and the market economy. The thirty member countries are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxemburg, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. See the SOPEMI document *Perspectives des migrations internationales*, Paris, OECD, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> As the references are too numerous to this, I will mention only the works by McKibben (2010), the MIT (2009), the IPCC (2007), the Stern Report (2006) and Monbiot (2006). The conceptual paradox is obvious, the economy destroys ecology: the two concepts contain the prefix *eco*, whose Greek root *oikos* means house. Ecology is the condition of the possibility of all life forms, therefore also of all the possible actions in the world, while the economy is the human organization of the means of life. If the economy destroys ecology, this is because the means of life are unsuited to living conditions. See Freitag (2008).

<sup>8</sup> This dilemma is not exclusive to Canada; it exists in all the OECD countries (excluding Mexico and Turkey) where the fertility rate has passed beneath the threshold of 2.1 births per women in the generation following the Second World War (OECD 2009).

<sup>9</sup> Labelle explains this problem very effectively by stating that the previous policy was "at odds with the qualified labor requirements. This labor was sought increasingly outside Europe, as a policy of minimum quotas could no longer provide it." (1988, 320).

<sup>10</sup> This notion of race, extensively present in the law, remains very problematic, as its use implies an essence in the blood, rather than designating groups with different somatic characteristics, associated with different cultural practices, as does the use of "cultural groups". The notion of race, which has no scientific basis, should be banned from our vocabulary. See Cooper, Kaufman, and Ward (2003), as well as Feldman, Lewontin and King (2003).

<sup>11</sup> In addition, the federal government of the time was killing two birds with one stone, as it was smothering both the Quebec and American Indian cultural claims, in the wider framework of a cultural realignment that made all cultures equal in its relation to the State and its Anglo-Saxon resolved. See for example Bourque, Duchastel (2000) and Weaver (1982).

<sup>12</sup> There are actually ten principles promoted in the law. See Canada (1981, 5). Knowles's formula is an exceptional synthesis of these points.

<sup>13</sup> Labelle underlines the continuity of this hierarchy, noting that "the regulations in force in 1956 were established as follows: 1) immigrants from France, England, Ireland, the United States and the white Commonwealth territories: Australia, South Africa, New Zealand; 2) other Western European countries; 3) Eastern European countries, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Turkey, Central and South American countries; 4) Asian countries" (1988, 317).

<sup>14</sup> The first annual report by the Economic Council of Canada insisted from 1964 onwards that the immigration policy should be reconsidered in the light of the period of economic growth which was anticipated (1988, 320) while a "new ministry of Labor and Immigration was created in 1966 to respond to the pressures and recommendation from the Senate's special committee on labor and employment, the Economic Council of Canada and the committee in charge of the white book." (*ibid.*, 324).

<sup>15</sup> Labelle cites Passaris, who writes that the 1967 regulations "[...] provided the most direct and obvious emphasis that had been placed in Canadian post war immigration policy between immigration and the economy's manpower requirements" (1988, 333).

<sup>16</sup> Here again, references to this point are too numerous. We can refer to Coriat (1984), Verdier (1983) and Pastré (1983) who studied the technical dimensions of the process, as well as Gorz (1988) and Pinard (2000) for more in-depth analyses of the meaning of these transformations of work in society.

<sup>17</sup> For example, Legault and Rachédi 2008.

<sup>18</sup> It is certainly a paradox to open immigration of doctors, engineers and architects and then see them drive taxis in the large cities. As in other situations, the process of reception and insertion is incomplete, in particular in the adoption of a mechanism to recognize the diplomas obtained in certain developing countries.

<sup>19</sup> Michaels opens an interesting discussion on the relation between the liberal ideology of equality of individuals from different cultures and the gradual diminution in the struggle for economic equality of social classes. In his words: "the trick is to think of inequality as a consequence of our prejudices rather than as a consequence of our social system and thus to turn the project of creating a more equalitarian society into the project of getting people (ourselves and, especially, others) to stop being racist, sexist, classist homophobes. This book is an attack on that trick." (2006, 20) This is the opposite of what the researchers and works around the Metropolis group of Demetrios Papademetriou from the Migration Policy Institute, who has "improved the trick". This is also one of the targets of the criticism by Abu-Ladan and Gabriel (2008). In short, we have here a classic opposition of two conceptions of social sciences: a critical and normative conception in the perspective of the global society, and another as manager in a functionalist perspective at the service of the local society.

<sup>20</sup> There would be a better kind of development, for example, for the some hundred countries with a score under 0.8 on the HDI developed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP 2009a).

<sup>21</sup> The works by Saez (2009), Piketty, Saez (2003) and Domhoff (2009) confirm aberrations such as the fact that 1% of the population of the USA owns 34.3% of the country's wealth and the first quintile owns 84.6%. See also Milanovic (2005). According to Statistics Canada, 20% of the population received 42% of the income in 2007 (Stat-Can 2007). For a Quebecois perspective, see Couturier and Schepper (2010).

<sup>22</sup> For example, *Cahiers de Recherche Sociologique*, No 27, 29 and 41-42.

<sup>23</sup> For example, the 2007 IPCC report.

<sup>24</sup> A special issue of a popular science magazine carried the title: "Water: are we going to run out?" A textbox then asked the following question: "The quantity of water on Earth has not changed. The water that the dinosaurs drank millions of years ago is the same that falls from the sky today. But will there be enough for a more populated world?" (NGF 2010, 3). See also Petrella (2008).

<sup>25</sup> Indeed, the great wave of deregulation in the 1980s removed all the regulations that the USA's New Deal and its Canadian and European equivalent had established to control the unbridled capitalism that had led the West into the great crisis from 1930 to 1945. See in particular Aglietta, (1976), second edition (1982) and Aglietta and Brender (1984), as well as Beauchemin, J., G. Bourque and J. Duchastel (1995) and Dostaler (2009).

<sup>26</sup> The eight large industrialised countries are the United States, Japan, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Canada and Russia.

<sup>27</sup> In addition to the G8 countries are China, Brazil, India, Mexico, South Korea, Turkey, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, South Africa and the European Union.

<sup>28</sup> NAFTA, North American Free Trade Agreement.

<sup>29</sup> APEC, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.

<sup>30</sup> The concept therefore refers to the organization of the relation between the economy and politics in a social "system" whose political philosophy or vision, was initially theorized by John Locke in the second of the *Two Treatises of Government* (1960).

<sup>31</sup> See the two tomes of *Dialectique et Société* (1986 and 1986b), as well as *L'oubli de la société* (2002) and *L'impasse de la globalisation* (2008).

<sup>32</sup> Freitag, *L'abime de la liberté*, 2011, Montreal, Liber.

<sup>33</sup> This "essential" criticism of liberalism has already been formulated by Rousseau in *Du Contrat Social* in 1762.

<sup>34</sup> Pinard (2000) underlines the process whereby the XVIth century entrepreneur organized his workshop effectively and rationally for his own productive ends. He then organized the production process both upstream and downstream, as for example the enclosures in England that connect the countryside and the city in a single process (Polanyi 1983). He subsequently organized the labor market and the distribution system, before planning whole worldwide sectors for the extraction, transformation and consumption of merchandise, to finally organize all society to serve his own objectives. This is the point at which we find ourselves, neoliberalism, whereby all of society is organized to serve the production of goods and the production and reproduction of financial capital. This is incidentally the aim of the MAI: to systematize this arrangement of liberalism at a superior level, which gives precedence to society's economic interests over political principles.

<sup>35</sup> It should be reminded that several trillion dollars have been invested in the United States, Canada, Europe and Asia, to buy out the bad debts of banks, financial institutions, General Motors, Chrysler, etc.. It is difficult to imagine a trillion dollars. It is written like this, 1,000,000,000,000, and represents approximately four years of the total budget of the Canadian government in 2008 dollars.

<sup>36</sup> McKibben (2010) insists on saying that the impact of contemporary way of life has been like this for two generations, and we should now speak about planet "Eearth" with two A' to indicate that we no longer inhabit the same place as our ancestors.

<sup>37</sup> The federal budget speech for the financial year 2010 was called *Plotting the way for growth and employment* (Canada 2010), while

an article in *Globe and Mail*, published on 18 May 2010, bore the title "It's the economy that counts and the rest is just noise, Harper tells students". See Clark (2010). The Conservative party's entire electoral campaign of spring 2011 focused on economic stability and job creation.

<sup>38</sup> According to Glen Hodgen, the president of the Conference Board of Canada, the country will need to welcome increasing numbers of immigrants every year to increase its productivity and help to pay for the pension plan. He recently stated: "We are a much older country, we will have fewer workers to fuel the system (...) and this will weaken our economy. A slower growth of the workforce leads to slower economic growth." Freeman (2010).

<sup>39</sup> According to various studies and compilations, only a third of the world population lives in decent conditions, a third is nearing decent conditions and a third still lives on a dollar a day. Milanovic (2005, pp. 63-65), UNDP, tables 1, 14 and 15 in particular (2009). The polarization of wealth also emerges among the population which lives well. In the United States alone, "the average income of the 400 families with the highest income, expressed in 1990 dollars, passed from 17 to 87 million dollars, being multiplied by five in real terms. During the same period, the percentage of the total national revenue received by these 400 families tripled, rising from 0.52% in 1992 to 1.59% in 2007. (Damon 2010).

<sup>40</sup> For an in depth discussion on the issues of world population relating to the ecology, see Cafaro and Christ (2012).

<sup>41</sup> Researchers constantly remark on the acceleration of the climate transformation. A report by the World Wildlife Fund, published on 2 September 2009, sounded the alarm once more: "We thought by 2050, multi-year [sea] ice would be cut in half (...). Well, it happened in 2007." Weber, 2009.

<sup>42</sup> Contrary to what was said in certain studies, in particular those of the UNDP (2009b, chapter 4), on the transfers of funds from immigrants to their families in their countries of origin, it appears to us that this type of monetary transfer cannot compensate for the lost local know-how on health, science, education, etc. These transfers allow the consumption of goods and services. But what can a sick farmer in West Africa do with 100,000 CFA francs (250\$ CAN) sent by his child living in Canada if there is no doctor within a radius of 200km? What can a shepherd do with 1 million CFA francs (2,500\$ CAN) to water his herd during a drought? See also Goldin and Katz (2008).

<sup>43</sup> See <http://www.populationmondiale.com>

<sup>44</sup> By balanced development, we are referring to the total existence of human communities, being the cultural, political and economic development of each human society. See Boudreau 2007, 185-186.