The Trudeau Foundation

Papers

VOLUME 1 • 2009

An independent and non-partisan Canadian charity, the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation was established in 2001 as a living memorial to the former Prime Minister by his family, friends, and colleagues. The Foundation supports outstanding creative thinkers who make meaningful contributions to critical social issues through scholarships, fellowships, mentorships and public interaction events. To date, the Foundation has granted hundreds of major awards to top researchers and highly accomplished individuals, in Canada and abroad.

Human Rights and Dignity | Responsible Citizenship
Canada in the World | People & their Natural Environment

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Preface

It has been my honour and privilege to be a part of The Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation since its inception. At its best, good public policy can transform opportunities for individuals and broader communities, but only if it is built upon a sound foundation of critical research and analysis. I am convinced that there are few worthier goals than to make a substantive contribution to the dialogue between outstanding scholars in the humanities and social sciences and public policy makers across Canada and beyond.

The central themes of the Foundation's work—Human Rights and Dignity, Responsible Citizenship, Canada in the World and People in Their Natural Environment—encompass the critical challenges facing modern societies and help us to formulate answers to the questions *What is right? What is for the public good? What is just?*

Each year, the Foundation selects five Fellows who have demonstrated both their ability to make original contributions to these questions and the courage to engage in public debate. Our hope is that, with our support, they will be able to devote themselves more freely to original, fair, and critical thinking. Since 2003, 34 Fellows have received awards, and the evidence is clear: these exceptional researchers, thinkers, writers and professors are creating a wealth of knowledge and insight.

In 2008, the Foundation decided to initiate the Trudeau Lectures so that the ideas generated by the Trudeau Fellows might become more accessible to Canadian scholars and policy makers. Each year, distinguished lecturers offer a series of five original and thought-provoking presentations across the country linked to the themes of the Foundation. As we work in collaboration with host universities, and through the publication of the lectures, we hope to accelerate the dissemination of the Trudeau Fellows' research, observations and proposals for sound and progressive public policies.

I am delighted that through this publication series, the thoughtful reflections contained in these lectures will have the opportunity to find the wider audience they so clearly deserve.

Roy L. **Heenan,** o.c., q.c.,
Chairman, October 2009

The *Papers*… A Beginning

When embarking on any work, wrote the great Italian author Cesare Pavese, nothing is more important than the "richness of the point of view." When I consider the five texts assembled in this first edition of *The Trudeau Foundation Papers,* I have absolutely no doubt that this criterion has been fulfilled.

The authors are all exceptional academics and renowned researchers, carefully chosen as Trudeau Fellows because of their intellectual rigour and commitment to social engagement. But in addition to this academic standard and sense of commitment, and as important, each Fellow has developed keen personal observations rooted in his or her own experience, the ability to discover new connections and relationships, and the gift of being able to articulate the relevance of particular insights within specific contexts. Each Fellow speaks with a unique and deeply individual voice from a very dynamic and sophisticated point of view.

This predilection for individuality and originality animates all Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation programs. Those who knew the man whose memory the Foundation honours would scarcely be surprised. Pierre Trudeau himself said it best: "To 'ready-made' or second-hand ideas, I have always preferred my own." Trudeau showed

a passion for fashioning original ideas and expressing them in the first person, without shying away from debate. The Foundation exists to reward and encourage the virtues of our former Prime Minister, including the energetic audacity of exceptional individuals willing to wrestle with critical contemporary questions.

The Trudeau Lectures are a series of public talks that feature the work of our Trudeau Fellows and publicize their achievements in areas of the country where they have yet to enjoy the reputation they clearly deserve. Published here in this first edition of the *Papers,* these lectures are unique in Canada. While the Fellows are inevitably focused on themes dear to the Foundation, we do not impose either the topic or tone of the series. We do require the usual rigour expected of a public intellectual, but with an over-arching desire to reach a wider audience and as a step toward public engagement, we also ask that the Fellows avoid the usual forms of scholarly communication. Consequently, as you shall see, some of the text is experimental in nature. Some have chosen the voice of autobiographical discourse, some make proposals for social action, others debate.

The Foundation decided to focus its efforts on four areas of research and reflection: human rights, citizenship, the environment and international affairs. This was no arbitrary choice, for the problems that arise in these four areas are, in fact, the crucial problems of democracy at the start of this 21st century: How do we encourage the exercise of human rights? What are the definition and obligations of citizenship? How do we prevent environmental degradation? What are the implications of globalization for Canadians?

Each Trudeau Fellow works within their own sphere, while remaining committed to the essential work of clarifying the relevance of their research to the themes of the Foundation, with the goal of proposing solutions. It is well recognized that the knowledge produced in the social sciences and humanities is not always directly comparable to that produced in the natural or life sciences. It is not a

question of maturity or rigour: in all the sciences, true knowledge is tenuous and necessarily includes some uncertainty because it is subject to constant revision—sociology or history is no different here from physics or biology. The difference lies elsewhere, particularly in the range of reactions people might have to knowledge that directly concerns them—whether they use it to advantage, for example, or take umbrage.

Shana Poplack is an example of someone who is passionate about the use of French in a minority milieu. To that end, she misses no opportunity to provoke reactions even in the very communities she studies. The evening she gave her Trudeau Lecture at the University of Moncton, the reactions of the audience were palpable, shifting in response to the way her words resonated with the people's predispositions. Eric Helleiner's Trudeau Lecture at the University of Lethbridge took place right in the middle of the financial storm of autumn 2008, reassuring a community hard hit by the market crash and failure of the global economy.

In St. John's, Newfoundland, the room was packed on the evening William Rees gave his Trudeau Lecture on environmental policy. His tone was solemn and his remarks sombre to an audience looking for frank answers about ways to tug on the reins of a society intoxicated with growth and expansion. Joseph Yvon Thériault, a self-described "poacher" of ideas, challenged some preconceptions held by members of the audience who might have preferred to consider aspects of Canadian society, absent elements of our history and politics.

I was moved by the Trudeau Lecture given by Will Coleman at the University of Northern British Columbia. The talk was brilliant and erudite, a great researcher's insight into an extraordinary array of questions and ideas prompted by globalization, but the real event that took place that evening was in the faces and eyes of the students. By illustrating the intimate connections between his personal journey

and the tools of political analysis, by demonstrating that it is possible to detach oneself in order to produce original and important scientific work, and by patiently explaining how people can step outside themselves without betraying their origins or denying their people, Will Coleman proved that he is also an educator *extraordinaire*.

The Trudeau Lectures and the *Papers* will continue to evolve. The Foundation has already identified ten Fellows who will participate in the next two series, taking up the role of public intellectuals, revealing their passions, exploring the hypotheses and understandings that they believe to be critical to considerations of the public good. Of course, a lecture does not provide sufficient time to explicate a system of thought. Ideas need time to germinate. The Foundation is convinced it is playing a crucial role here, which is to give researchers a public venue to express their ideas where they can freely share their certainties alongside their doubts, their new insights and perhaps their indignation at the lack of attention paid to older ones.

This space for expression already exists within the university, where it is obviously jealously guarded. But we know for certain that it is not enough. The social sciences and humanities require as many opportunities for public engagement as possible. Our societies are bombarded with disjointed information, industry advertorials, and contradictory solutions to problems. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the public often meets so-called experts or political platforms with mistrust or even outright hostility. We are not seeking rehashed ideas, peremptory retorts or trite slogans. Rather we desire tools to help us understand, frameworks to help us make choices, new ideas to ground our actions.

In truth, in our collective spheres, even the standard approaches to "popularizing" academic knowledge often lead to an impasse, if not outright misunderstanding. It is critical that researchers in the social sciences and humanities not place themselves outside or above society. The challenge of discovering the right voice and the

appropriate stance *vis-à-vis* knowledge remains, but it is clear that there is a certain urgency for us to engage in an open dialogue on the issues that disquiet democracies. These five Trudeau lectures are permeated with this desire, and are authentic invitations by outstanding intellectuals. It is a beginning.

Pierre-Gerlier **Forest**
President, The Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation

William D. Coleman
Trudeau Fellow 2007, University of Waterloo

BIOGRAPHY

William D. Coleman holds the Center for International Governance Chair in Globalization and Public Policy at the Balsillie School of International Affairs and is Professor of Political Science at the University of Waterloo. He was the Founding Director of the Institute on Globalization and the Human Condition at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. Born in Nelson, British Columbia, he received his B.A. from Carleton University and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

He has written five books: *The Independence Movement in Quebec, 1945-1980* (University of Toronto Press, 1984), *Business and Politics: A Study in Collective Action* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), (with Michael M. Atkinson) *The State, Business and Industrial Change in Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 1989). This book was awarded the Charles H. Levine Prize for the best book in the fields of public administration and public policy by the Structure of Government Research Committee of the International Political Science Association. His two most recent books are *Financial Services, Globalization and Domestic Policy Change: A Comparison of North America and the European Union* (Macmillan, 1996) and *Agriculture in the New Global Economy* (with Wyn Grant and Timothy Josling) (Edward Elgar, 2004). He has also edited three books in the public policy field. He is the Project Director of the Globalization and Autonomy Series that is being published by the University of British Columbia Press. The first two books in this series, *Global Ordering: Institutions and Autonomy in a Changing World*, edited by Louis W. Pauly and William D. Coleman, and *Renegotiating Community:*

Interdisciplinary Perspectives, Global Contexts, edited by Diana Brydon and William D. Coleman, were published in May 2008. The second two were published in 2009: *Empires and Autonomy: Moments in the History of Globalization,* edited with Stephen Streeter and John Weaver, and *Unsettled Legitimacy: Power and Authority in a Global Era,* edited with Steven Bernstein. In addition to these books, he has written articles dealing with Quebec politics, business-government relations, changes in agricultural policy, the making of financial services policy and globalization that have been published in journals in Canada, the United States and Europe.

In 1996, he received the Konrad Adenauer Research Award from the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung in Bonn, Germany, awarded annually to a scholar in the humanities and social sciences in Canada. He used this award to pursue further research on agricultural policy in Germany and in the European Union. In January 2002, he was awarded a Major Collaborative Research Initiatives grant of 2.5 million dollars (CDN) by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Together with 40 colleagues from across Canada and another 43 from outside Canada, he studied the relationships between "Globalization and Autonomy." He was named a Fellow by the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation in May 2007.

He is a 1994 winner of a Canada-wide 3M Teaching Fellow awarded by the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. In 1997, he was awarded an Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations Teaching Award. McMaster University awarded him the President's Award for Educational Leadership in 2002.

ABSTRACT

Penticton (BC) is a very different environment today than it was in the late 1950s and 1960s when William D. Coleman was growing up there. He has seen change over the years and, as a scholar and researcher, he has pondered its impact on his province. What does globalization mean for British Columbia? How does it influence us, our current and future lives? Do we have to feel overwhelmed by what is going on around us or can we influence and shape the way globalization affects our province today and into the future?

LECTURE

Globalization and British Columbia: A Long History?

University of Northern British Columbia,

OCTOBER 23, 2008

Globalization is taking place in local places, small and large, across the world and many of those living in these places do not even realize it. Globalization is not out there in places like the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank; it is not something far away. It is taking place here, right here in Prince George, at the University of Northern British Columbia, and in British Columbia, an important part of Canada. Globalization brings change to the way you and I live our lives today. There is nothing inevitable, or unchangeable, or unstoppable about globalization. The processes that together we call globalization today were started by us, by our leaders, our inventors, our creative thinkers, our transnational corporations, our governments. These processes did not just materialize out of thin air; human beings like you and me and institutions that we have created took decisions that opened the door to globalization. So the other point that I will emphasize is that if you do not like what globalizing processes have brought, if you believe that they have undermined social justice or human rights or even the very quality of life you have, you can act. You have agency. You can work toward changing these processes.

I am going to make these arguments in several steps. I will begin by speaking a little bit about myself personally and how I came to

be a scholar who has devoted now about 15 years to the study of globalization. I will then turn to talk about globalization and explain how we can understand the ways it is changing our lives and why I think that we can challenge those aspects of globalization that we find wrong-headed or harmful. I will outline what I think globalization is, providing you with a short definition. Then I am going to take you back to the small town in British Columbia where I grew up, Penticton; I will point to some of the aspects of that town that I remember as a boy and then use these memories to comment upon globalization in the present day. I am sure that some of the changes that I note about Penticton, my home town, will be meaningful to you here in Prince George and to those of you who come from other parts of the country and the world. I will then use that definition to talk about globalization in the areas of culture, immigration, indigenous peoples and the economy.

Becoming an academic interested in globalization

I was born in Nelson, still a small town in the eastern Kootenay region of BC. When I was six years old, my father switched jobs and we moved to Penticton, another small town here in BC, some 13,000 people. It is the city where I grew up with my four brothers, my sister, my grandfather on my mother's side, and my parents. My mother still lives there today in the same house in which I grew up. In thinking about my journey from there to being able to deliver a lecture today to you on globalization, several snapshots come back to me that affected how I took that journey.

22 November 1963. I was sitting in my Grade 8 English class taught by Mrs. Moss in McNicoll Park School when an announcement came over the public address system from the principal, Mr. Donovan. His voice was shaking and he said that he was sad to report that John F. Kennedy, the President of the United States, had been shot in Dallas, Texas. About 45 minutes later, he came on the PA system again to

announce that President Kennedy had died and he dismissed school for the day. I went home and down into the basement where we kept our little black and white television set. My grandfather, then 85 years old, had pulled his chair up right in front of the television. He was sitting, slumped forward, his face no more than 20 centimetres away from the screen, and tears were rolling uncontrollably down his cheeks.

I mention this event because my grandfather was passionate about politics and what was going on in the world around him. He differed from my parents in that regard. I found his passion infectious and the way he opened to the world with his heart moving. I wanted to be passionate like him.

Grade 12 History Class. I took a course on European, particularly British, history in Grade 12 from a new teacher at the school, Mr. Roald. He was a quiet man, very serious about history, and I learned a great deal from him. Toward the end of the course, he had a small party at his house for our class. At that party, he pulled his bound M.A. thesis off his bookshelf and showed it to me. It was the first time that I had actually seen something like a thesis. He explained the research he had done for it and then mentioned he was working on a Ph.D part-time from Gonzaga University in Washington State. He talked excitedly for a few minutes about the research he was doing for his doctorate. It is hard to explain why, but seeing that bound thesis and hearing him talk about research swept over me. I thought to myself that it would be wonderful to be able to explore things deeply that I did not understand in that way.

Carleton University, February 1971. I left BC to go to Carleton University in Ottawa for a number of reasons including wanting to see another part of the country. I was not sure what my major subject would be when I left but had settled upon Political Science by my second year. Living in residence near Colonel By Drive, I woke up one morning in my third year, in October 1970, to see army

tanks driving toward the center of the city past the campus. It was the time of the FLQ (Front de libération du Québec) crisis and the War Measures Act. It was a momentous time for someone like myself majoring in Political Science. A few months after that event a group of radical Quebec nationalists came to the Carleton campus to speak against the decision to use martial law the previous fall and to outline their hopes for the creation of an independent, socialist Quebec. One of these men in particular, Michel Chartrand, a trade union leader from Montreal amazed me. His eloquence, his passion, his commitment to social justice, and his devotion to an independent Quebec – both moved me and puzzled me. I had never seen, live in person, someone who seemed so passionate about social justice, so certain about his beliefs, and so confident that he knew the way ahead that had to be followed. I realized too that I could not be like him, so confident in how to change the world. Rather I came away from the meeting wanting to understand why they were so angry. I wanted to do some research.

Graduate Studies, University of Chicago. I was fortunate to be accepted to pursue graduate studies at the University of Chicago where I ultimately wrote my dissertation on the independence movement in Quebec and why it existed, which also was published later as my first book. I found myself in a university environment that was far more intense than I had expected. It was intimidating and often frightening. There is much that I could say about it but tonight I will mention only one aspect of my graduate education. I had to do three years of course work, involving 27 courses over that period. Most surprising here was the fact that not one of these was required. I was free to take courses in any department or school at the university; in fact, I was encouraged to do so. I was told that I was learning to become a social scientist, not a political scientist. It was my first exposure to interdisciplinarity: being pushed to consider diverse theories, different methodologies, and different disciplines to focus

on problems. Learning to think and write in an interdisciplinary way was crucial to my later career, especially once I began to do research on phenomena as complex as globalization.

In summary, passion about politics, the idea of research, commitments to social justice, interdisciplinarity—each of these influences from my youth and early adulthood prepared me to be open to studying the world and to be predisposed to carry out research on the contemporary phase of globalization that has intensified its force over the past quarter century.

Defining Globalization

Globalizing processes have become the subject of daily commentary in the mass media, and a common reference in the discourses of politicians, corporate executives, social movements, and a wide range of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Whether invoked publicly or privately, the word globalization carries a strong emotive content, signalling a position in major debates of the day, whether to liberalize trade further, to accept that environmental warming is real, to resist Western cultural influences, to give support to human rights for women, or to detect the legacies of colonialism and imperialism.

Over the past 15 years, academics have been wrestling with the question: what is globalization? As often occurs in the academy, however, we find that there are many answers. Still, the word "global" can be counterposed to "national," "regional," or "local" and given meaning in this way. Scholte (2005) offers that the word "global" might be profitably understood as referring to phenomena that are "transplanetary" or "transworld." In this reading, globalization refers to processes, specifically the spread and growth of transplanetary connections between people (Scholte, 2005, p. 59). This growth might take place in economic, political, cultural, migration, military, or other realms.

Nor is there anything inevitable or necessary about this growth. Transplanetary connections have been growing for centuries, if not

millennia. Even if we look back only a century, we note that the last half of the nineteenth century and the first fourteen years of the twentieth were characterized by accelerating growth in transplanetary connections in most areas of social life, albeit mediated by nation-states and imperial powers. After the First World War, however, these connections shrank or were abruptly ended by economic, political, and other actors to the point that the levels of human migration and economic interdependence at the end of the nineteenth century would not be seen again until the 1980s (Bordo *et al.*, 1999; Hirst & Thompson, 1999; Bairoch, 2000). Similarly more recent events like the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City on 11 September 2001 or the collapse of the Doha Round trade negotiations or the current financial crisis have led many to ask "Is globalization over?"

Most observers, even those who are skeptical, do allow, however, that the growth of transplanetary connections has accelerated in the period following the Second World War, and particularly since the late 1970s. There are varying explanations for this acceleration. At the heart of most of these is the continued dynamism of capitalism coupled with innovations in information and communication technologies that have permitted transplanetary connections to become more "supraterritorial," to use a common term.

These new forms of planetary connections and their consequences are only now beginning to be understood. Economists argue that they appear to make financial crises more severe and more difficult to overcome. Wars like the US invasion of Iraq, the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, and the civil war in Sri Lanka tend to very quickly become global spectacles, leading some scholars to coin the term "global civil wars." Others suggest that imaginations are expanded by these changes. It is easier for individuals to place themselves in a world context and they are more likely to imagine themselves doing new things in different ways than before.

Based on this discussion, I define globalization as follows for this lecture: "Globalization is the transformative growth of connections among people across the planet. In the contemporary era, many of these connections take a supraterritorial form. In ever more profound ways, globalization ties together what people do, what they experience, how they perceive that experience, and how they reshape their lives. In short, individuals and communities begin to see the world as one place and to imagine new roles for themselves within it."

For understanding the current period, the most important term in this definition is that of supraterritorial: it means that the connections are less confined by the territorial boundaries of nation-states than they were in the past. Some examples: internet chat rooms, world financial markets, spread of diseases like SARS and HIV/AIDS, changes in global climate.

Some scholars argue that the combination of these new technologies and the growth of transworld relationships have led to new horizontal organizational forms that compete increasingly with the hierarchical structures of nation-states and their bureaucracies. Manuel Castells (1999) describes it as a "network society." Since the information technology revolution, networks have become more efficient forms of social organization due to their flexibility, their scalability and their survivability.

The network structural form becomes increasingly predominant in the economy as evidenced by global financial markets, transformations in international trade, regionalization of production and the emergence of the "network enterprise" and global business networks. Some see these networks as having nodes of varying importance in cities around the world. They argue that the linkages between cities are now as important if not more important than the linkages between countries.

Networks also become more and more important in the realm of culture. Cultural expressions of all kinds are fundamentally changed

and reshaped as networks permit the formation of an electronic hypertext that enables television, radio, print-media, film, video, art and the Internet to be integrated and networked into an increasingly global system. This global system departs from the hierarchical approaches of the past in being more *interactive*, more *two-way*. We can watch things on You Tube, comment on them in blogs, upload our own videos as a response and so on. Similarly, in the political realm, as the need for continuous cooperation among states in most areas of governmental activity grows exponentially, we find transnational information networks, enforcement networks and harmonization networks prominent in the executive, legislative and even judicial realms of government (Slaughter, 2004). Corresponding to this growth of official transnational networks is the networking of social movements, often characterized as the emergence of a global civil society.

Nonetheless, this expansion in the global coverage of interdependence, its importance in daily lives of people and the rapidity of the social changes involved are all more pronounced in the wealthy countries as a group than between the wealthy countries and those with lesser wealth. What changes over time is not the degree of interdependence between the wealthier societies and the poorer ones, but the movement of some societies to join the club of the wealthy. Moreover, the changes are such that particular parts of poorer societies might be incorporated into these relations of interdependence, thereby intensifying the differences between these parts and the given society as a whole (the Bangalore phenomenon). Even in the wealthier societies, gaps widen between the rich and the poor, as shown by a report released recently by the OECD, the club of the wealthy countries. And the gap has become deeper in Canada than in most other countries in the club.

In each of these respects, globalization processes contribute to deepening fissures between those societies participating in globalization and those sidelined by it, and within those societies,

including our own, between those who are part of global networks and those who are excluded from them. For many countries outside the wealthy core, considerable despair and difficulties come from this widening gap, when contrasted with the hope in many of them, for example, that existed at the time of decolonization and independence half a century ago.

Globalization and British Columbia

For this discussion of globalization and British Columbia, I am going to return to my youth. I will provide you with some snapshots of life in Penticton then and use these to comment on how things might be different now.

Culture

Let me begin by talking about music. Listening to music in Penticton in the 1960s was a far more limited and isolated practice than it is today. We had one radio station, CKOK. On weekdays, it played rock music for one hour, between 4:00 and 5:00 in the afternoon in a program called "The Guys and Gals Show." Eventually, the station expanded its programming, adding a new show called the "Homework Hit Parade." In the evening, between 7:00 and 8:00 PM, a disk jockey would play songs from the Top 10 Hits of the week according to Billboard Magazine and take phone calls about homework. "I am having trouble with question 7 in Mr. Donovan's grade 8 math class. Does anyone have an idea how to do it?" And occasionally answers would be provided by someone else phoning in. We purchased music from the one local music store, usually a small record called a "45" which had one song on each side, and they cost $1.00 each. The store would have the top hits in 45s available lined up on the wall behind the counter. On television, the only exposure to important rock groups of the day occurred on Sunday nights when the Ed Sullivan Show from New York City aired on CBC. Usually, he would have one popular music singer or group on and they would

perform one song. No "Much Music," no videos. The mountains blocked out radio stations from Vancouver where, rumour had it, amazingly, they had a station that played rock music all day long. A few people had cable television so they got three additional channels to CBC, but there was not much music on those either.

In simply describing this situation, you can easily see how much things have changed in the past 40 years. If we refer back to our definition of globalization as the spread of transplanetary connections some now being supraterritorial, just think about it. With the internet, there is immediate access to all kinds of music from every part of the world. A simple review of the playlists on your own MP3 players is testament to the globalization of music.

But it is not only the distribution of music, but the form and production of music that has changed. During a meeting of the Tunisian sub-group in my research project, a colleague in the field of ethnomusicology once played three pieces of music. All three were in Arabic. The first one was a traditional Tunisian song, produced in Tunis, and it seemed "foreign" to my ears because it had no regular beat and the instruments were ones not only that I had not heard before but also that many of the younger Tunisian scholars in the room were not familiar with either. She then played the same song reproduced some 40 years later in what she called a "modern" style, produced in Egypt and designed to sell across the Arab world and perhaps beyond. What was changed was the introduction of a regular Western beat, and somewhat to my surprise, the room changed when the music came on: people began moving to the beat around the room. So through more transplanetary connections, these Tunisians had absorbed a certain westernization of the music and responded to it more physically than they did to the traditional song. Finally, she played a "world music" version of the same song, one that is distributed around the world as part of the world music genre and where transplanetary connections play an even more pronounced

role. This one differed from the previous two because it featured the introduction of the electric guitar, western-style drums, and a couple of instruments from the Indian sub-continent. And it was digitally mixed in three different cities: Paris, New York and Mumbai. For this piece of music, the younger people in the room smiled and moved, obviously happy, while the older ones looked confused.

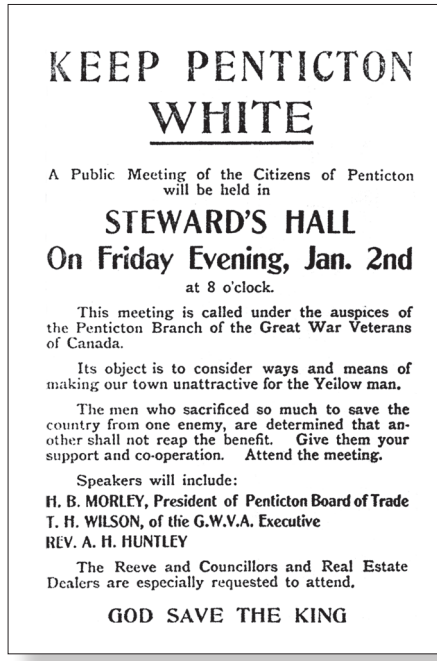
The discussions around the table that day focused on a simple question: were Tunisians in danger of losing their culture? It is an important one in studies of globalization and culture. Some social scientists and public intellectuals have hypothesized that this latest phase of globalization will gradually lead to the spread of a global culture highly influenced by Western, particularly American, values and practices across the world. Others offer a similar hypothesis but place more emphasis on global capitalism and suggest that a highly materialistic and consumerist culture built around commodification will become dominant. In both hypotheses, accordingly, contemporary globalization is understood to bring an acceleration of the loss of distinctive cultural practices, languages and communities in the world.

Research tells us, however, that things are more complicated than that. As people become more aware of the world as a single place, as they are confronted more directly with what differentiates them from other communities around the world, a peculiar thing happens. They tend to think more about what differentiates them from these other communities and then they often begin to accentuate these differences rather than emphasizing what is shared with others. I could give many examples and I will offer you briefly one of these. As the world has globalized, as transplanetary connections have grown over the past 40 years, we have also seen a significant rise in religious fundamentalism at the same time. People usually think about Islam when they hear these words but it is not only Islam that features those emphasizing a return to fundamentals.

Christian evangelicals in North America and South America, particular branches of Judaism, and Hindu fundamentalism in India are all examples of rapid growth in these types of religious practices. In the Roman Catholic Church, the rather liberal Popes of the 50s, 60s and 70s, John the XXIII and Paul VI, have been followed by very conservative ones, John Paul II and now Benedict XVI. Similar to other fundamentalist changes, these latter Popes have retreated from the ecumenical movement of 40 and 50 years ago to emphasizing basic values. So on the surface, places in the world might look more similar because of McDonald's and Starbucks and Wal Mart being found most places in the world to some degree. Underneath, though, globalization also seems to lead many people to see differences. Why else would we have more ethnic, communal, often civic wars occurring now than perhaps at any other time in history – Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Russia, the Congo, Uganda, Peru, Kenya, Myanmar…I could go on.

Immigration

The poster advocating for Penticton "to remain white" [Figure 1] was posted in the town in the early 1920s; it represented a type of racism and a fear of the other that was in the air at the time. Some 40 years later, the Penticton of my youth was also very homogenous. When I look at the group photograph of the 300 plus students who graduated from PenHi (Penticton Secondary School) in the spring of 1968, every one of them was Caucasian, white. All were Christian. I did not meet the first Jewish person in my life until I came to Carleton. In fact, the city is not all that different today. I will argue that the interaction between globalization and immigration has changed several of our large cities in profound ways, thereby opening the gap between these cities and smaller towns and rural areas in Canada.



KEEP PENTICTON
WHITE

A Public Meeting of the Citizens of Penticton will be held in

STEWARD'S HALL
On Friday Evening, Jan. 2nd
at 8 o'clock.

This meeting is called under the auspices of the Penticton Branch of the Great War Veterans of Canada.

Its object is to consider ways and means of making our town unattractive for the Yellow man.

The men who sacrificed so much to save the country from one enemy, are determined that another shall not reap the benefit. Give them your support and co-operation. Attend the meeting.

Speakers will include:
H. B. MORLEY, President of Penticton Board of Trade
T. H. WILSON, of the G.W.V.A. Executive
REV. A. H. HUNTLEY

The Reeve and Councillors and Real Estate Dealers are especially requested to attend.

GOD SAVE THE KING

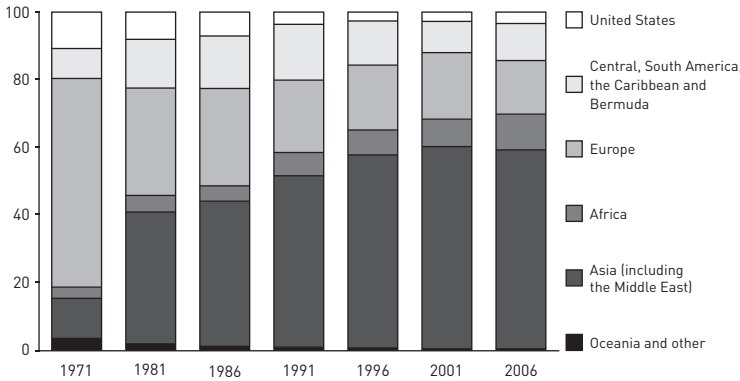
Figure 1.

Changing sources for immigration

The building of transplanetary connections through the movements of large numbers of people is not new either in Canada or elsewhere. Canada received very large numbers of immigrants from the British Isles in the late 18th and throughout the 19th centuries and then from other parts of Europe at the end of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century. Proportionately, the numbers of immigrants received at that time were at least as high, if not higher than the contemporary period. After the end of the Second World War and continuing up to the present day, Canada has again received large numbers of immigrants relative to its population size. In the 50-year period from 1961 to 2001, the country welcomed over

4.5 million immigrants, representing 15 per cent of the population of the country. That is a large number and few countries have increased their population through immigration to that degree in the world.

In the late 1960s, in a globalizing move, Canada moved away from the somewhat racist immigration policy that had been in place since the end of the First World War [Graph 1]. The country decided to accept immigrants from almost anywhere as long as they met certain defined criteria. This globalizing move has worked. Since that time, our population has diversified significantly in terms of the cultural backgrounds and geographical places from which immigrants come. Before 1961, immigrants from the UK, other parts of Europe and the US accounted for close to 95 per cent of immigrants. Today, these countries account for only 22 per cent of our immigrants, while the number from Asia has risen from 2.7 per cent in the earlier period to over 58 per cent today. We also receive more from Africa and from the Caribbean and Latin America than in the past. On each of the usual criteria of culture—language, religion, other cultural practices, the arts—these immigrants are more different from the long-standing dominant English and French groups than their predecessors at the end of the 19th century.



Graph 1.

One indication of this difference comes in religion. Just over 78 per cent of the non-immigrant population is Christian, and another 16 per cent say that they have no religion, but are probably socialized to Christian norms. So a mere 6 per cent of the non-immigrant population is not Christian, with those in the Jewish population the largest group of these (just under 1 per cent). If we look at the immigrant population, it is much more diverse and ever increasingly so. For example, for the period 1996-2001, Christians accounted for 37 per cent, Muslims for 18 per cent, Buddhists for 3.7 per cent, Hindus for 6.3 per cent, Sikhs for 4.5 per cent. The number professing no religion had risen to 22.7 per cent, probably reflecting the strong numbers of immigrants from Mainland China.

This increase in the cultural diversity of the immigrant population is not experienced equally in all parts of Canada. It is more pronounced in the English-speaking provinces, particularly Ontario and British Columbia, and within these provinces in the cities of Toronto and Vancouver respectively. From the point of view of globalization theory, these two cities have evolved more than other Canadian cities to fit the mould of what some scholars have termed "global cities." About 44 per cent of Toronto's population is foreign born, compared to 40 per cent in Miami, a target of Latin American immigrants in the US, 38 per cent in Vancouver, 31 per cent in Sydney and Los Angeles, 24 per cent in New York City, and 18 per cent in Montreal.

Statistics Canada, our national statistics bureau, has carried out studies of what the cities of Toronto and Vancouver might look like in 2017. The studies show that over 50 per cent of Toronto's population and close to 50 per cent of Vancouver's population will be from visible minorities. In Toronto, ten years from now, about 18 per cent of the total population, some 1.2 million persons, will be immigrants from South Asia and 12 per cent from China; in Vancouver, about 23 per cent will be from China and 11 per cent from South Asia. Of all the immigrants to Canada from China and South Asia, around 73 per cent of them will settle in these two cities.

These developments are significant because they suggest that Canada will be adding several cultural communities to the long-standing British-origin and French-origin ones. They are sufficiently different from the dominant ones that assimilation is unlikely in the short or even medium term. Nor is assimilation any longer the policy of the government. Moreover, these changes are creating deep differences within Canada between the largest cities on the one side and the smaller cities, towns, and rural areas on the other. Whereas multiculturalism might make sense to those living in the largest cities, it might be viewed negatively outside those cities.

Reinforcement of cultural communities

The story about immigration and globalization does not end here, however. If we are to look back half a century and try to compare the situation of immigrants from South Asia and East Asia then to their situation now, it is very different. In fact, it is easier for immigrants to retain their culture from home, if not to reinforce it once they live here. In the past it was highly expensive to travel, so immigrants might go 10, 20 or 30 years before they could travel home, if they did at all. Long-distance telephone connections were also very expensive, so the telephone would only be used in crucial situations, such as a death in the family. Access to cultural developments at home was much more difficult, such that people's attachment to their home culture was based on an imaginary one, locked into the time that they left their home country. They were often shocked when and if they had a chance to return home. They often could not understand and accept how much their home culture had evolved or changed.

Each of these factors is different today as a result of globalization. The cost of travel has fallen drastically, as has the expense of long-distance telephone. New technologies like the internet, voice over internet protocol, web cams, and so on permit new arrivals to Canada to remain in close, if not daily touch with home. Through the internet and local shops, they also have access to cultural products

like newspapers, films, music and other forms of popular culture. Transportation technologies have also changed the world food industry, making it possible to cook and eat like home. Through globalization, immigrants in Canada today can make their home in Canada much more like their home in their country of origin. They can live in two cultures at once in ways never before possible.

Diasporas and economic globalization

Globalization has also changed the economics of immigration. With immigration have come more developed economic relations with many of the home countries of those concerned. A minority of the more wealthy in these communities are involved in businesses that tie the two countries together. These ties are often somewhat gendered. For example, in Canada, in the Chinese community, we talk of astronaut families: the father has a business in China or in both countries and the mother and the children live in Canada. We find similar patterns in other Asian diaspora communities. In this respect, having immigrants retain ties to "home" and having them in touch with cultural developments at "home" may be in the economic interest of Canada. India and China have had record levels of growth, far outstripping levels found in Canada and other Western countries, for over a decade now.

In summary, the processes of contemporary globalization, when married to immigration today, are leading to high levels of cultural diversity in our largest cities, the presence of cultural communities that mix together the cultures from home and from Canada in new and innovative ways, and new dynamic economic ties between sending countries and Canada that reinforce a need for multiculturalism. And while this is happening at an accelerating rate in these large cities, it occurs much less in the smaller towns, cities and rural areas like the Okanagan Valley. The gaps in the degree of cultural diversity of the population between the large cities and the rest of the country have never been deeper.

Indigenous Peoples

Returning to Penticton once again, like many British Columbians, I grew up in a place situated beside an Indian reservation. Before the Europeans arrived in Canada, the territory now called BC was home to the largest number of aboriginal peoples of all places in Canada. Only in BC were there communities large enough to build small towns or cities. Not surprisingly, then, given its temperate climate, the Okanagan Valley and neighbouring areas was home for an aboriginal nation [Map 1]. In their own language they call themselves Syilx. The word "Okanagan" comes from a Syilx word "S-Ookanhkchinx" meaning ""transport toward the head or top end" and refers to "the people travelling from the head of the Okanagan Lake to where the Okanagan river meets the Columbia river." A Syilx community lived in the area of Penticton along the Okanagan River which joined two lakes, now called Okanagan and Skaha. I went to school with some boys and girls from the reservation. They were quiet, not socially accepted in school, kept to themselves, and usually dropped out of school by grade 9 or 10. In my graduating class of some 300 students, not one was aboriginal.

Let us jump ahead to the present period and ask how has globalization interacted with the somewhat abject, culturally discriminatory and racist situation that I knew in Penticton when I was growing up. If you ask aboriginal peoples themselves, as I have done with some colleagues in one of the books that will come out of my research project about globalization and autonomy, they tend to say,"lots of bad stuff, some good stuff" (Blaser *et al.*, forthcoming).

The "bad stuff" they see to be more of the same: globalization does not look much different to them than early periods of colonization and displacement from their traditional lands, denigration of their cultures and their religions, repression of their languages, and changing their living situations through the exploitation of natural resources. If anything, with contemporary globalization, there is


LEGEND
City
International boundary
Provincial boundary
Syilx people
C A N A D A
ALBERTA
BRITISH
COLUMBIA
Kamloops
Okanagan Lake
Kelowna
Penticton
Penticton Indian Reserve
Vancouver
Strait of Georgia
Vancouver Island
Juan de Fuca Strait
UNITED STATES
N
SCALE
0 50 100 km

Map 1.

an acceleration in the penetration of the global market economy into their living spaces, further altering their ways of life. Resource development expansion, in particular, has substantially reduced, if not eliminated in many instances, the possibility of a sustainable, subsistence economy. With these economic developments has come in many instances a growing urbanization of indigenous peoples, and with that development a further marginalization into poverty and social despair. We all know about the downtown East side in Vancouver, but there are similar, if not worse, areas in Prairie cities, particularly Regina and Winnipeg, as well as in Central and Eastern Canada.

The "good stuff" that has come out of globalization, they might say, is a growing sense that they are not alone. Let me give three examples of this change.

Globalization of ideas about human rights

Since the end of the Second World War, partially in response to the Holocaust, partially in response to racism associated with Euro-American imperialism, there has been a globalization of the idea of *human* rights: rights that every person has simply because he or she is a human being. These ideas have been institutionalized globally at least symbolically through the United Nations in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1966.

Indigenous peoples around the world have read those documents and absorbed their meaning. They also noticed how the British and other European empires ended around the same time and many colonized territories became independent. To the extent to which decolonization might also be understood as part of contemporary globalization, it has led to greater consciousness of the many forms of cultural suppression that had seemed a natural part of the "civilizing" process in earlier generations (Niezen, 2003,

p. 41ff). In Article 2 of the UN General Assembly 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, self-determination—governing your own affairs—was for the first time raised to the status of a "right": "All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of the fact that they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development." Canadian aboriginal claims to a right to self-government grow out of these global processes.

Development of a global indigenous identity

In this period in Canada, the government finally ended the prohibition that had existed for indigenous peoples to form their own organizations, their own interest groups. In 1960, the government even finally gave them the right to vote. Various aboriginal communities began to get together and they formed their own national body, the National Indian Brotherhood (later the Assembly of First Nations). In this process, despite their linguistic and cultural differences, they learned that they had things in common, they began to see themselves first of all as Syilx, not just inhabitants of the Penticton Indian Reservation. Moreover, once they became organized across Canada, they learned of indigenous communities doing similar things in other parts of the world. We might say that they began to develop a global indigenous identity (Niezen, 2003, p. 23). This identity is based on an attachment that all participants share to some form of subsistence economy, to a territory or homeland that predates the arrival of settlers and surveyors, to a spiritual system that predates the arrival of missionaries, and to a language that expresses everything that is important and distinct about their place in the universe. Most importantly, they share the destruction and loss of these things.

Over the past thirty years, this identity has earned increasing institutionalization within the UN System, culminating in the creation of a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in December

2000. This forum was the place where a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was negotiated and eventually passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2007. 143 countries voted for it, 4 opposed it (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the US) and 11 abstained. These developments, in turn, have further triggered the growth of consciousness about being "indigenous" well beyond the Americas, the starting point of these processes, and thus transnational connections among indigenous peoples.

A "rights" framework at the nation-state level

Some of these developments at the global level are mirrored by corresponding and complementary changes at the nation-state level in Canada. Urged on by the courts, aboriginal peoples have increasingly been understood as possessor of rights, particularly based on the treaties they signed over the past 250 years. In the constitutional reform that took place in Canada in the early 1980s, aboriginal rights including treaty rights were given constitutional status through their affirmation in Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982.* These rights might be defined as: "rights held by peoples by reason of the fact that they were once independent, self-governing entities in possession of most of the lands now making up Canada."

Accordingly, when one talks to indigenous peoples these days, they are often of very mixed mind when it comes to globalization and its impact on their lives. There are opportunities on the one side and an acceleration of cultural and social destruction on the other. Returning to the Syilx in the Okanagan region, poverty remains. There are also signs of hope: efforts at linguistic rejuvenation, cultural recovery and economic development are present.

The Economy

In order to speak about globalization and the economy, I will return once again to Penticton. When I was growing up there, the town had two major areas of economic activity, tourism and fruit growing. It is

a favourite site for vacationers from other parts of British Columbia and from Alberta to enjoy some sun, the several kilometers of sandy beaches, and a calm ambience (except for on certain long weekends when biker gangs show up). It is not surprising then that the city defined its identity in terms of these two activities. It was known as the City of Peaches and Beaches when I was a boy. The two activities would come together every summer in a week-long festival called the Penticton Peach Festival. Tourists would come for the festival and townspeople would enjoy the midway and rides that came with it.

Those of you who have been to the Okanagan over the past 20 years will know that the landscape has changed significantly. Thousands of hectares of peaches, apricots, cherries and apples have been replaced by thousands of hectares of grapes, being grown for wine. This change has everything to do with economic globalization and the increase in transplanetary connections. The soft fruits and the apples are gone because the Okanagan could no longer compete with canned soft fruits and even fresh ones coming in from California, Central America, Chile in South America, South Africa, and a number of other countries. With the movement toward global free trade, tariffs that protected Okanagan and other Canadian producers of processed fruits have fallen significantly. At the same time, significant improvements in seaborne transportation, particularly the introduction of "the box" for container shipping, have lowered the cost of transporting products from outside Canada. Okanagan and south Ontarian farmers try to compete today through special programs that bring in labourers from Mexico and the Caribbean who will work for less money and where benefits paid by employers are low. It still does not matter. Soft fruits and apples are declining with every passing year.

I took a trip to Penticton in the summer of 2006 with my daughter. We went north first to Summerland and Sumac Ridge winery and then south to Hawthorne Mountain Vineyards in Okanagan Falls and finished up at Nk-mip outside Osoyoos. I talked to the

people at each of these wineries since I was interested in their story. It turns out that the first two, Sumac Ridge and Hawthorne, started out as small estate wineries, became successful, and were purchased by Vincor Canada, an Ontario-based corporation. Vincor is owned, in turn, by Constellation Brands, the largest wine company in the world, with holdings in Canada, the US, Australia, New Zealand, Europe and South Africa. The Nk'Mip winery is a joint venture between the Osoyoos Indian Band and Constellation. So global capital is present in the Valley in ways quite unlike 30 years ago.

Many other things besides trade have changed since I grew up in Penticton. One of the more notable ones is the radical shift toward floating exchange rates of currencies that began in the early 1970s. This change reflects a remarkable increase in the integration of world financial markets. These foreign exchange markets are global to a degree never seen before in history. Canadian dollars are bought and sold 7 days a week, 24 hours a day not only in Toronto and Vancouver, but also in New York, London, Frankfurt, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Sydney, Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires and so on. Not only are dollars bought and sold any time of the day in these places and others around the world, the price is virtually the same everywhere, the sign of a fully global market.

Three years ago, on a cold and dark December night, I found myself flying to Penticton to see my mother after examining a Ph.D. dissertation at Simon Fraser University. I began to talk to the man next to me and he was a senior manager in a furniture making company, whose manufacturing plant was in Penticton. It was a time when the Canadian dollar had finally climbed back to the low 80s in value, after falling to 65 cents US in the late 1990s in a period of two months during the East Asian financial crisis. I asked him whether the rise in the dollar had hurt the business and he moaned, saying that US markets were becoming less accessible because of the rising cost of his company's exports. When I asked him how they coped, he

offered an interesting reply. He said that they were farming out some of the fine cutting of the wood to a company in Vietnam. "BC wood is being cut in Vietnam?" I asked. "Yes," he replied. He added,"Think about it. Crossing the Pacific every day from east to west are hundreds of container ships with goods being exported from China primarily but also other East and South Asian countries. A lot of the containers on those ships return to Asia empty. So we can fill some of them with wood for a very low cost." "So," I said, "then you save costs more because labour is cheaper in Vietnam. Right?" "Well, a little bit", he replied. "More important is that the Vietnamese have built state-of-the-art, very large, computer-driven wood factories. They can cut the wood to our specifications using technologies that we can only dream of in BC. So it is their technological advantage and their efficiency that we value more than the lower labour costs."

It was an interesting conversation because it pointed to another dimension of economic globalization. The central position in the global economy of the US and the European Union countries is being challenged more and more every day. Economically, we are moving from a world dominated by the Euro-American economies to one that is more multi-centred and decentralized. The US has paid the several trillion dollar bill for the war in Iraq by borrowing from East Asian lenders, not by raising money from US taxpayers. And as we in Canada know, some of the chickens from this situation have come home to roost lately in the latest world financial crisis. The past several months has seen the Canadian dollar fall from a dollar and 10 cents to 84 cents. When the global economy trembles, we Canadians are knocked off our feet and find it hard to get up again for months, if not years, afterward. And it happens more quickly now than it ever did, it affects more countries and more people now than it ever did, and the effects penetrate further into the lives of people like you and me than it ever did.

Conclusion

I started off by stating that I wanted to explain to you that there is nothing inevitable or necessarily unchangeable about globalization. I would like to end by reiterating this point. You and I are not the helpless victims of globalization. We can benefit from it in some instances and we can work to change it in others.

Let us look back at the several examples that I used in this lecture.

When I compare the situation in Penticton and other places like it in Canada 40 years ago with that today, it is clear that we have access to more **culture**—whether in music, fine arts, films, or theatre—than ever in history. And Canadians have used that access to become significant musicians, artists, writers, actors, film makers on that same world stage. It is true that with globalization we have seen increased ethnic conflict and religious fundamentalism, but we have also seen organizations like *Médecins sans frontières*/Doctors without Borders, the Stephen Lewis Foundation, Oxfam Canada, Amnesty International and many others working for peace around the world. And Canadians are often involved in those activities.

When it comes to **immigration**, all studies show that the Canadian economy is strengthened by our open immigration policy. What is more, because many of the recent immigrants are coming from those parts of the world that are growing the most rapidly economically, China and India, we have built-in opportunities for partnering in this growth if we can see the forest and not just the American trees below the border.

When it comes to **indigenous peoples**, while there are continued if not worsening social decline and deaths on the one side, we see also a growing sense of a global indigenous identity and self-confidence. The attempts by the Syilx in the Okanagan to rejuvenate their language and recover their culture are matched by other aboriginal communities in Canada, the US, Central America, South America,

South Africa, India, Australia, New Zealand and other countries. Globalizing processes have created openings for these changes.

The changes noted in the Okanagan in terms of a shift from soft fruits and apples to grape-growing and building **global economic alliances** like those in wine-making or the one described by the furniture maker are positive not negative ones. They show that a more integrated, interdependent global economy creates advantages for some Canadians and that Canadians who keep themselves informed and well educated can take up those advantages.

Finally, where there are global problems that affect us all, we can take advantage of the same information and communication technologies that anchor the global economy to work together with others who share our concerns. Think back to February 15-16, 2003. On those days millions of people in a coordinated way protested the imminent war in Iraq. 100,000 people demonstrated in Montreal and events were held in 70 other Canadian cities. In total, protests took place in 60 countries involving an estimated 20 million people on the same day. Coordinated global activism is itself a globalizing phenomenon. There are other less-publicized stories about cooperation among communities and people made possible by globalizing processes that permit them to challenge existing configurations of power:

- Scientists around the world and their fight to convince us about the seriousness of climate change
- Movements in favour of micro credit for women leading to a Nobel peace prize for Muhammed Yumus and the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh
- Slum dwellers faced by sanitation problems in cities like Mumbai

The list is long and impressive when it is put together. My point is that these kinds of technologies permit people living in small places like Penticton and Prince George and slightly larger places like Hamilton, Ontario, my current home, to find out whether others

share similar problems, worries or dreams, to share information with those others, to coordinate actions focusing on relevant centers of power, and sometimes to succeed where they could not do so before. The slum dwellers in Mumbai, working with other groups of the very poor around the world, convinced the United Nations to support the holding of a "toilet festival." Here the ideas from all of these people were put on display, discussed with one another, leading to new ideas and improvements in water sanitation. And they did not stop there. As some of you may know, 2008 is the UN Year of Sanitation thanks to their initiative and that of many others.

So there is hope when people work together, and with globalization, they can do so in new, innovative and global ways [Figure 2].

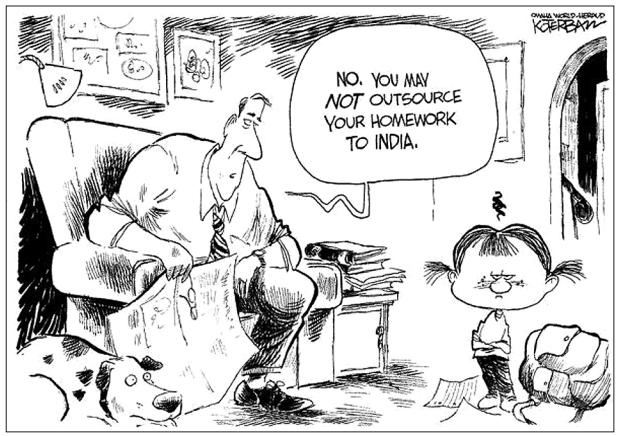


Figure 2.

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Eric Helleiner

Trudeau Fellow 2007, University of Waterloo

BIOGRAPHY

Eric Helleiner is CIGI Chair in International Political Economy at the Balsillie School of International Affairs and Professor of Political Science, University of Waterloo. He received his B.A. in Economics and Political Science from the University of Toronto, and his M.Sc. and Ph.D. from the Department of International Relations of the London School of Economics.

He is the author of *States and the Reemergence of Global Finance: From Bretton Woods to the 1990s* (Cornell University Press, 1994), *The Making of National Money: Territorial Currencies in Historical Perspective* (Cornell University Press, 2003), and *Towards North American Monetary Union? The Politics and History of Canada's Exchange Rate Regime* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006). He has also co-edited three other books, including most recently *The Future of the Dollar* (Cornell University Press, 2009), as well as a number of special sections of journals on topics such as "Crisis and the Future of Global Financial Governance" (*Global Governance*, 2009), "The Geopolitics of Sovereign Wealth Funds" (*Geopolitics*, 2009) and "The Dollar's Destiny as World Currency" (*Review of International Political Economy*, 2008). He has also published dozens of articles and book chapters on topics relating to international political economy, and international monetary and financial issues.

He is presently co-editor (with Jonathan Kirshner) of the book series "Cornell Studies in Money" and is a member of the editorial advisory boards of a number of scholarly journals. He was founding director of the M.A. and Ph.D. Programs in Global Governance at the Balsillie School of International Affairs, and he has taught previously at the London School of Economics, York University, and Trent

University, where he held a Canada Research Chair. He has won the Symons Award for Excellence in Teaching (Trent University), the Marvin Gelber Essay Prize in International Relations (awarded by the Canadian Institute for International Affairs), and the 2007 Donner Prize (awarded annually by the Donner Foundation to the best book on Canadian public policy). He has also served as co-editor of the journal *Review of International Political Economy* and associate editor of the journal *Policy Sciences*. He was selected as a member of the 2009 Warwick Commission on International Financial Reform.

Eric Helleiner is currently working on a book-length research project exploring the origins of international development and North-South monetary relations in the postwar period. He is also co-editing a forthcoming volume on the contemporary politics of international financial regulation. Other current research interests include the political economy of current global financial crisis, changing power in the international financial system, and international monetary reform. He was awarded a Trudeau Fellowship in 2007.

ABSTRACT

Looking in every day's paper seems to confirm the common view that global market pressures and particularly the globalization of money force policymakers to adopt certain policies. Eric Helleiner is convinced, however, that those same global markets are less powerful than they appear. Not only do the markets rest heavily on political foundations, but policymakers have considerable room to make distinct choices when responding to global market pressures. In other words, politics play a much more central role in a global economy than is implied by the common saying "money makes the world go 'round."

Eric Helleiner is the person to ask when it comes to the history of financial globalization in the last 30 years, the debate on North American monetary union, the future role of the US dollar as a world currency, or the current global financial crisis. As new powers emerge in the world economy, and the global financial system suffers one of its worst crises since the Great Depression, politics (albeit new kinds of politics in many cases) has never been more important in explaining the future trajectory of the global economy.

LECTURE

The Politics of Global Finance: Does Money Make the World Go 'Round?"

University of Lethbridge (Alberta)

NOVEMBER 19, 2008

I must confess that I was initially somewhat reluctant to take up this invitation to reflect on the research I have done over my career. These kinds of reflections are often done at the ends of people's careers and I consider myself only about halfway through. If I remember correctly, I think my first reaction was: "I'm not dead yet". But after some reassurance, I quickly realized what a unique opportunity this was. It is too easy to become absorbed in individual projects and day-to-day research agendas without spending the time to step back and reflect on the overarching themes and motivations that drive one's work.

When I did step back, I found myself faced with an interesting fact. I remember as a graduate student listening to an older professor joke about how most scholars only ever had one big idea in their life. To be sure, they approach their idea from many distinct angles throughout their careers, but at the end of the day they were remembered for the one single big thought that ran through their work. I recall being skeptical. Alas, I find myself halfway through my career facing the fact that there has indeed been one central theme that has run through almost everything I have done. In this lecture, I will attempt to describe my one big idea, the different angles from

which I have approached it, as well as its importance at this unique historical moment when the world is suffering from the worst global financial crisis since the 1930s. Let me begin, however, by explaining where the idea came from.

The Central Role of States

Knowledge usually advances by reacting against an existing idea. This has certainly been true of my own knowledge. My university education and early scholarly career coincided with the acceleration of the globalization of economic life during the 1980s and 1990s. The most dramatic aspect of this trend was the globalization of financial markets. During this period, enormous sums of financial capital began speeding across the world electronically on a 24-hour basis, dwarfing the size of international trade.

To many observers, the new global financial markets represented a new force that challenged the power of the state. The popularity of this view was understandable. International financial market pressures appeared to be forcing governments everywhere to embrace policies that powerful investors favoured such as fiscal discipline, lower taxes and stable money. When countries sought to buck what Thomas Friedman (1999, p. 87) called the "golden straightjacket" of the markets, they experienced severe discipline. Indeed, a number of dramatic episodes—such as Mexico in 1994, East Asia in 1997-98—seemed to highlight how countries that lost global investor confidence could be destroyed overnight by massive private capital outflows. As their autonomy eroded, many analysts began to suggest that governments everywhere would need to consider quite radical ways of pooling or abandoning sovereignty—such as the creation of monetary unions or dollarization—in order to protect their citizens from the vagaries of the powerful markets.

Given these trends, it is not surprising that many thought there was underway a profound relocation of power and authority away from the state. As an editorial in *The Globe and Mail* (1995) put it

after the 1994 Mexican crisis, "Once the world was run by kings in ermine, later by politicians in blue suits. Today it is run by 20-year-old currency traders in striped suspenders. Hovering behind their trading terminals in Tokyo, New York, London, and Zurich, they pass judgment daily on the fitness of their world's economies with the tap of a computer key. Countries that fail to pass muster can expect no mercy." At the core of this perspective was the view that private money flows in global markets, not politics within and among states, increasingly made the world go 'round. But to what extent was the power of states really being challenged?

From a very early stage in my graduate studies, I found myself wondering whether this trend was being exaggerated. To a certain extent, this came from the field in which I was being trained. I was part of a new generation of people studying in a field called "international political economy" (IPE). This new field was pioneered by international relations scholars rebelling against their field's preoccupation with the "high politics" of war and peace at the expense of the study of economic relations among countries. It also attracted economists who were reacting against the increasing domination of their discipline by mathematical modelling which ignored insights from economic history as well as the political context within which markets exist. They sought to revive and carry on the older tradition of political economy which had informed many of the most famous economists of the past, ranging from Adam Smith to John Maynard Keynes and Milton Friedman.

I fell into this field quite by accident. I had in fact arrived at the London School of Economics (LSE) in 1986, accepted into its M.Sc. program in Economics. Within the first two weeks, it quickly became apparent to me that the program would be less policy-oriented than I wanted. After talking to some professors about my interests in international public policy, one of them suggested that I have a look at a new M.Sc. program in "Politics of the World Economy" which provided an opportunity to study the new field of IPE. The program

was only in its second year and I was warned that enrolling in the program would be risky from a job or career standpoint. Even one of the program's advisors suggested to me that the field of IPE might not last and that the degree might not be worth pursuing for a young scholar who intended to go on to Ph.D. studies. Despite these cautions, the focus sounded perfect for my interests and I enrolled.

Switching into that program was the best academic decision I ever made. I was clearly not the only person to find the subject matter fascinating. Over the next decade, the field of IPE became one of the fastest growing areas in the social sciences. Scholars produced highly innovative work examining various topics ranging from the political economy of international trade and global production to the politics of international resource and energy use. I found myself drawn to the somewhat obscure political economy of global finance. The founder of the LSE's Politics of the World Economy M.Sc. program, Susan Strange, was the key influence on me. Because of its more technical nature, the study of global finance had been historically dominated by economists. In a number of highly readable and engaging works, Strange had widened the analytical focus to highlight how international financial system rested on important political foundations that deserved more scholarly attention (see especially Strange, 1971, 1976, 1986, 1998). I found her work fascinating and was quickly hooked on the subject.

It was with her ideas in mind that I reacted against the arguments about global financial markets challenging the power of states. The more I studied the financial globalization trend, the more convinced I became of the enduring centrality of states within global finance. This has been the one big idea which has driven my research since the 1980s. I was of course not the only scholar in the field of IPE driven by this idea. Susan Strange herself insisted on this point in much of her work, as did other new IPE scholars. But I have tried to show its relevance in a number of novel ways that I can quickly summarize.

Financial Globalization

My initial foray into this topic was an attempt to explain why financial globalization had happened in the postwar period. At the time I was writing my Ph.D., it was often argued that the trend was a product of unstoppable market pressures and technological innovations. It was certainly true that the information technology revolution had made money more mobile than ever before in history. Many market pressures also certainly encouraged individuals and firms to take advantage of the new ability to move money in its new electronic form around the world at the touch of a button. These included the rapid growth of international trade and transnational corporations, competitive pressures within national financial systems, the emergence of large international payments imbalances, and the desire to diversify risk in the more volatile global economic environment ushered in by the breakdown of the Bretton Woods monetary system in the early 1970s.

I had no doubt that these developments had been important, but my political economy training encouraged me to look at the role of governments too. It quickly became clear to me that they had not been just passive players in the story. In the early post-1945 years, almost all governments had had in place strict controls on the cross-border movement of money. The use of these "capital controls" had been explicitly allowed, and even encouraged, by the 1944 Bretton Woods conference that had established the "constitution" for the postwar international financial system. The Bretton Woods architects had seen these controls as useful for constraining the speculative and disequilibrating financial movements that had undermined exchange rate stability, freer trade and governments' policy autonomy during the interwar years (Helleiner, 1994). The globalization of financial markets from the 1960s onwards could not have taken place without governments dismantling these controls.

My Ph.D. thesis, subsequently revised and published as *States and the Reemergence of Global Finance* (1994), tells the story of how

this happened. The first step in the direction of liberalization was taken by the British government during the 1960s when it allowed the growth of the "euromarket" in London. This "offshore" market for dollar-based international financial activity was subject to very little regulation by the British government, and it grew very rapidly during the 1960s, particularly after the US government introduced capital controls which inhibited New York's ability to act as the world's financial centre. The second step came when US dismantled its capital control in 1974 and the British government followed suit in 1979. During the 1980s, most other OECD countries copied the US and UK decisions with the result that an almost completely liberal regime for the movement of cross-border financial capital had emerged across the OECD by the early 1990s. Many developing countries followed this liberalization trend throughout this period, including many small states and territories which established themselves as offshore financial centres through loose regulatory environments for international financial activity. Some of these—such as the Grand Caymans—were so successful at attracting financial business to their territory that they had become among the top international banking centres by the 1980s.

Financial globalization was thus a product not just of market and technological developments but also of active political decisions by governments. If states were partly the authors of the globalization process, why did they support it? It was common to read during the 1980s that governments liberalized capital controls out of a defeatist sense that controls were no longer effective in the face of technological change. But it was not entirely clear to me that information technology had undermined states' abilities to control cross-border flows of money. In fact, I suggested in a later article that a plausible counter-case could be made. Officials involved in efforts to curtail international money laundering had noted that electronic money left a trace that made it easier to track than anonymous cash. It was also channelled through a small number of centralized payments

systems which could be monitored and regulated. Complex artificial intelligence programs could also be used by authorities to search for suspicious patterns of financial flows in ways that were much more sophisticated than in the past (Helleiner, 1998).

The more important critique of the "defeatist" explanation for financial liberalization, however, was that many governments clearly dismantled capital controls for more active and positive reasons. My reading of the history suggested that three reasons were particularly prominent. The first was the growing influence of more "free market thinking"—or "neoliberal thinking"—during this period. Whereas Keynesians had been skeptical of the free capital movements, neoliberals felt that capital controls inhibited the efficient allocation of capital internationally and also unnecessarily protected governments from healthy financial market discipline. Second, financial liberalization was supported in most countries by increasingly transnational firms who sought to rid themselves of cumbersome capital controls as their cross-border activities grew. And finally, the liberalization of capital controls was seen by many governments as a kind of competitive strategy to attract mobile financial business and capital to their national territory. The lead role played by the US and UK, for example, partly reflected the desire of policymakers in these two states to boost the positions of London and New York, respectively, as leading international financial centres. The US also hoped to attract foreign capital to the uniquely deep and liquid US financial markets in ways that could help finance US trade and budget deficits. Once the US and UK had begun to liberalize their financial systems, many other governments were inclined emulate their decisions in order to prevent mobile domestic capital and financial business from migrating abroad. National financial sectors were increasingly seen everywhere as an economic sector like any other that required a competitiveness strategy, rather than a unique part of the economy needing tight control to preserve stability, as had been the case in the wake of the Great Depression.

Researching this history was the first reason that I became skeptical of arguments about the demise of the state in an age of global financial markets. If financial globalization was a product not just of technological and market pressures but also of deliberate political decisions of governments, the latter retained considerable influence over the process. Global financial markets, in other words, ultimately rested on a political foundation provided by the willingness of states to continue to allow the cross-border movement of finance to take place unimpeded. Indeed, it is worth remembering that some of the most important emerging powers—such as China and India—have remained relatively insulated from global financial market pressures because they never fully embraced the financial liberalization trend and retain to this day various capital controls. Other developing countries—most famously Malaysia at the height of the East Asian financial crisis in 1998—have reimposed controls in order to protect their policy autonomy when it has been threatened. No OECD countries have yet reversed their liberalization decisions, but the possibility can not be ruled out, particularly if any of them experience severe exchange rate instability or balance of payments crises in the coming years.

Global Markets as Constraint

Even if states choose not to use capital controls, there remains the question of how extensive the constraints imposed by global financial markets are on national policymaking. I have become convinced that these constraints are easily overstated. One reason has to do with simple open macroeconomics: governments can retain considerable autonomy in their monetary policy in an environment of high capital mobility by allowing their country's exchange to fluctuate (Helleiner, 1999). In the realm of fiscal policy, other IPE scholars have also shown that international financial markets actors are less concerned about the governments' overall levels of spending and

taxation than about their levels of fiscal deficits or national inflation rates (Mosley, 2003). Poorer countries faced with international debt problems are also not always disciplined by international bankers; Argentina's experience between 2001-05 showed how debtor governments can exploit creditor divisions and place the burden of adjustment back onto international investors (Helleiner, 2005).

Beginning the late 1990s, I became interested in another dimension of the debate about the extent of the disciplinary power imposed by global markets. In the wake of the East Asian financial crisis, a number of prominent analysts began to argue that financial globalization was forcing governments to consider abandoning their national currencies. As the size of global financial markets grew, they noted that it was becoming impossible for governments to maintain exchange rate pegs in the face of speculative pressures. In this context, they suggested that governments faced a two-corner world: embrace a floating exchange rate or move to a fully credible peg in the form of monetary union, unilateral dollarization, or a currency board. Because floating rates could be so volatile, the prediction was that many governments would move to the latter solutions.

The move by many European countries to adopt the euro in 1999 reinforced this belief. So too did the decisions by Ecuador and El Salvador to fully dollarize in 2000 and 2001 respectively as well as the embrace of currency boards in some ex-Eastern bloc countries. In many other countries, heated debates broke out at this time about the pros and cons of regional currency unions, dollarization and/or currency boards. And analysts predicted that it was just a matter of time before the world resembled a number of giant currency zones. As Beddoes (1999, p. 8) put it, "By 2030 the world will have two major currency zones—one European, the other American. The euro will be used from Brest to Bucharest, and the dollar from Alaska to Argentina—perhaps even Asia. These regional currencies will form the bedrock of the next century's financial stability."

If these predictions were to prove accurate, they suggested that financial globalization was posing a very profound challenge to the state. National currencies have long been seen as one of the key symbols of sovereignty. If globalization was prompting their abandonment, this would lend strong support to the broader thesis about the revolutionary significance of financial globalization for world order. But how convincing were these predictions?

I spent a number of years examining this question and emerged skeptical. I began by exploring the reasons why national currencies had been created in the first place around the world. A global history of this process had not yet been written and I set out to fill this hole in scholarly literature with my book *The Making of National Money* (2003). This turned out to be a fascinating project. Before the mid-19th century and until much later in many parts of the world, money was not organized on the "one money, one country" principle that we consider normal today. Not only did foreign currencies commonly circulate alongside domestically issued ones, but the latter was very heterogeneous. Various towns and private corporations often issued multiple forms of money; different regions within countries frequently used different monetary standards; counterfeiting was widespread; and the small denomination money used by the poor usually had only a loose relationship to the official currency.

Beginning in the 19th century, leading industrial powers launched major domestic monetary reforms to create the kinds of territorially exclusive and homogeneous national currencies within their borders that we take for granted today. Their initiatives were then emulated in other regions of the world in the 20th century, including many countries that emerged from colonial rule after World War Two (although some choose to retain colonial monetary unions such as the CFA zone in Africa). In every country, the creation of modern national currencies was closely linked to the broader project of building modern nation-states. This kind of

money was designed to foster nationally integrated markets and national identities, as well as the state's capacity to raise revenue and manage the money supply. In other words, it was state power and political priorities, rather than market logic, that played the decisive role in determining the new "national" geography of money.

But is this still true in our times? To address this question, I turned to look at a specific case of the possible "denationalization" of money in the contemporary period: Canada. My home country seemed to me a perfect one to examine because it had become embroiled in a debate about creating a monetary union with the United States in 1999-2000. Although Canadians had long debated the pros and cons of free trade with the US, the idea of a monetary union had been entirely absent from the policy agenda since the country's creation. Suddenly, at the very time of the euro's creation in 1999, the debate became front-page news across the country.

Not surprisingly, those who suddenly favoured North American Monetary Union (NAMU) invoked financial globalization as a part of their cause. The collapse of the value of the Canadian currency to US$0.62 in the wake of the East Asian crisis had highlighted the vulnerability of Canada to the whims of global speculators. It was time, supporters of NAMU argued, to follow the European example of creating a regional currency, particularly given the deepening of US-Canada economic relations in the context of decade-old free trade agreement between the two countries. Indeed, given global trends, supporters even suggested that "the Canadian dollar is doomed" and that NAMU was "inevitable" within as short a time as five years (quoted in Helleiner, 2006, p. 4).

These predictions have not yet been realized. The reason, as I suggested in my book *Towards North American Monetary Union?* (2006), was that politics once again has trumped global market forces. Through a detailed analysis of Canadian exchange rate history, I showed how there have been a number of features of the

Canadian political economy that have consistently encouraged Canadian policymakers to embrace a floating exchange rate regime vis-à-vis the US despite its sometimes volatile nature. This embrace began in the 1930s, resumed between 1950-62 (when Canada ignored its Bretton Woods exchange rate commitments), and then emerged again after 1970 when Canada became the first country to abandon the Bretton Woods fixed exchange rate system. Canada's historically strong preference for floating, I argued, reflected a number of political factors including a consistent distrust of US monetary policy, the desire to depoliticize controversial debates about exchange rate issues within the country, longstanding concerns about balance of payments adjustment processes given Canada's status as a commodity exporter and domestic wage and price inflexibility, and the absence of a concerted and coherent business lobby for a fixed exchange rate.

While globalization may have increased the costs of floating, I showed how these factors retained their enduring influence on Canadian policymaking during the debate that began in 1999 on NAMU. Very substantial opposition to the NAMU proposal quickly emerged, which drew not just on the same defenses of a floating exchange rate as in the past, but also on newer nationalist arguments about the link between the Canadian currency and national identity. By contrast, advocates of NAMU had trouble attracting many supporters to their cause. Indeed, if there was an important new force pushing for NAMU in this period, financial globalization turned out to be much less important than a domestic political change: the rise of Quebec sovereigntist movement which saw NAMU as a way to ease the path to Quebec independence. The support of Quebec sovereigntists, however, was not enough to give the NAMU proposal much political momentum and its backers were soon forced to acknowledge political defeat. Once again, the logic of economic inevitability and all-powerful global market pressures had succumbed to the enduring influence of national politics on the

geography of money. States—even those with small open economies such as Canada—retained considerable room to manouevre in an age of financial globalization.

Global Markets Serving States

Global markets themselves also often serve the political priorities of specific states. I have highlighted this point in two distinct contexts in my research. The first concerns the rise of sovereign wealth funds (SWF). Until recently, most scholars of global finance assumed that influential investors in global financial markets were private firms and individuals driven by profit-seeking motives. But in the last few years, sovereign wealth funds—pools of capital owned by states—have emerged as a new kind of influential investor on the global scene. They are not, in fact, entirely new; Kuwait established the first such fund as far back as 1953. But their number and size have grown very rapidly during the past decade. There are now about 40 SWFs and their combined assets are larger than the entire hedge fund industry (even before the financial crisis reduced the size of the latter), making them a significant power within global financial markets.

Most of the funds come from two groups of countries: oil exporting countries (with the largest SWFs being from Norway, Kuwait, and Abu Dhabi) and East Asian exporters (with the largest being from China and Singapore). These countries have used SWFs as a tool to actively invest a portion of their wealth and foreign exchange reserves abroad in stock markets and other financial markets which offer the prospect of higher returns (because of their higher risk) than more conventional and passively held reserve holdings in US Treasury bills. The investments of SWFs could be used, however, not just to maximize financial returns but also as a tool to serve the political priorities of the country within international financial markets. For example, Norway's SWF is already mandated to invest in ways that uphold various international social and environmental conventions

that Norwegian politicians have prioritized. In a more strategic sense, many analysts have worried that the overseas investments of SWFs could be targeted by governments to gain economic or political leverage abroad (see discussion in Helleiner & Kirshner, 2009).

The growing influence of SWFs within global markets thus poses a fundamental challenge to the view that financial globalization is undermining the power of the state. It is not just that states provide the political foundation for markets or that they can resist global market discipline, as noted in the two previous sections of this lecture. With the rise of SWFs, certain states have become a key part of the very structure—the international investment community—that was said to be undermining their authority. This development in fact calls into question the usefulness of the analytical distinction between "global markets" and "states" that underlies the conventional view about declining state power (Helleiner & Lundblad, 2009).

Global financial markets have also served the political priorities of specific states in a more indirect way. Various IPE scholars, myself included, have highlighted how the US benefits from the dependence of global financial markets on the US dollar as a medium of exchange, unit of account and store of value. When foreigners hold dollars, they provide the equivalent of an interest-free (in the case of Federal Reserve notes) or low interest (in the case of US Treasury securities) loan to the US. According to some estimates, this "seigniorage" profit has totalled over $20 billion per year in recent years (Cohen, 2008, p. 258). The dollar's global role has also bolstered the US capacity to finance current account deficits as well as to deflect the costs of adjustments onto foreigners by depreciating the currency in which it has borrowed funds (Andrews, 2006). In addition, US authorities have been able to exploit the dependence of market actors on dollar-clearing networks to encourage worldwide cooperation with US regulatory initiatives (e.g., anti-money laundering regulations) as well as to enforce sanctions against foreign states (Helleiner, 2006a).

For these reasons, I have found myself agreeing with Strange's (1986, 1987) conclusion that the globalization of finance has strengthened US power rather than undermined it. Because of the dollar's international role, the US has a unique and indirect "structural" form of power within global finance which enables it to influence indirectly—and often unintentionally—outcomes in the global markets. But will this privileged position endure? This is a question that has increasingly interested me in the last few years.

In my review of existing literature on the future of the dollar as an international currency, I have been struck by the varying opinions expressed by scholars. Existing analysis of this topic is dominated by economists who are inclined to focus on the economic incentives that market actors face to use the dollar as an international currency. Some predict that the dollar's global status is now more precarious than at any time in the postwar period because of both the financial troubles of the US and the emergence of the euro as a serious rival. Others are less sure for a variety of reasons ranging from the euro-zone's own difficulties to the unique size and depth of US financial markets and the inertia of international currency use (Helleiner, 2008).

My own view has been that more attention needs to be paid in these debates to the *political* foundations of the dollar's international position (Helleiner, 2008; Helleiner & Kirshner, 2009). The dollar's international position today is being sustained not just by market actors but also by the political decisions of foreign governments to hold massive reserves in dollars (especially China, Japan and the Gulf States) or to encourage their country's international economic activity to be denominated in dollars. The decisions of these governments to support the dollar can be influenced not just by the kinds of economic factors that economists study, but also by various political considerations. During the 1960s and 1970s, major dollar reserve holding countries were US allies who often saw their dollar holdings as linked to broader alliance politics. In my view, the politics of foreign dollar support is less predictable today, given that the

largest dollar reserves are held in a country—China—that is often seen as a potential rival of the US. Indeed, the Chinese authorities have recently publicly highlighted their frustration with their dollar dependence and their desire to promote the IMF's currency (special drawing rights) as an alternative international money.

The more the dollar is sustained by the political support of foreign governments, the more it resembles a kind of "negotiated" international currency rather than a pure "top" currency whose position derives from its inherent economic attractiveness alone (Strange, 1971; Helleiner, 2008). The international status of a currency is boosted by network externalities; that is, the more it is used, the greater the incentive for others to use it for convenience reasons. In this context, a declining power may see its currency remain internationally dominant for some time after other aspects of its international position erode. But there can also emerge a "tipping point" where expectations can change rapidly. The sudden withdrawal of foreign political support for the dollar's international role could act as such a turning point in the current environment. In this way, we see once again the enduring significance of states in global financial markets. It is not just that one state—the US—has gained power from the globalization trend. Other states also increasingly act as determinants of the future of the international monetary infrastructure of those same markets.

The Vulnerability of Global Markets

The clinching argument against those who believe financial globalization is undermining the power of state has come during the dramatic global financial crisis that we are living through today. The crisis has made very plain the ultimate dependence of global financial markets on states in times of crisis. This is in fact not the first time that this lesson has been learned. In my first book, I noted how the financial globalization trend had been accompanied by a number of international financial crises, three of which had been particularly

severe at the time of writing: the 1974 international banking crisis, the 1982 debt crisis, and the 1987 stock market crisis. Each of these had threatened to reverse the globalization process by undermining confidence in international markets, just as the momentous crisis of 1929-31 had done. In each instance, however, confidence in international markets had been restored through the provision of public financial support to firms and/or markets in distress in the international financial system. The stabilizing role of public authorities, I argued, reinforced the broader argument I was making at the time, which was that globalization could never have taken place without the support of nation-states (Helleiner, 1994).

Since that time, the importance of this point has been reinforced in other episodes, most notably during the international financial crisis of 1997-98. But it has been during the current crisis that began in 2007 that the lesson has been driven home particularly forcefully. Because of the severity of this crisis, public authorities have been forced not just to provide massive emergency assistance but even to nationalize various private institutions. And it has been *national* officials above all that have played the most decisive role. As one analyst recently quipped, the crisis has shown clearly that "global banks are global in life and national in death" (quoted in Larsen, 2009). Without state support of this kind, the collapse of confidence would have shattered international financial markets. If it was not clear before, it is now hard to ignore the fact that nation-states, backed up by national taxpayers, provide the ultimate foundation of international financial markets (Pauly, 2008).

The crisis has also undermined the credibility of arguments about the all-powerful "Masters of the Universe" within global markets. It is not just that so many private financiers have been left humbled and dependent on public support. The scale of that support has also generated widespread demands for a tightening of regulation over international markets to try to prevent this situation ever

arising again. These demands are resulting in major initiatives at the national and international level whose politics I am closely studying at the moment (Helleiner & Pagliari, 2009; Helleiner, 2009c). These initiatives are not just strengthening existing rules (e.g., vis-à-vis international banks) but also introducing new rules over markets (e.g., derivatives) and institutions (e.g., hedge funds) that had previously been left largely unregulated. Even bond raters such as Moody's—once famously described by a *New York Times* columnist as a new "superpower" in the post-Cold War era (quoted in Cohen, 1996, p. 282)—are falling under states' regulatory umbrella. The new regulatory mantra is that no institution, market, or financial market should be left unregulated or unsupervised if it can create systemic risk.

This reregulatory moment reminds us once again that global markets always exist within a political context set by states. The era when global markets appeared so powerful had only been made possible because states had enabled and fostered it through liberalization and deregulation decisions. In addition to dismantling capital controls, states across the world had increasingly delegated prudential regulation to the private sector out of a belief that "self-regulation" would be more efficient and effective. That belief has crumbled in the current crisis as the excessively risky activities of various firms has been exposed. The new mood was been well captured by Willem Buiter (2009) who recently noted that "self-regulation is to regulation as self-importance is to importance." French President Nicolas Sarkozy put it more bluntly in September 2008: "Self-regulation is finished. Laisser-faire is finished. The all-powerful market that is always right is finished" (quoted in Helleiner, 2009c, p. 8).

Why are global financial markets so prone to severe crises? Economists disagree on this question, pointing to a number of possible explanations ranging from imperfect information to human psychology. Whatever the causes, the historical record suggests that financial markets left to themselves will experience crises and that

public authorities will be called upon to restore confidence and regulation. This is not to absolve public authorities themselves from blame for financial crisis. Their policies—in the form of misguided regulatory initiatives, poor macroeconomic management, excessive borrowing and spending behaviour—have often played important roles in triggering crises, including the current one. It is simply to note that financial markets—particularly international financial markets—are very likely to continue to experience crises in ways that reinforce their dependence on states.

Towards a New Bretton Woods?

If the current crisis has provided a rather decisive confirmation of the enduring power of states, what is left for my research agenda? With my one big idea now increasingly conventional wisdom, perhaps it is time to break with academic tradition and move on to a second big thought. But the uniqueness of this political moment in global finance has led my research in a different direction for the moment. Although I am still in the midst of the work right now, let me briefly describe its content before concluding this lecture.

During the past two decades, many national policymakers were caught up in what Linda McQuaig (1998) has called a kind of "cult of impotence," in which they felt their hands were tied in various ways by the imperatives of powerful global markets, particularly global financial markets. This belief was the popular equivalent of the academic arguments that financial globalization was undermining the power of states, and like the latter, it is now being rapidly rejected in policymaking circles. The uniqueness of the current moment is that policymakers around the world are unified in their desire to reassert public authority over international financial markets and make them more of a servant of societal goals than a master.

If the cult of impotence is being rejected rather dramatically, what political choices will policymakers make at this turning point? What kind of global financial order will they construct? Are we now

at a kind of "Bretton Woods" moment where policymakers might be willing to embrace the kind of ambitious international financial reform that was undertaken at the 1944 conference in Bretton Woods?

These on-going debates have prompted me to explore the parallels between now and the Bretton Woods era. By a strange twist of fate, I had begun some detailed archival research on the origins of the Bretton Woods meeting before the current financial crisis began. That research was driven initially by a desire to more thoroughly understand US-Latin American financial relations in the 1940s, a subject which I had become interested in while writing my history of national currencies. That research led me to fascinating archival material that I believed demonstrated conclusively how the early US drafts of the Bretton Woods proposals had their origins in US policy towards Latin America in the late 1930s and early 1940s (Helleiner, 2006a, 2009a). To prove this rather unconventional view, I had become very familiar with the literature on the history of the Bretton Woods negotiations. When the current financial crisis broke out, I drew on this research to explore the parallels to the current context.

In my view, there *is* indeed an important parallel. Like policymakers today, the Bretton Woods architects were driven by a desire to assert public authority over international financial markets in the wake of the devastating international financial crisis—that of the early 1930s. They chose to do so in three broad ways (Helleiner, 2009b). First, they endorsed strong regulations over international financial markets. Second, they gave public authorities at both the national level and the supranational level (through the creation of the new IMF) a much more active role in the management of international economic imbalances than they had had under the market-driven international gold standard of the pre-1931 era. And finally, by creating the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, they established an entirely new principle in

international financial governance: that the international community had a public responsibility to promote the economic development of poor countries.

Each of these three initiatives was a very significant innovation in international financial governance. This is where the parallel between Bretton and today ends. Despite the new political mood today, most of the current initiatives to reform the global financial system—which have been led by the G20 above all—have so far been much more incrementalist (Helleiner & Pagliari, 2009). The contrast is understandable. We are still living in the midst of a crisis, whereas the Bretton Woods architects were designing a new order well over a decade after the international financial crisis of the early 1930s. The creativity and ambition of the Bretton Woods architects was also bolstered by the fact that they were planning for a post-war world in which there would be a single clear dominant financial power: the United States. Today, the ability of the US to lead is less clear and the international political order is in considerable flux. In these circumstances, the analogy to the Bretton Woods moment looks much more forced.

Still, I have suggested in recent work that contemporary policymakers seeking a more ambitious reform agenda might find the three broad innovations in global financial governance outlined at Bretton Woods to be a useful road map (Helleiner, 2009b). To date, most of the reform agenda has concentrated only on the first issue: the regulation of international financial markets. The Bretton Woods experience reminds us that a bolder agenda would devote more attention to the management of global imbalances and the distinctive problems faced by poorer countries. Even within the regulatory realm, the focus of reform initiatives to date has been fixed on the strengthening of international prudential regulation rather than also including some of the cross-border issues that attracted the attention of the Bretton Woods architects.

At the same time, because the world has changed in various ways, I have also argued that the mechanisms for reasserting public authority more centrally into the realm of international finance will need to be different in the current age. For example, the management of global imbalances needs to devote more consideration to the reserve currency status of the dollar, the currency composition of borrowing by developing countries, sovereign wealth funds, and the role of regional cooperation. The promotion of international development must also address issues raised by contemporary international prudential regulatory initiatives. And because of the changing distribution of power at the global level, there is also a great need for a broader governance agenda of making international financial institutions—including, but not restricted to, the Bretton Woods institutions—more inclusive as well as more open to the principles of subsidiarity and regionalism.

Conclusion

My current research on the politics of global financial reform represents, in many ways, a culmination of the work I have been engaged in over the past twenty years. At the core of that work was an effort to evaluate the argument that financial globalization was a powerful force undermining the power of states. I suggested that this argument was easily overstated and that states were more powerful for a number of reasons. The globalization of finance was not an unstoppable or inevitable force, but rather one authored by states. States were not nearly as constrained in their policy choices by global financial markets as some suggested. The global financial markets themselves often served the political priorities of specific states, rather than undermined them. And because of their tendency to experience crises, the markets were also much more vulnerable and fragile than was often supposed and they relied heavily on states to prevent and contain crises. None of these arguments was meant

to suggest that financial globalization was unimportant. Quite the contrary, I was drawn to study this phenomenon because of its enormous significance in reshaping power and wealth across the globe. But its significance in undermining the power of states has been, in my view, often exaggerated.

That said, let me quickly register two caveats. First, there is of course considerable variation in the experiences of different states. Indeed, the differential impact of financial globalization across states is an important implication of the phenomenon and I have explored in a number of contexts, some of which I have noted already. Second, I have also examined how financial globalization has been associated with transformations in the nature of the state. One of these has been a shift towards more "internationalized" states than the kinds of "welfare-nationalist" and "developmental" states that were more prominent during the early post-1945 years (Cox, 1987). At a deeper level, I have also suggested some ways in which financial globalization has been linked with an unravelling of state practices of "territoriality" in the context of "offshore" spaces, extra-territorial regulation, and dollarization (Helleiner, 1999). Global financial markets have also encouraged new and interesting patterns of inter-state cooperation. I am not suggesting, in other words, that nothing has changed. Rather, the idea I have been reacting against over the past two decades is the more generalized notion that financial globalization is unleashing some kind of a revolution which is diminishing the significance of states as a whole as important actors in world politics. Private money churning through international markets does make the world go 'round, but so too do politics within and among states. Put in simpler terms, the world is not being entirely taken over by 20-year-old currency traders in striped suspenders.

This has been my one big idea. In retrospect, I cannot pretend that I have consciously set out to prove it in this consistent manner. It is only through the preparation of this lecture that I have been

forced to the recognition that there has been this underlying continuity in my work. For that (and many other things), I am grateful to the Trudeau Foundation. I am particularly grateful because this reflection has reminded me of how this crisis has really brought me to the end of this project. Now that my one idea has become commonplace, it is time to move on and try to break the iron academic law of "the one idea."

But into my next projects, I will take one important lesson that I have learned: the importance of the kind of interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity that the field of IPE represents. Some years ago, Susan Strange (1991, p. 33) suggested that IPE was best seen as a kind of "open range, like the old Wild West, accessible—as the classical study of political economy had been—to literate people of all walks of life, from all the professions and all political proclivities." This vision of the field has both enabled and inspired me to explore and attempt to integrate insights not just from political science and economics but also history, geography, sociology and other fields that have examined issues relating to money and finance. I will certainly continue this approach in future work. In age of ever-greater academic specialization, this commitment to intellectual openness remains the greatest strength of my chosen field of international political economy.

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William E. Rees

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BIOGRAPHY

William Rees received his Ph.D. in population ecology from the University of Toronto and has taught at the University of British Columbia's School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) since 1969-1970. He founded SCARP's "Environment and Resource Planning" concentration and from 1994 to 1999 served as director of the School.

Professor Rees' teaching and research focus on the socio-economic and ecological prerequisites for sustainable societies in an era of accelerating global ecological change. A human ecologist and ecological economist, William Rees is best known as the originator of "ecological footprint" analysis, a sustainability assessment tool now used around the world that has helped to reopen the debate on human carrying capacity. His book *Our Ecological Footprint* (co-authored with then Ph.D. student Mathis Wackernagel) was published in 1996 and is now available in nine languages. Professor Rees has also authored 125 peer-reviewed academic papers and book chapters, and numerous popular articles, on humanity's (un)sustainability conundrum. Drawing parts of his answer from various disciplines, his current book project asks: "Is Humanity *Inherently* Unsustainable?"

Professor Rees is a founding member and recent past-President of the Canadian Society for Ecological Economics and a co-founder of the One-Earth Initiative. He is also a co-investigator in the Global Integrity Project, which seeks to define the ecological and political requirements for biodiversity preservation while sustaining human population health. Professor Rees' work is widely recognized. He

has been invited to lecture on his research in 25 countries around the world. In 2000, the *Vancouver Sun* named Professor Rees one of British Columbia's top public intellectuals; in 2006 he was elected to the Royal Society of Canada and in 2007, he was nominated a Trudeau Fellow.

ABSTRACT

The originator of "ecological footprint" analyses, William Rees is a contemplative man who carefully considers the present ecological state of the world as influenced by humans and the prospects for humanity's future. He is convinced that the current global "slow crisis" is caused by people simply acting naturally. The human social-cultural behaviour and dynamics that contributed to our success at earlier stages of evolution have become maladaptive in the rapidly changing environments of the 21st century. What can we do, since socio-political processes at local and global levels are proving to be ineffective in addressing these changes? Dr. Rees will let us know whether there is a future for humans.

LECTURE

Are Humans Unsustainable by Nature?

Memorial University of Newfoundland

JANUARY 28, 2009

Introduction: The State of the World in "Light of Human Evolution"

This paper is an exploration of an extended and admittedly somewhat discomforting hypothesis, namely that the human species, *H. sapiens*, is unsustainable *by nature*. In short, I am proposing the deteriorating state of the biophysical world and the threat that it poses to the human prospect is a natural outcome of what humans themselves have evolved to be. Initially, some of you may take this proposition to be radically nonsensical. By the end, however, I hope you will see that the main threads of my argument, many of which have been recognized for centuries, have merely wanted knitting into whole cloth.

Most of you will be well aware of the context for this discussion. People are destroying their ecosystems; we are undermining the life-support functions of the ecosphere. Our best science warns that the human enterprise has already overshot the long-term carrying capacity of Earth. According to the latest (fairly conservative) estimates by the World Wide Fund for Nature, the human ecological footprint exceeds global biocapacity by almost 30% (WWF, 2008).

This should come as no surprise. Back in 1992 (the year of the first United Nations Conference on Environment and Development), the Union of Concerned Scientists issued its famous *World Scientists' Warning to Humanity*:

> We the undersigned, senior members of the world's scientific community, hereby warn all humanity of what lies ahead. A great change in our stewardship of the earth and the life on it is required if vast human misery is to be avoided and our global home on this planet is not to be irretrievably mutilated (UCS, 1992).

No waffly ambiguity there! Nevertheless, in the course of the subsequent decade—a decade characterized by increasingly rousing rhetoric on the needed shift to "sustainable development"—ecological trends generally worsened. Thus in 2005, the authors of Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (the most comprehensive examination of the state of the ecosphere ever undertaken) were moved to echo the UCS's statement in their own summary document:

> At the heart of this assessment is a stark warning. Human activity is putting such a strain on the natural functions of the Earth that the ability of the planet's ecosystems to sustain future generations can no longer be taken for granted (MEA, 2005, p.5).

And still the dismal data accumulate. One recent peer-reviewed climate change analysis concludes that "an optimistic interpretation of the current framing of climate change implies that stabilization much below 650 ppmv CO_2e is improbable."[1] To stabilize at 650 ppmv CO_2e, the majority of OECD nations would have to begin draconian emission reductions within a decade. Thus, unless we can reconcile economic growth with unprecedented rates of decarbonization—in

1. Anderson and Bows' analysis considered several green-house gases. Thus, the term "ppmv CO_2e" should be read as "parts per million by volume of carbon dioxide equivalents." The current atmospheric concentration of CO_2 *alone* is an already excessive 387 ppmv, or 38% above the estimated pre-industrial level of 280 ppmv.

excess of 6% per year—this would require *a planned economic recession* (Anderson & Bows, 2008). If this seems outrageous, consider that 650 ppmv CO_2e implies a catastrophic 4 C° mean global temperature increase—the impact of a major recession, planned or not, would be mild by comparison.[2]

In effect, the world's top scientists are warning that staying our growth-based path to global development virtually guarantees catastrophe for billions of people and threatens the possibility of maintaining a complex global civilization. Such warnings should galvanize any self-proclaimed science-based culture to corrective action. Nevertheless—and this is really the starting point for our analysis—there is scant evidence that national governments, the United Nations or other official international organizations have begun to openly contemplate the implications for humanity if the scientists are right, let alone articulate in public the kind of policy responses the science evokes. Despite decades of accumulating evidence and growing anxiety about the risks of global change, the modern world remains mired in a swamp of cognitive dissonance and collective denial. Just what is going on here? How can we make sense of such conflicting realities?

There is, of course, no shortage of explanations for the ecological crisis. No doubt it can be traced, in part, to technological hubris and humans' inflated sense of invulnerability; some blame it on ignorance, greed, and even the desperation of impoverished people; others point to the flawed structure of industrial capitalism or the sheer momentum of growth-bound techno-industrial society. No doubt all of these reasons are valid, some more than others and at different times and places, but each such explanation has the superficial sheen of *proximal* cause. What we really want to know is

2. For example, a four Celsius-degree-increase in mean global temperature would likely convert China, India, much of Africa and the US—i.e., places where most of humanity lives—into uninhabitable deserts.

the root source of human greed, why some people are propelled by desperation and just how industrial capitalism came to be the way it is. This paper therefore advances a more *distal* cause of our common dilemma, one that lies beneath all the others.

The explanation we explore below was actually inspired by a phrase first penned by famed Russian-born geneticist Theodosius Dobzhansky in 1964: "Nothing in Biology Makes Sense Except in the Light of Evolution" (Dobzhansky, 1964, p. 449).

To get straight to the point, my thesis is that we will only fully understand the modern sustainability conundrum and society's apparent paralysis in the face of it if we examine its root causes in human evolutionary biology.

Premise 1: *H. sapiens* is an evolved species

My argument begins from two related and, I hope, non-controversial premises. The first should already be obvious: *H. sapiens* is an evolved species like all the others, and human evolution, like that of all the others, has been shaped by the forces of natural selection. Since individual and emergent social behaviour are as much exposed to selective pressure as any other genetically influenced human quality, it is therefore not much of a leap to extend Dobzhansky's principle to assert that *nothing in human affairs—including much of economic and socio-political behaviour—makes sense except in the light of evolution.* This is not to say that other factors are not involved. Rather, I am arguing that the picture is unintelligibly incomplete unless we factor in the bio-evolutionary contribution.

It is true, of course, that human evolution differs significantly from that of other species. Most significantly, human evolution is now determined as much or more by socio-cultural factors (memes) as by biological factors (genes). Now everyone knows that a "gene" represents a unit of genetic information encoded in DNA that is passed from parent to offspring and that interacts with the environment to help determine the physical and behavioural phenotype (the

"appearance") of the individual. But fewer people are familiar with the concept of the "meme," first introduced by evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins in 1976 (Dawkins, 1976). A "meme" is a unit of cultural information that, like a gene, can be passed between generations and that influences the "phenotype" of the culture. A meme can be a persistent belief, an entrenched assumption, a particular value, a scientific concept or a working technology. Memes are thus the basis of cultural inheritance. Significantly, memes differ from genes in that they can be shared and spread rapidly among living individuals in the *same* generation or population.

Indeed, people acquire much of their memetic endowment passively, just by being exposed to a particular cultural environment and various social contexts, including schools, religious institutions and the family home. Once acquired, such "cultural programming" asserts considerable, often subconscious, influence over both individual and group behaviour. (More on this to follow.) While an individual's meme-based cultural programming *can* be modified, we shall see that humans are often extremely resistant to change.

Genetic science tells us that genes generally do not perform solo. Many complex characteristics under genetic control are "polygenetic," i.e., they are influenced by several genes acting in consort as what might be called a "gene complex." Thus, we can extend the analogy and refer to any coherent, integrated set of memes that characterize a particular ideology, paradigm, discipline or worldview as a "meme complex."

Most importantly in the present context, meme theory holds that memes, like genes, vary within and among populations, are exposed to competition, can mutate, and will be exposed to varying biophysical and socio-cultural environments. In other words, memes are subject to a form of natural selection and evolve over time. It follows that if a meme or meme complex becomes maladaptive under particular environmental circumstances, it may be eliminated or selected out. Thus, while memetic evolution is theoretically much

faster than the genetic variety, there may be circumstances in which it is not fast enough. In extreme circumstances, whole societies stuck with maladaptive meme complexes have foundered and collapsed.

Premise 2: *H. sapiens* as work-in-progress

My second premise is that human evolution is incomplete. We may think of ourselves as the pinnacle of earthly evolution, but *H. sapiens* remains very much a work in progress. We can get a good sense of humanity-in-transition by considering just the brain. Neurologist Paul MacLean argued that the human brain has evolved in at least three overlapping phases, each with a corresponding anatomical sub-component having distinct functions, memory and intelligence. MacLean referred to the three quasi-independent structures of the human brain as the reptilian or R-complex (the brainstem and cerebellum), the limbic or paleo-mammalian system, and the neocortex or neo-mammalian brain (MacLean, 1990):

- The reptilian complex is concerned with autonomic functions associated with the body's physical survival (e.g., circulation and breathing). It also influences instinctive social behaviour (e.g., pertaining to territoriality, social stature, mating and dominance), executes the fight-or-flight response, and controls other mainly hard-wired ritualistic or instinctive behaviours.
- The limbic system is the primary seat of emotions (e.g., happiness, sorrow, pleasure, pain), personal identity and related behavioural responses (e.g., sexual behaviour, play, emotional bonding, separation calls, fighting, fleeing). It also houses our affective (emotion-charged) memories and seems to be the seat of our value judgments and informed intuition.
- The neocortex or rational brain is the most recent elaboration but occupies over two-thirds of the human brain by volume. More importantly, it is responsible for the higher cognitive functions that distinguish humans from other mammals; it is the seat of consciousness and the locus of abstract thought, reason and logic. It makes us uniquely capable of moral judgment and forward planning. The neocortex facilitates language, speech and writing and, with these, the very possibility of civilization.

Although some critics consider MacLean's conceptual separation of major brain components to be somewhat simplistic, animal and human research has generally supported the fundamental elements of the theory (Panksepp, 1998). In any event, however localized its various functions, the healthy brain generally acts as an integrated whole—the three sub-brain systems are intricately interconnected, each continuously influencing the others (e.g., emotions stimulate thought and thought may trigger emotion). The emergent behaviour and overall personality of the individual is thus a melding of thoughts, emotions and instincts. Under particular circumstances, however, one of the sub-brains, with its distinct capacities and limitations, may assume the dominant role. Significantly, *the individual may not be fully aware of which part of the brain is in control.*

This last point is particularly important in the context of (un) sustainability. Humans think of themselves as uniquely self-aware and rational. But because of the seeming success of the enlightenment project and subsequent scientific revolution in giving humans mastery over the physical world, western society has come to overestimate the power of mindful intelligence and reason. We seem to live in consciousness conferred by the human neocortex but remain paradoxically unaware of critical influences over our individual and group behaviour that spring from the lower brain centres (see Buchanan, 2007). The circumstances in which logic and reason dominate may still actually be limited and their effect relatively trivial in the grand evolutionary context.

What this implies is that much of expressed human behaviour, from routine one-on-one social interaction to international political posturing, is shaped, in part, by innate subconscious mental processes and their associated chemical/hormonal agents. Most importantly, in situations of conflict or resource scarcity, social/political/behavioural predispositions that operate beneath consciousness (i.e., in the limbic system and reptilian brain stem) may well override higher logic and rational thought in delivering a response. You will

all be aware—perhaps even from personal experience—that passion frequently trumps reason.

The main point to take from this is that *humanity is a conflicted species*, torn on the one hand between what reason and moral judgment says we should do and what pure emotion or baser instincts command us to do. With no knowledge of its neurological basis, 15th Century Italian Renaissance philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola nevertheless recognized the tension.

> Upon man [...] God bestowed seeds pregnant with all possibilities, the germs of every form of life. Whichever of these a man shall cultivate, the same will mature and bear fruit in him. If vegetative, he will become a plant; if sensual, he will become brutish; if rational, he will reveal himself a heavenly being (Mirandola, 1486).

Indeed, it is clear that Mirandola saw humanity's unique capacity for reason as a bridge to godliness and feared the consequences of "losing it" to more primitive drives. Blessed with the unique capacity to assert will and reason over more primitive instincts and passions, we are nevertheless inclined, absent the image of God, to serve the beasts within us. Famed modern-day neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, who studies the actual neuro-chemical mechanisms of such internal conflict, expressed the same idea as follows: "There are indeed potions in our own bodies and brains capable of forcing on us behaviours that we may or may not be able to suppress by strong resolution" (Damasio, 1994, p. 121).

Working Hypothesis: Humanity is Unsustainable by Nature

With this as background, let me advance the following double-barrelled elaboration of my opening hypothesis:

> Unsustainability is an inevitable emergent property of the systemic interaction between techno-industrial society, as presently conceived, and the ecosphere. Both purely innate (genetic) and quasi-cultural behavioural factors are involved.

Some explanation is in order. For present purposes we will define "emergent property" as a characteristic, quality or phenomenon that arises from the particular interaction of two complex systems. In this case, the interacting systems are techno-industrial society and the ecosphere. Thus, I am arguing that the various symptoms of unsustainability, from fisheries collapses to human-induced elements of climate change, emerge from fundamental incompatibilities between the structure and behaviour of natural ecosystems and the structure and behaviour of the human enterprise. Ecosystem behaviour is wholly determined by the laws of physics, chemistry and biology, and ultimately governed by the laws of thermodynamics. The human enterprise is subject to those same laws, but its actual behaviour is now as much influenced by various socially constructed technological and conceptual memes. Problems emerge when, for example, effects of techno-cultural innovations overwhelm the natural processes that ultimately sustain the integrated whole (e.g., fish-catching technology and fishers' strategies now vastly outstrip the escape mechanisms and reproductive capacities of fish stocks).

The biological drivers

Just what are the genetic presets that are pressing us toward the brink? The suspect biological drivers are basic reproductive and survival instincts that humans share with all other species. Many experiments with organisms ranging from bacteria cultured in Petri dishes to reindeer introduced to previously uninhabited islands reveal the following universal properties of life: *unless or until constrained by negative feedback, all species populations expand to occupy all accessible habitats and to use all available resources*. Moreover, in the competition for habitat and resources, evolution favours individuals who are most adept at satisfying their short-term selfish needs whether by strictly competitive or by cooperative means, despite potential negative consequences down the road—i.e., a tendency to discount the

future has evolved by natural selection. As my friend and colleague Dr. Ronald Brooks argues, the potential for ecological destruction "is not merely a cultural trait, or even a [human] species trait, but a characteristic of any species that has evolved by Darwinian selection" (Brooks, 2001, p. 72).

Of course, *H. sapiens* has always had to compete with other consumer species for food and other resources, and there is little doubt that humans have prevailed in the competition. In particular, written language and cumulative technology—unique assemblages of meme complexes—give us a powerful leg up in the Darwinian struggle. As a result, *H. sapiens* has the greatest geographic range of any ecologically comparable species. There is no sizable patch of habitable landscape on Earth that has not been claimed and occupied by people. And does anyone imagine that if, somehow, another resource-rich continent were discovered today we would collectively say, "Well, we've certainly messed up everywhere else. Let's just leave this one in its pristine state"? Consider the universal official response to the disappearing sea-ice in the Arctic. Do governments react in alarm and redouble efforts to negotiate a climate change mitigation treaty or otherwise protect the Arctic ecosystem? Certainly not! Canada and other circumpolar nations are tripping over each other in their frenzy to stake or reinforce their claims to the newly-exposed resource endowment of the ocean floor, including more of the petroleum and natural gas that are the cause of the problem in the first place (Gamble, 2009).

In fact, this is the typical human response to anything we take to be resources. One recent study shows that in terms of energy use (and therefore carbon dioxide emissions), biomass consumption and various other ecologically significant indicators, human demands dwarf those of similar species by orders of magnitude. Human consumption of biomass, for example, exceeds the upper 95% confidence limits for biomass ingestion by 95 other non-human mammal species by two orders of magnitude (Fowler & Hobbs,

2003). By virtue of cumulative knowledge and technology, *H. sapiens* has become, directly or indirectly, the dominant macro-consumer in all major terrestrial and accessible marine ecosystems on the planet.[3] All of which means that our species may well be the most voraciously successful predatory and herbivorous vertebrate ever to walk the earth. In this light we can interpret unsustainability as the most recent and possibly terminal manifestation of humanity's competitive superiority.

Humanity's extraordinary material success actually makes us the archetype for an idea first articulated by ecologist Alfred Lotka in 1922 and now known as the "maximum power principle": systems that prevail in the struggle for life (i.e., successful individuals, species and ecosystems) are those that evolve in ways that *maximize* their use of available energy and material resources (see Lotka, 1922). *H. sapiens*' adoption of agriculture ten millennia ago was the first great leap forward in our species' capacity to harvest energy from nature and the one that made permanent settlements and large-scale civilization possible. But more than any other factor, our ability to exploit fossil fuels explains the explosive expansion of the human enterprise that began in the 19th century. In effect, the modern world is made from petroleum.

There is, however, a compound problem.[4] First, despite today's material abundance, people's competitive drive and tendency to accumulate remains unsatisfied. Modern humans do not have a built-in "off" switch that is tripped by sufficiency (which, by the way, is the basis for the economists' caricature of humans as *Homo oeconomicus*, "a self-interested utility maximizer with fixed preferences and insatiable material demands"). Second, humanity's technological

3. This is ironic considering the common belief that the human enterprise is decoupling from, and no longer dependent on, nature.

4. Yet another problem I will not dwell on here is the approach of "peak oil," the point at which the extraction of petroleum levels off and begins its inexorable decline.

capacity to exploit nature now exceeds nature's reproductive capacity. The combined result of these forces haunts the sorry history of so-called resource management, particularly common pool assets: "While there is considerable variation in detail, there is remarkable consistency in the history of resource exploitation: resources are inevitably overexploited, often to the point of collapse or extinction" (Ludwig, Walters & Hilborn, 1993, p. 17). The implosion of North Atlantic cod in 1992, until then the world's greatest fishery, is a striking local example.

The cultural re-enforcer: The myth of perpetual growth

These basic facts of human ecology alone are sufficient to explain how even primitive hunter-gatherers often caused permanent changes in ecosystems, including the extinctions of many large mammals and (particularly flightless) birds. Certainly, too, humanity's expansionist tendencies, combined with such preindustrial technologies as sail-power, were sufficient to drive the European "rape of the world" that was well under way by the end of the 16th century (Ponting, 1991). But the contemporary sustainability crisis, the global-scale degradation that threatens the future of humanity itself, is a product of the industrial era. This is the period when cultural forces, endowed with unprecedented technological leverage, emerged to *reinforce* humanity's innate expansionism. In particular, industrial culture acquired a universal unifying goal—promoting economic growth has become the principal raison d'être of national governments the world over.

There is actually a second layer of nature-nurture interaction at work here. Humans are natural story-tellers and myth-makers. No society is without its myths and legends, its grand cultural narrative. In fact, the social construction of reality (or better, the social construction of perceptions) in the form of stories, myths, ideologies and paradigms is a universal property of human societies that plays a vital role in every culture including our own (Grant, 1998). The key point is that while the tendency to mythologize is yet another

vessel cast from our genes, what we put into it (in this case, the idea of perpetual growth) is determined by social and cultural context. If the modern mind has difficulty in accepting this notion, it is only because we prefer to believe that we are essentially a science-based culture. Most "educated" people have learned to equate myth with falsehood, superstition, and the mystical beliefs of "primitive" peoples.[5] But this is a particularly sterile and dismissive view of myth. Consider instead Colin Grant's description of myths "not as mistaken views but as comprehensive visions that give shape and direction to life" (Grant, 1998, p. 1).

With this perspective in mind, I submit that the entire world today is united in a grand mythic vision of global development and poverty alleviation centred on unlimited economic expansion fuelled by open markets and more liberalized trade. This myth springs from the assumption that human well-being derives from perpetual income growth. No other cultural narrative in all of history has given greater "shape and direction to [the lives]" of so many people (Rees, 2002).

The perpetual growth ethic, still spreading into the developing world, has actually taken hold in a remarkably short period of time. Only eight or ten generations of people have experienced sufficient economic growth or related technological change to notice it in their lifetimes—99.5% of human history has been no-growth history. As an *influential* memetic construct, perpetual economic growth has actually been around for only *two* generations. Indeed, there was virtually no interest in economic growth as a policy objective anywhere before 1950. Yet by the end of the 50s, economic growth had bubbled to the top as the "supreme overriding objective of policy"

5. Balance these perceptions against the fact that much of politics and international (i.e., intertribal) tension in the modern world, from the recent pervasive influence of Christian fundamentalism in US governance to the perennial Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle-East, is essentially myth-based.

in many countries. By then, "…more rapid economic growth came to be regarded as a prophylactic or remedy for all the major current ailments of western economies" (Arndt, 1978, cited in Victor, 2008, p. 13). Here the point to remember is that like maladaptive genes, ill-considered memes—no matter how successful in the short term—may ultimately be selected out by a changing environment.

Indeed, the problem for sustainability is that the perpetual growth myth knows no ecological bounds. Mainstream academic models of the economy make no functional reference whatsoever to the ecosystems that contain it. Co-lateral damage to the environment is considered to be a mere "negative externality" that can be corrected by appropriate pricing through, for example, pollution charges or taxes. Resource shortages? No matter—we can relieve local shortages through trade, and should the problem be more widespread, we play the technology card—the expansionist myth asserts that human ingenuity will find a substitute for any depleting resource. The late business professor Julian Simon put the techno-mantra this way:

> Technology exists now to produce in virtually inexhaustible quantities just about all the products made by nature… We have in our hands now—actually in our libraries—the technology to feed, clothe and supply energy to an ever-growing population for the next seven billion years… (Simon, 1995).

This is such an arithmetically challenged statement that only the terminally gullible would take it seriously,[6] but it makes the point to which Simon dedicated his business and academic life—there is no basis whatsoever for concern about resource scarcity or ecological

6. Simon was, in fact, challenged on this statement and promptly backed down to "seven million years," a three orders of magnitude retreat. Nevertheless, starting from 5.7 billion people in 1995, growing at just 1% per year, the human population after "only" seven million years would be 2.3×10^{30410}. This is an unimaginably large number, something like "thirty-thousand orders of magnitude larger than the number of atoms estimated to be in the known universe!" (Bartlett, 1998).

degradation. Indeed, growth advocates regard environmentalists and other critics as imposing a dangerous drag on the world's growth-based pursuit of progress.

It goes almost without saying that industrial capitalism both feeds and feeds on perpetual growth—material accumulation is both the objective of and a necessary fuel for the capitalist production and consumption. But because of its insatiable thirst for cheap resources and labour, capital has become tightly tied to the political and military power needed to sustain its global expansion (just as US President Eisenhower warned it would). The history of conflict since WW-II (particularly the recently ended Bush administration's record) shows how this particular alignment of powers responds to any effort to resist it.

Finally, we must note the average citizen's generally unconscious role in all this. Capitalism needs people to buy its prodigious output. In the 1950s, private capital therefore began to re-think what has become today's multi-hundred-billion dollar advertising industry to flog the products of its factories. At that point, the social construction of reality had become a commercial enterprise with the goal of converting potentially self-aware citizens into autonomic consumers. (By the way, this is achieved by playing on people's innate insecurities, competitive instincts, envy, concerns about social status, etc., i.e., a bevy of emotions and instincts resident in the mid-brain and R-complex.) Our throw-away consumer society was literally invented by private capital mainly to serve the interests of private capital. Listen to how 1950s marketing expert Victor Lebow described the mission:

> Our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction and our ego satisfaction in consumption. We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced and discarded at an ever-increasing rate (Lebow, 1955).

Little wonder that theologian Colin Grant describes the consumer sub-myth as going beyond materialism: "…it is about spiritual reality. It represents the most sustained attempt in the history of humanity to accord total spiritual significance to material consumption" (Grant, 1998). All of which underscores an essential factor impeding progress toward sustainability: The current generation of people has been thoroughly, if unconsciously, socially engineered as reflexive mega-consumers with no consideration of the long-term effects on personal health or the earth.

Parsing the Growth-Based Development Myth

I have argued that the modern world is in the thrall of a global development myth based on continuous economic growth. This myth essentially equates human well-being with ever-rising income (i.e., capacity to consume). It posits that we need ever greater money-wealth to provide the means better to protect the environment. The myth promotes global economic integration as a means to increase gross economic output by taking advantage of the efficiencies associated with specialization and trade. Most importantly, in the present context, growth advocates argue that economic expansion is essential to relieve the debilitating poverty that is still the dominant reality for at least a third of the human family.

It seems appropriate to assess how we are doing in light of these assumptions and in pursuit of these goals: What does the empirical record of the past half century tell us not only about the merits of the myth itself but also about the human nature of (un)sustainability?

- First, we know that growth-driven "development" is degrading the biophysical basis of our own existence—and the problem is not just climate change. Humans are acidifying the oceans; deserts are spreading; tropical forests are disappearing; biodiversity is declining; fisheries are collapsing; soils are eroding; aquifers are falling; surface waters are polluted beyond life and use, etc. The climate system and major ecosystems are approaching tipping points

beyond which they may well "flip" into new equilibrium states that might not be compatible with human economic or ecological needs. Such changes may be irreversible in practical terms on time scales that matter to people. Again, the collapse of Canada's Northern Cod stocks serves as an archetype of systems collapse. Obviously, such trends can only detract from long-term human well-being.

- We know that the world's most serious ecological problems (e.g., climate change) can be traced mainly to high-income consumers. The wealthy have per-capita ecological footprints twenty or more times larger than the very poor. The richest 20% of the population consumes most of the world's economic and ecological output (see below). Clearly, greater income is no assurance of greater environmental protection.
- We know that while economic growth has raised millions out of poverty, the absolute number of poor has never been greater. Particularly in the impoverished parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America, about 1.2 billion people still lack access to potable water and 2.6 billion have no sanitary or sewage facilities. Almost a billion people live on less than a dollar per day and most are calorically deprived. About 2.6 billion people or 40% of the human population live in poverty at less than two dollars a day and most are otherwise malnourished. Over 26,000 children die every day from poverty (meaning hunger, water-borne and other preventable illnesses) (Shah, 2008; World Bank, 2008).These billions of people, ostensibly the intended beneficiaries of global growth, would benefit greatly from even modest income increases but are gaining little ground.

By contrast:

- We know that the greatest share of national and global income growth flows to upper income groups who need it least. In 2006 the world's wealthiest countries with one billion people—15% of the world population—accounted for 76% of gross world product ($36.6 trillion out of $48.2 trillion). The richest 20% of the world's population take home 76.6% of the world's income; the poorest 20% subsist on 1.5% (Shah, 2008; UNDP, 2007).

- We know that further income growth for the rich is borderline futile and certainly an egregious waste of the world's resources. Beyond a certain point, a point long past in the development of high-income countries, there is no significant positive relationship between various objective indicators of population health (longevity, infant mortality, post-operative survival, etc.) and rising incomes (Siegel, 2006; Victor, 2008). The same is true for subjective indicators, measures of "felt" well-being (e.g., for the United States, Robert Lane describes "…the strange, seemingly contradictory pattern … of rising real income and a falling index of subjective well-being" (Lane, 2000).
- Nevertheless, we know that the income gap both among and within countries is widening. In 1960, the 20% of the world's people living in the richest countries took home 30 times the income of the poorest 20%; by 1997, this had increased to 74 times as much. The average American, who was 38 times richer than the average Tanzanian in 1990, was 61 times richer in 2005. (By 2005, the average African household was consuming 20% less than it did 25 years ago [UNDP, 2005]). As noted, the already- wealthy increasingly appropriate the greatest share of national income growth. As a result, by 2000, the richest 5% of the United States' population owned 60% of that nation's wealth. That is, the top 5% had more wealth than the remaining 95% of the population combined. (The US now has the widest income gap of any high-income nation.)
- We also know—ironically—that one of the most significant contributors to declining population health and increasing civil unrest in poor and rich countries alike is income disparity. Countries with increasing inequality and deepening social divisions "…tend to show markedly higher rates of alcohol-related deaths, accidents, homicide, crime, violence and probably drug use" (Wilkinson, 1996). Yet we actively promote national and global political economies that systematically and dramatically increase inequity. More than 80% of the human population lives in countries where income differentials are increasing, including Canada and the US (UNDP, 2007).

It seems that over the past few decades virtually the entire world has bought into an economic growth paradigm that, contrary to its implicit assumptions and stated goals, is wrecking the ecosphere, undermining essential life-support systems, failing the chronically poor, making the already-rich richer without improving well-being, and increasing inequality virtually everywhere with negative implications for population health and social stability. This is not exactly a stellar record. As ecological economist Herman Daly has frequently argued, we may be well into a period of uneconomic growth in which the (mostly unaccounted) costs *outweigh* the benefits. Yet the universal response to these failings—and, most recently, to the collapse of the global financial system—is to add fuel to the (now somewhat dampened) fire. Rather than seize the opportunity to create a potentially sustainable new economy, governments everywhere are attempting to resurrect the old—bailing out corrupt financiers and failed banks, salvaging a grossly mismanaged auto industry, lowering interest rates, assembling stimulus packages and doing everything else they can to reignite the flames of national and global growth.

And we have certainly not forgotten that programmed automaton, the lowly consumer. Governments are lowering income taxes to renew people's enthusiasm for performing their assigned role in the capitalist economy (and the blind-sided "beneficiaries" mostly cheer, apparently oblivious to the fact that this means reducing government services that they may actually need). The media are certainly firmly with the program. A recent *Globe and Mail* editorial chided Canadians for their thrift and parsimony, even in these uncertain times. Saving apparently stifles growth. For our own good, the *Globe* urged, "spend wisely, but spend nonetheless" (*Globe & Mail*, 2009).

Now, an alien observer might be puzzled by all this. Can we really claim to be a science-based society? Certainly repetitive futile actions are not the mark of high intelligence. Wasn't it Einstein who quipped, "insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting different results?"

But this precisely is the point—intelligence and reason are not the primary determinants of human social behaviour. It is raw instinct and emotion, combined with familiar constructed beliefs, not logical analysis and reason, that "give shape and direction to life." We prefer our myths and ignore the data; shared illusion provides a psychological shield against the harsh barbs of reality. Popular social critic and environmentalist Derrick Jenson nailed the point nicely when he wrote that:

> For us to maintain our way of living, we must… tell lies to each other, and especially to ourselves… [the lies] are necessary because without them many deplorable acts would become impossibilities (Jensen, 2000).

Intelligence, Self-Delusion and Sustainability

Modern humans may not be insane but we can make the case that they are genuinely confused. I argued earlier that *H. sapiens* is a conflicted species "torn on the one hand between what reason or moral judgement says we should do and what pure emotion or baser instincts command us to do." I want now to return to that argument.

In 1955, at the time economic growth was pushing its way to prominence on the policy agenda, German philosopher Martin Heidegger lamented that "…man today is *in flight from thinking*" (Heidegger, 2003, p. 88). Heidegger was not referring to the short-term, goal-driven *calculative* thinking of the kind that, for example, drives the economy, advances technology and proliferates electronic gadgetry. He meant that people have abandoned *meditative* thinking, that uniquely human form of intellectual activity that contemplates "…the meaning which reigns in everything that is" (Heidegger, 2003, p. 89).

Meditative thinking requires concentrated effort, wilful determination, and active consciousness in deep exploration of present reality. This is the kind of thinking that is missing from the roiling boil of modern life. Heidegger is arguing that we moderns have

allowed to "lie fallow" one of our greatest and uniquely human abilities. Instead we are being swept along in the techno-material tide, guided, if at all, by careless whims and sheep-like adherence to prevailing mythology.

Our Renaissance philosopher friend, Mirandola, actually anticipated Heidegger's concern by 500 years (unconscious human behaviour is fairly constant). Indeed, we may well be living Mirandola's worst nightmare. You will recall that Mirandola intuitively sensed the evolutionary role of the cerebral cortex—to him the capacity for contemplative thinking was a gift of God that raised man above the beasts. But Mirandola feared that even his contemporaries disparaged philosophy, seeing the pursuit of answers about "the causes of things, the ways of nature and the plan of the universe" as "occasion for contempt…, rather than honour and glory." He was pained to recognize that society had "reached the point… where the only persons accounted wise are those who can reduce the pursuit of wisdom to a profitable traffic." In Mirandola's view, "…if you see a man [thus] bedazzled by the empty forms of the imagination… and through their alluring solicitations made a slave to his own senses [read: emotions and instincts], you see a brute and not a man" (Mirandola, 1486).

Exactly so. By allowing our capacity for self-conscious intelligence to "lie fallow," we also allow relatively brutish behavioural predispositions that originate *beneath* consciousness in the limbic system and brainstem to dominate our actions. Short-term self-interest, material greed, possessive accumulation, competitive exclusion—these have been the primary and proudly public drivers of industrial capitalism's expansion around the world in recent decades.

By contrast, acting with high intelligence, consistent with the scientific evidence on global change, and exercising our capacity for moral judgment would require that rich countries recognize that it

is now in their own long-term interest to not only give up the idea of continuous material growth but begin a planned *shrinkage* of their national economies. This is necessary on a finite planet already in overshoot to make room for needed growth in the developing world (Rees, 2008; Victor, 2008). Climate science says that to avoid potentially catastrophic climate change, global society must reduce its CO_2 emissions by 80-90% by mid-century, beginning almost immediately (and even this may prove too little, too late). Similarly, our eco-footprint work shows that for sustainability with equity, North Americans would have to reduce their ecological footprints by about 80%, from around nine global average hectares per capita to our "fair Earth-share" of about two ghas (Rees, 2006; WWF, 2008).

These may seem to be impossible goals, but analysis shows that we actually have the technology today to enable a 75% reduction in energy and (some) material consumption (e.g., Weizsäcker *et al.*, 1997) while improving quality of life in the first world and increasing general well-being in the developing countries. Remember, too, that on average, people in wealthy countries were actually happier with half and less of today's average per-capita income.

Yet we do not act, even to save ourselves. Contraction is not the narrative people are used to hearing; it is not a story we want to heed. Privileged elites with the greatest personal stake in the *status quo* control the policy levers and are steering us onto the rocks. Ordinary people hold to the expansionist myth as to a life-raft, in deep denial of present reality. It seems we are all willing to trade off uncertain but potentially major long-term gain (i.e., cultural survival) to avoid the certain but minor short-term pain of having to adjust our lifestyles. Despite the growing scale of potential catastrophe, the innate human tendency to discount the future remains intact. And, of course, the world dismisses those analysts who have actually thought things through. Nineteenth century behavioural psychologist Gustave Le Bon described the syndrome well in his book on the workings of "the popular mind":

> The masses have never thirsted after truth. They turn aside from evidence that is not to their taste, preferring to deify error, if error seduce[s] them. Whoever can supply them with illusions is easily their master; whoever attempts to destroy their illusions is always their victim. (Gustave le Bon, 1896).

Le Bon's observation is no mere curiosity. Cognitive blocks and resultant behavioural inertia can determine the fates of nations. The distinguished American historian, Barbara Tuchman, details the tragic effects of self-delusion on entire societies through millennia in her 1984 classic, *The March of Folly*. According to Tuchman, political folly or "wooden-headedness":

> [...] plays a remarkably large role in government. It consists in assessing a situation in terms of preconceived fixed notions [i.e., ideology] while ignoring any contrary signs. It is acting according to wish while not allowing oneself to be deflected by the facts (Tuchman, 1984, p. 7).

For those who still doubt the power of entrenched beliefs over thoughtful deliberation, recent cognitive research has revealed a physiological mechanism. During early development and maturation, social, cultural and sensory experiences actually *shape* the individual's brain structures and synaptic circuitry in an "image" of those experiences. Once entrenched, these neural structures alter the individual's subsequent experience and perception. People tend to seek out experiences that reinforce their pre-set neural circuitry and select information from their environment that matches these structures. Conversely, "when faced with information that does not agree with their internal structures, they deny, discredit, reinterpret or forget that information" (Wexler, 2006, p. 180).

This problem may be particularly acute among political leaders because yet another mechanism is at play. When people perceive a threat to their status, safety or survival, innate behavioural propensities that operate beneath consciousness in the limbic system and brain-stem tend to override more rational defensive responses.

Thus, in addition to being psychologically hard-wired to their political ideologies, politicians may be more than usually enslaved to brainstem-based survival instincts, particularly the deep-seated need to retain their wealth, prestige and political power. So it is that in the history of human affairs, brutish passion and instinct often overwhelm the godly gift of reason (Morrison, 1999).

There is a still further complicating factor in the context of sustainability. Globalization, that hand-maiden to expansionist logic, has lead to such an entanglement of interests and nations, that individual people and countries who do understand the ecological crisis cannot act to save themselves even if inclined to do so. In a thoroughly interconnected world (un)sustainability is a collective crisis that demands collective solutions. Nations that act alone to rationalize their economies would have to abrogate various international treaties and agreements (on trade, for example) and would be regarded as rogues or renegades. Unless most others followed, they would put themselves at great contemporary disadvantage with no long-term benefit—they would inevitably go down with the global ship. Machiavelli, the more cynical contemporary of Mirandola, understood this well, when he observed that:

> […] the way men live is so far removed from the way they ought to live that anyone who abandons what is for what should be pursues his downfall rather than his preservation (Machiavelli, 2003, p. 7).

Conclusions: Coming to Grips with Reality

I want to be sure that we understand the full import of what I am proposing here. Our current unsustainable state is actually the product of *H. sapiens*' inordinate evolutionary success in the struggle for existence. The same genetic traits that assured the survival and competitive supremacy of primitive peoples, however—e.g., an emphasis on short-term individual self-interest, future discounting, loyalty to tribal myths, etc.—have become maladaptive for modern humans in the much-changed circumstances created by humanity's success

itself. To make matters worse, our now disadvantageous innate behavioural traits are being reinforced by cultural memes—e.g., the perpetual growth myth—that were maladaptive from the start. The problem is that both bad genes and inappropriate memes may be selected out by an ecosphere in convulsion. Modern human society is unsustainable by nature.

This thesis is not entirely speculative. Various previous cultures great and small have initially flourished, only later to succumb to problems exacerbated by their behavioural demons. According to anthropologist Joseph Tainter "…what is perhaps most intriguing in the evolution of human societies is the regularity with which the pattern of increasing complexity is interrupted by collapse…" (Tainter, 1995). The inability to cope with climate change and ecological degradation in particular are implicated in the ruin of various cultures throughout history (Diamond, 2005). Once again, assuming our contemporary science is correct, the human enterprise is on a collision course with biophysical reality, only this time on a global scale.[7] The world may already be at a point where there are insufficient resources and sinks to support a population of eight or nine billion people at an acceptable material standard.[8] It is therefore by no means a stretch to contemplate the decline if not rapid collapse of global society (e.g., Greer, 2008).

As this possibility becomes clearer to panicking governments everywhere, prospects for a negotiated collective solution will likely fade in inverse proportion. The tension between reason and fear would dissolve like sugar in hot rum. Base survival instincts—looking out for number one, now!—would prevail among still-powerful

7. And so far, the science actually appears conservative—climate models, for example, have underestimated the rate of change experienced in recent years.

8. Given the critical state of key biophysical systems and the accelerating pace of degradation, it may not be possible to sustain even today's 6.7 billion people at an acceptable material standard.

nations clinging to desperate dreams of maintaining the *status quo*, at least for themselves. Thus, we may well face a future of wars fought not so much over conflicting beliefs as over access to the world's dwindling supplies of vital energy, mineral and agricultural resources. The shape of US foreign policy in recent years provides a foreshadowing template. (There is no shortage of books and reports exploring this scenario—e.g., Klare [2001], Woodbridge [2004], CSIS [2007]). Of course, if any one nation plays its nuclear card, the entire human species would be at risk.

Can We Fix the Future?

The sustainability conundrum obviously poses the ultimate challenge to collective intelligence, complex reasoning and the capacity for moral judgment, vital qualities we humans claim as uniquely our own. The copious historical evidence that, in times of crisis, these cerebral properties generally yield to evolutionarily older and better-tested emotional (limbic) and instinctive (R-complex) intelligence is therefore somewhat disheartening. The integrated human brain obviously does not yet trust higher-order intelligence to be in charge when the pressure is on. The question is whether the world community can muster the sheer cooperative will needed to reverse the intellectual dominance order in today's extraordinary times.

Success in this effort may be necessary for the survival of civilization for one simple reason. For the first time in the evolutionary history of *H. sapiens*, short-term individual and "tribal" self-interest has all but converged with humanity's long-term collective interest. Ecological and social selection pressures have shifted. In today's nuclear-tipped world, "*every man for himself!*" might well mean destruction for all; working cooperatively for all may be necessary to save oneself. This means that the selective advantage has shifted to genes that reinforce cooperative, even (mutually) altruistic behaviour. The question is whether we can create the necessary complementary memetic mutations. Social reinforcement of newly

adaptive mutualistic behaviours is necessary for collective survival in a resource-stressed world.

It is said that in every crisis is opportunity. To date, responses to global financial and economic meltdown have focused on reproducing the economic pyramid scheme(s) that precipitated the problem in the first place. Instead, the available data, intelligently interpreted, suggest that the world community should seize the moment to begin the creation of a global steady-state economy. The guiding principles should be sufficiency for all and a focus on true development (getting qualitatively better) rather than mere growth (getting quantitatively bigger).[9]

In other words, the global crisis offers us the privileged mission—should we choose to accept it—of setting out intentionally to script a new, ecologically adaptive, socially enriching global cultural narrative. This new master blueprint must better reflect ecological reality on a crowded planet than does our failing growth-based paradigm.

Competition, greed, and fetishistic individualism must be balanced or replaced by cooperation, sharing and community values; short-term material wants must give way to long-term survival needs. The key is to recognize that all these terms can found in the dictionary of human behaviour, but the vocabulary we choose to give voice to our new "narrative for survival" is a matter of social choice.

Of course, any attempt to engineer a social transition must confront the fact that humans are naturally behaviourally conservative. We are indeed creatures of habit. Once an individual's synaptic pathways and associated behaviours are well-entrenched, it is difficult for

9. "Steady-state" implies a more or less constant rate of energy and material throughput compatible with the productive and assimilative capacities of the ecosphere (Daly, 1991). Humans must learn to live within the means of nature.

that person to adapt to significant changes in either the socio-cultural or biophysical environments. To re-establish cognitive consonance between programmed perceptions and new environmental realities requires that the affected parties engage wilfully in the restructuring of their own neural pathways and psychological states. Even when people accept that such "reprogramming" is necessary, the process it can be lengthy, difficult and unpredictable (Wexler, 2006). The good news comes from research showing that the human brain is remarkably plastic (e.g., Schwartz & Begley, 2002). Assuming the availability of adequate resources and political will, it is therefore theoretically possible to inscribe a new narrative even on the resistant psyches of the present generation. Sustainability may yet be within our grasp. Humanity, that wondrous work-in-progress, may yet have an opportunity to pull itself up another rung on the evolutionary ladder.

Epilogue

In essence, the sustainability challenge for the present generation is to come fully to consciousness and to elevate humanity's capacities for collective intelligence, inclusive reasoning and moral judgment to positions of greater prominence in global politics as it pertains to issues of ecological change. This is theoretically possible but will be extremely difficult. Many would argue that the inordinate diversity of the human family and its distressing array of conflicting values and interests, combined with the power of maladaptive instincts and contrary narratives, render any such plan for global self-rescue little more than a utopian dream. Indeed, given the record to date, its probability of success is less than that for the survival of an overcrowded Newfie dory adrift without power in the wintery North Atlantic.

Other analysts recognize this conundrum. Sweden's 2007 Tällberg Forum focused on the question "How on Earth can we live together?" Discussions closed with two other questions together with answers: "*Do we know what to do? Probably yes. Will we do it?*

Probably not." Participants apparently saw this as a "realistic view of our common situation with regard to climate, sustainability and the necessary transition we must all achieve" (Tällberg Forum, 2008).

Discouraging? Yes—but it is up to every one of us, acting together, to prove the 2007 Tällberg Forum wrong. If we do not succeed in realizing our collective dream, modern humans will, indeed, wind up visiting vast misery on themselves and irretrievably mutilating their planetary home (see UCS, 1992). As I have written elsewhere, "It would be a tragic irony if, in the 21st century, this most technologically sophisticated of human societies finally succumbs to the unconscious urgings of fatally self-interested primitive tribalism. The cycle of societal collapse will have closed once again, this time on the global scale" (Rees, 2002).

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Shana Poplack

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BIOGRAPHY

World-renowned sociolinguist Shana Poplack studies language as it is spoken, especially in bilingual and minority language contexts in Canada. With her unique data banks of natural speech, she uses novel analytical methods to trace the evolution of speech varieties within their social, historical, and linguistic contexts.

Insights from Shana Poplack's studies of spoken Canadian French, Canadian English, African American vernaculars, New World Spanish, and the language of urban immigrant communities have challenged received wisdom about the quality of these languages. She demonstrated that alternating between languages in bilingual discourse is a skill, not a defect, and that borrowing vocabulary does not disrupt the grammatical structure of the recipient language. She showed that Black English (in Nova Scotia, for instance) is neither incorrect nor a creole, but an offshoot of Early Modern English that resisted mainstream linguistic change. She debunked the purist idea that natural internal grammatical developments in Canadian French are "corruptions" imposed by contact with English.

Shana Poplack studied in France and the United States, earning her Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania before joining the University of Ottawa in 1981. She has had an unbroken string of Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada research grants, enabling her to maintain her world-acclaimed Sociolinguistics Laboratory. A prolific and highly respected scholar, she has published a long series of influential papers and books, e.g., *African American English in the Diaspora* (2001), and is a perennial keynote speaker at linguistics and language conferences worldwide.

She is Canada Research Chair in Linguistics and Distinguished University Professor at the University of Ottawa, a Killam Research Fellow (2001), a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and a recipient of the Society's Chauveau Medal (2005). Shana Poplack was nominated a Trudeau Fellow in 2007; she received the Killam Prize in the Humanities in 2007, and the 2008 Premier's Discovery Award in the Social Sciences and Humanities. She was recently named Fellow of the Linguistic Society of America.

ABSTRACT

When Shana Poplack came to Canada many years ago, she noticed differences between the French she had learned in school and the French spoken here. Local francophones were quick to assure her that their language was *not* the language of Voltaire: good French was to be found in France. Where did this idea come from? Who decides what is good and what is not? If the way we speak is non-standard, then what is standard? Who speaks it? Shana Poplack will tell us the surprising story of how the grammatical enterprise has failed to regulate the way we speak, based on her research confronting the way grammatical rules have evolved since the 16th century with our speech today. Using examples from French and English, she will show us that the notion of standard language is an arbitrary one, and that the forms grammars prescribe have little to do with the language we speak.

LECTURE

What Language Do We Speak?

University of Moncton (New Brunswick)

FEBRUARY 24, 2009

Introduction[1]

Ever since I can remember, I have loved language. Originally, in its "expressive" and "poetic" capacities: the way it could be used to create beautiful literature and poetry. But I was introduced to the incredible power of the spoken word very early on. That happened when I moved to New York City from Pennsylvania at the age of nine. At that time, New York City had a very distinctive variety of English, which, in contrast to its restaurants, museums, and fashion statements, was not admired or emulated. Rather, it was *stigmatized,* not only by outsiders, but by New Yorkers themselves. This phenomenon, known as "linguistic insecurity," turns out to be widespread across the world, including of course in Canada. One of the things I want to explore in this paper is the nature of the force that instills such insecurity: the prescriptive grammatical enterprise.

Now although New Yorkers may have found fault with the way they themselves spoke, they were also fiercely proud of it. I found *that* out the hard way, when my peers singled me out for my Pennsylvania

1. The research on which this paper is based is part of a larger project entitled "Confronting prescription and praxis in the evolution of grammar" generously supported by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (#410-99-0378) and Killam Foundation grants. It is the fruit of a joint effort with Nathalie Dion, and many other members of the University of Ottawa Sociolinguistics Laboratory, who participated in the collection, transcription, location, extraction, coding and analysis of tens of thousands of tokens of data that form the basis of this study.

vowels, which were quite different (albeit not stigmatized) from their native New York City vowels. These experiences drove home the realization that in people's minds, not all ways of speaking are the same, and some of those ways are perceived as better than others. The quizzical—but still jovial—remarks about my "accent" assumed their true importance later, when I saw their counterparts being levelled, without any of the joviality, at the many minority groups that make up New York City, whose distinctive varieties of English—variously labelled Black English, Spanglish, Chinglish, etc.—are widely considered to be deficient, incorrect, and just plain bad. And these value judgments have had serious repercussions in terms of educational failure, employability, and unequal opportunity for their speakers.

By the time I got to university, my love of language had morphed into a love of languages, and I majored in the Romance family, studying French, Spanish and Portuguese. Before I even finished university this fascination had propelled me to the countries where these languages are spoken, and I ended up doing graduate work in Paris at the Sorbonne. That was another eye-opener. There I learned that despite years of studying French, and the facility I had acquired with Racine, Molière and Corneille, not to mention modern classics, I could not order a cup of coffee or a pack of cigarettes without being asked to repeat myself over and over. And those efforts would then be ridiculed and/or corrected by the shopkeeper or policeman or bureaucrat I was trying to engage. The take-home message was that there was a right way to speak French and I was not doing it. Imagine my surprise when I learned years later that native francophones from Belgium, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Tunisia, Haiti and of course Canada were not doing it either. It was not Parisian French, so it was not good.

Despite all this, in Paris I fell in love with what was to become my life's work: sociolinguistics, or the scientific study of language in its social context—the way real people speak in real life and the repercussions this may have for them and the members of the speech communities in which they live.

I had the incredible good fortune to do my Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania, under the direction of William Labov, the founder of modern sociolinguistics. Labov has dedicated himself to converting people's random impressions about language into replicable science, a preoccupation which I inherited.

It was in my capacity as a sociolinguist that I was hired in the 1980s by the University of Ottawa. The national capital region, like any bilingual area, is heaven on earth for a sociolinguist—a natural laboratory for the study of language contact and language change. It is also a place where once again linguistic differences emerged at the very forefront of the provincial and national discourse about language rights and linguistic inequality. The gist of this discourse is that Canadian French is very different from European French (or more precisely, the prestige dialects of European French), and not in a good way. Some people point to the supposedly archaic nature of Canadian French, alleging that it retains older forms that have since disappeared from modern European counterparts, like *char* (car), *breuvage* (drink), *barrer* (lock) and *astheure* (now or nowadays). For those who endorse this view, the problem is that Canadian French has *failed* to change in tandem with the mainstream varieties. But much more troublesome is the widespread idea that it *has* changed, mainly via attrition, through loss of core vocabulary and important grammatical features like the subjunctive, for example. And most people, laypeople as well as linguists, ascribe this to one or both of the following reasons: 1) separation from the European metropolis, where the language has supposedly remained in its pristine state, and 2) long-term contact with English, the majority language in most of the country. These are thought to have caused the minority language to lose its distinctive traits, while imposing other, English-origin features that contravene the spirit of the French language. Both of these ideas are eminently reasonable, but when I tried to find scientific proof, I learned that neither scenario had ever been confirmed empirically. This became the linchpin of a wide-ranging, decades-

long research program into *how* language changes and what role, if any, language contact plays.

Now in order to claim that language (or anything else) has changed, it is necessary to know what it has changed *from.* This requires access to an earlier stage predating the change. In the case of linguistic change, it should be an earlier stage of the *spoken* language, since it is in speech that most changes originate and spread; the written language is much the same wherever it is used. But the groundwork that this entails is usually bypassed, under the assumption that the "standard" language constitutes a viable benchmark for comparison. As a consequence, when a particular way of speaking differs from the standard, the inference is that it is the result of a *change.* This makes it crucial to understand what the standard actually is, and this question was the driving force behind the massive project I describe here, and the surprising finding that the standard is not the immutable entity it is thought to be. As we shall see, it is more an ideology than anything else.

Products of Standardization

Normal everyday speech often differs considerably from what is designated as "standard," because of its core property: inherent *variability,* or alternate ways of expressing the same thing. This variability exists at every level of linguistic structure, from the sound system to the syntax, as in the examples below, taken from the speech of ordinary individuals.

1. a. "I mean, when I'm talk***ing*** franglais." (QEC.004.1179)[2]

b. "And I said, 'If things don't change around here, I'm gett***in'*** out of here.'" (QEC.037.630)

2. Codes in parentheses refer to corpus (QEC= Quebec English Corpus [Poplack *et al.,* 2006], H = *Corpus of Ottawa-Hull French* [Poplack, 1989], RFQ = *Récits du français québécois d'autrefois* [Poplack & St-Amand, 2007]), speaker and line number. All corpora are housed at the Sociolinguistics Laboratory, University of Ottawa. Examples are reproduced verbatim from audio recordings.

2. "I understand ***there wasn't*** really too many argument**s** over that. Everyone like pretty much made a big joke about any clique**s** ***there were*** about that." (QEC.303.1018)

3. a. "And now—nowadays the tooth fairy gives out like five-dollar bills, I'***m like*** 'I used to get a quarter, if I was lucky'." (QEC.304.1013)

b. "People notice it when I go over to Ontario. They ***say***, 'You're not from here, are you?'" (QEC.126.1383)

4. a. "And when I hear these mothers say, 'Well I ca***n't*** do ***no***thing with my child', oh, I wanna cry." (QEC.006.2530)

b. "But then next semester I ca***n't*** take ***any***thing extra, 'cause we have a *stage* at the end, like with the compressed semester." (QEC.067.237)

From a scientific linguistic point of view, these pairs of variant expressions are *equivalent,* in the sense that they are both equally effective at transmitting the *referential* message we want to convey. Thus, whether we say I'm *talk**ing***, as in (1a), or I'm *gett**in'***, as in (1b), the interpretation that the activity is ongoing (which is the meaning of the {*-ing*} suffix) is equally available. Likewise, whether we say *there **were** cliques* with verbal agreement or *there **wasn't** arguments,* without, it is equally clear that the referent is plural. Linguistically speaking, then, the alternating forms convey the same information. But from a social perspective, this is far from the case. In fact, faced with a choice between alternatives like these, most of us will readily identify some as "right" and some as "wrong," or at the very least, some as superior and others to be avoided at all costs.

Consider the variant forms of quoting shown in (3). Most would agree that the *be like* quotative (3a) is the flighty, silly way of reporting speech, and that *say* (3b) is correct. The same is true of the alternate ways of negating an utterance illustrated in (4). If your teachers were like mine, you probably learned that "double negatives" (4a) are wrong, even illogical, since "two negatives [purportedly] make a positive."

Such attitudes are widely shared by English speakers worldwide, regardless of prevailing usage patterns. In fact, empirical quantitative research has shown that Canadians under 30 use the quotative *be like* up to 90% of the time (Dion & Poplack, 2007). It is ousting the older *say* to such an extent that at this point it is unclear whether or how long *say* will survive. "Double" negatives, as in (4), have been with us since Middle English, and they are perfectly logical, and in fact prescriptively obligatory, in French as well as other Romance languages.

If the variant forms are equivalent from a communicative perspective, where do these shared ideas about right and wrong, good and bad, come from? They are the product of *standardization,* the process of selecting one of a set of competing forms and ratifying it as correct. The aim of standardization is to *fix* language in some pure, uniform state, and this in turn entails eradicating this kind of linguistic variability and resisting language change. The prescribed uses are then imposed and diffused by normative institutions such as schools, grammar books and language academies like the *Académie française* and the *Office de la langue française*. This is how they eventually filter into the collective consciousness.

The study of language as it is actually *spoken* on the ground, even by the most highly educated individuals, reveals not only that it is replete with variability, but that the variant forms are *not* used according to the prescriptions of language "authorities." The familiar examples of well-known and widely prescribed grammatical rules reproduced in (5) are almost never followed in everyday speech.

5. a. "No dangling prepositions!"

b. « Les *si* chassent les *–rais!* »[3]

This discovery prompted me and the team of researchers at the Sociolinguistics Laboratory I direct at the University of Ottawa to

3. Literally, *si* ('if') ousts *–rais,* the French prescriptive injunction against using the conditional ending on a verb located in an *if*-clause.

consider just *what* the standard is, how successful our normative institutions have been at promulgating it, and whether anyone in fact speaks it. These are the questions I invite you to explore with me as I present some results of an ongoing project confronting *prescription*—what the grammars tell us to do—with *praxis*—what we actually do in the course of everyday speech. Though I exemplify with French, I stress that these findings apply to every language with a tradition of standardization.

Seeking Standard French

To track the way the prescriptive enterprise has characterized the standard over time, we constructed the *Répertoire historique des grammaires du français* (RHGF; Poplack *et al.*, 2002), a unique database of 163 French grammar texts published since the 16th century. Normally, one consults a grammar to determine how to conjugate a verb or where to place an adverb, but our purposes were completely different:

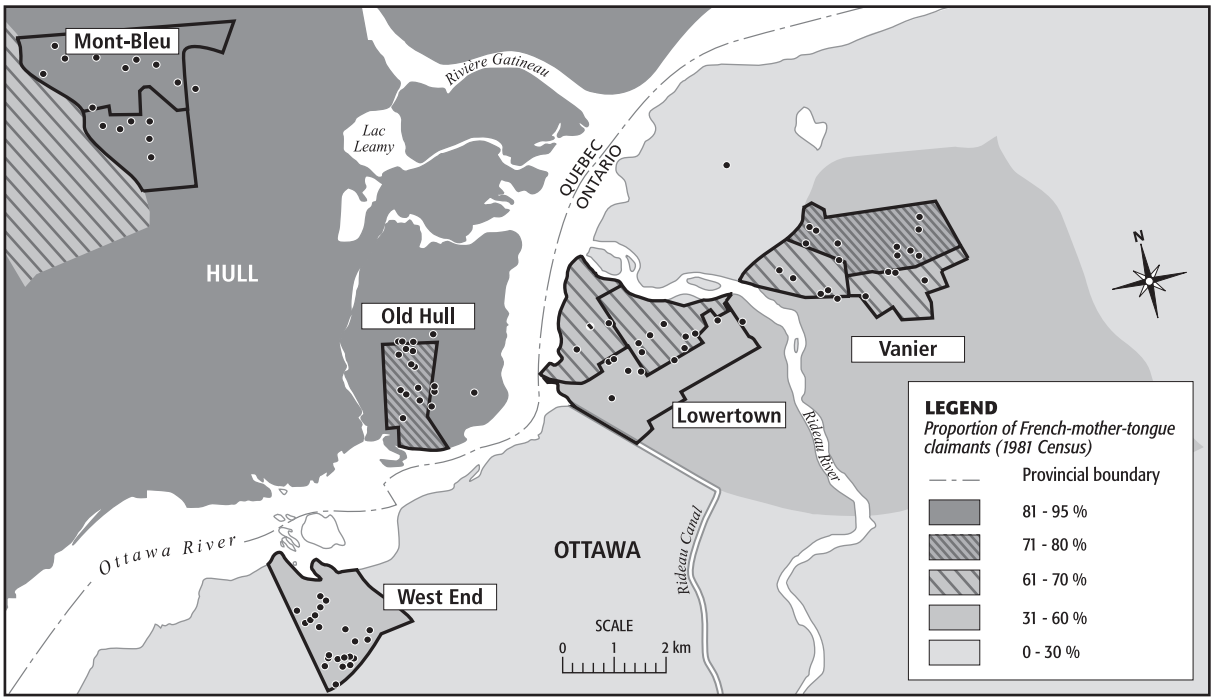
a. To verify the existence of prior variability. The excerpt reproduced in (6) suggests there are two ways to form a direct question in French.

b. To *date* the variability and associated variants. From the publication date of the Gaiffe grammar cited in (6), we can deduce that these forms had been alternating since at least 1936.[4]

c. To identify indicators that motivate the choice among variants. For example, Radouant, cited in (7), recommends the use of *est-ce que* when the question is in the first person singular.

d. To define the characteristics of the language grammarians endorse. This idealized language would not include the interrogative particle *–ti/tu (*as in *c'est-tu vrai)* , for example, because, at least according to Damourette and Pichon, it is low-class (8).

4. Actually, they have been around for centuries.



Map 1. Francophone communities studied in the National Capital Region (Poplack, 1989)

6. « ***Est-ce qu****'il est venu?* est courant; ***est-il*** *venu?* a déjà un soupçon de recherche et témoigne en tout cas d'un certain degré de culture. » (Gaiffe *et al.*, 1936, p. 76)

'Est-ce qu*'il est venu?* is current; ***est-il*** *venu?* is slightly more studied and suggests some level of culture.'

7. « De plus en plus fréquemment, dans la langue parlée, quand la question porte sur le verbe et surtout s'il est à la **1re personne du singulier**, on emploie la formule invariable ***est-ce que***. » (Radouant, 1922, p. 232-233)

'More and more often, in the spoken language, when the question focuses on the verb and especially for the **first person singular**, the invariable form ***est-ce que*** is used.'

8. « L'interrogation particulaire avec ***ti*** appartient surtout à la **parlure vulgaire**. » (Damourette & Pichon, 1930, p. 340)

'The interrogative particle ***ti*** is mainly found in **uncultured speech**.'

We confronted these normative prescriptions with usage—both contemporary and older, to establish the extent to which prescription and praxis influence each other. Contemporary usage is exemplified by the French spoken spontaneously in the national capital region (Map 1), which we have been studying for more than two decades.

The Variable Expressions of Future Time

To illustrate our approach, let us consider the variable expression of future time. Three variants have been competing for centuries: the inflected future (IF; 9a), the periphrastic future (PF; 9b) and the futurate present (P; 9c).

9. a. « Moi, j'ai dit, 'laisse faire, on ***ira (IF)*** à messe *demain matin*' » (OH.070.686)

'I said, "Never mind, we***'ll go (IF)*** to church tomorrow morning."'

b. « Il va dire, 'bien *demain*, […] tu ***vas aller (PF)*** au Bingo, tu ***vas gagner (PF)***.' » (OH.065.2301)

'He'll say, "okay, tomorrow you'***re going to go (PF)*** to Bingo, and you'***re going to win"'(PF)***.

c. « Il dit, 'j'y ***vas (P)*** *demain matin,* chez vous.' » (OH.119.861)
'He said, "Tomorrow morning, I ***go (P)*** to your place ."'

Why do we need all these ways of expressing the future? Most grammarians would reply that each of them carries subtle nuances about the way the future eventuality is envisioned: for example, the periphrastic future (known in French as the "futur proche" or proximate future) supposedly refers to states or events that will occur soon (as expressed by *tomorrow* in the examples in (9)).

But our research into oral usage reveals that these variants are not necessarily associated with the nuances that grammarians attribute to them. That is because almost *all* references to the future—proximate or distal—are expressed by one variant: the periphrastic, as illustrated in Figure 1).

This is a first discrepancy between what grammarians prescribe and the way we actually speak. Is this the result of change? To find out, we conducted a meta-analysis of the evolution of normative discourse on this subject over the centuries. We began by systematically extracting from the grammars that make up our corpus every reference to the future, like the one shown in (10). We then divided the results into five periods relevant to our analysis.

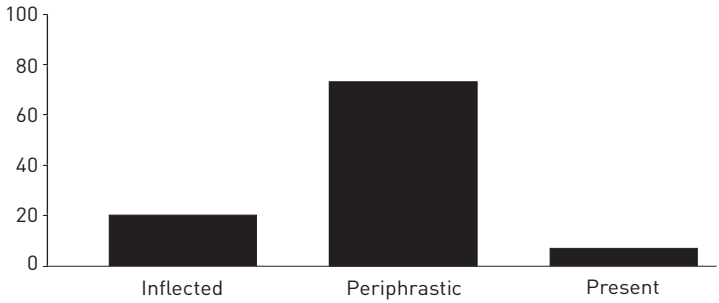


Figure 1. Distribution of future variants: 20th century

10. « I. LE PRÉSENT 4 °[…] est toujours accompagné de quelque nom ou adverbe de temps qui marque le futur. » (Vallart, 1744, p. 237)

'The [futurate] Present is always accompanied by some noun or temporal adverb marking the future.'

Normative Treatment of Variability

Perhaps the most striking result of this exercise was the discovery that the normative tradition largely *refuses* to acknowledge that the three forms are in fact interchangeable in the same context. On the contrary, to achieve the grammarians' ideal—where each form reflects a single meaning—they completely deny variability, by means of three main strategies. 1) They may simply discount one of the variants, as Girard does, (11a) by stating only that the inflected form expresses the future; 2) they may stigmatize one of the variants by characterizing it as foreign, infantile, low-class or, in the best-case scenario, "colloquial," which is how Baylon & Fabre describe the periphrastic future in (11b); or 3) they may explain away the variability by assigning to each form a dedicated meaning or function. In other words, instead of admitting that the forms may all express the same thing, they claim that each plays a distinct role. This is the meaning of the assertion in (11c) that a predication formulated with the inflected future is less certain to occur than if the periphrastic future had been employed.

11. a. « Lorsqu'on représente l'événement comme devant positivement arriver dans la suite, cela fait le **temps avenir**; qu'on nomme **FUTUR**, tel qu'on le voit dans cette frase: *je me* ***donnerai*** *de la peine; mais j'en* ***viendrai*** *à bout.* » (Girard, 1747, p. 20)
'When the event is represented as definitively taking place at a time to come, that calls for the **future tense**, which we call **FUTURE** [IF], as illustrated in this sentence: "I **will work** hard but I **will prevail.**"'

b. « Dans la **langue familière**, la périphrase *aller* + *infinitif* [**PF**] tend à prendre la place du futur I [**IF**]. » (Baylon & Fabre, 1973, p. 126)

'In **casual speech**, the periphrasis aller + infinitive [PF] tends to replace the [inflected] future **[IF]**.'

c. « [FS véhicule des] valeurs possibles de **promesse** ou de **prédiction**—qui reste toutefois **moins certain** que le procès présenté par le futur périphrastique [**PF**] » (Leeman-Bouix, 1994, p. 162).

'[IF conveys] possible values of **promise** or **prediction** – which, however, remains **less certain** than the process presented by the periphrastic future **[PF].**'

Let us look more closely at this third strategy—the quest for form-function symmetry, because in fact it encapsulates the essence of the evolution of normative discourse about the expression of the future in French.

A systematic study of all the nuances and contexts associated with the variants over five centuries of normative tradition reveals that each variant is assigned a large number of functions: 20 for the inflected future, 19 for the periphrastic form and 14 for the futurate present. If the variants really expressed (or express) all these nuances, one would expect at least a modicum of consistency in the associations between form and function over time. But only *one* association has persisted throughout these periods—that between the periphrastic future and proximity. Most of the others are idiosyncratic—that is, they were never mentioned before or after the period in question.

But the most surprising result lies in the lack of *consensus*—across or even within grammars—on the functions to be associated with each variant. Although they tend to be presented contrastively, implying that they are isomorphic with forms, our analysis reveals that the same function is often associated with two or even all three of the variants. Sometimes contradictory functions are attributed

to the same variant. Thus the inflected future is said to express certainty and doubt (12a-b), hope and fear, and neutrality as well as very specific nuances. And this is true not only within a single period, but also, and more tellingly, within a single grammar! For example, the inflected future is characterized by Dubois (1965, p. 117) as having progressive and non-progressive value, and by Silvestre de Sacy (1799, p. 125-126) as being determined and undetermined, as well as indefinite and definite.

Even the relationship between variant and *temporal distance* turns out to be contradictory, since each variant has been associated by a grammarian with both proximate and distal futures, as exemplified in (13).

12. a. « On devrait, en bonne logique, ne l'employer [IF] que lorsqu'on est sûr de son fait. » (Frontier, 1997, p. 533)

'To be logical, we should only use it [IF] when we are certain of its realization.'

b. « [PF] présente la réalisation du procès comme plus assurée et sa réalité comme plus certaine que le futur [IF], qui laisse subsister un doute » (Riegel *et al.*, 1998,p. 315).

'[PF] presents the reality and the realization of the process as more certain than the future [IF], which leaves some doubt.'

13. a. « Le futur [simple] refuse une telle dépendance au présent et exige une date objective ou une distance avec le présent. » (Léard, 1995, p. 197)

'The future [IF] does not depend on the present and requires an objective date or distance from the present.'

b. « Il s'agit d'un **moment futur, mais très proche**. » (Grevisse, 1993, p. 1257).

'It refers to future time, but very proximate.'

Figure 2 shows that the most consistent semantic value ascribed by grammarians to the inflected future is *neutrality*, the idea that something will simply happen. Note, however, that the

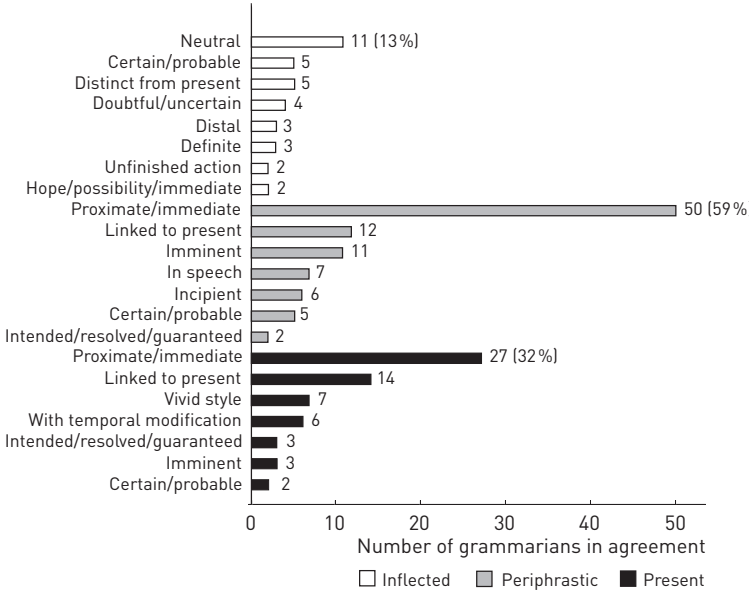


Figure 2. Inter-grammar agreement on non-idiosyncratic functions assigned to IF, PF and P

inter-grammar agreement rate is only 13%. Far greater consensus is obtained on the periphrastic future—59% of grammars associate it with the value of *proximity*.

Comparison with Speech

How well do these grammatical prescriptions capture the way the variant forms are actually used in the expression of future temporal reference in contemporary spoken French? We have already seen some evidence (examples 9 a-c) that the usage facts would not necessarily cooperate, namely, that *all* the variants co-occur in the same contexts, here proximate future: *demain*. Is this an isolated occurrence or a regular pattern? To find out, we extracted 3,559 references to the future from the 2.5 million words of recorded speech making

up the *Ottawa-Hull French Corpus* (Poplack, 1989), and modeled the mechanism underlying the choice speakers make among the variant forms by means of multivariate analysis (Table 1).

Table 1 reproduces two particularly noteworthy results of independent analyses of the factors affecting the selection of the inflected, periphrastic and futurate present variants respectively. The first concerns temporal distance. We have seen that the association of the periphrastic future with proximity was the major area of agreement among grammarians. But in contemporary speech temporal distance has no effect on variant choice. On the other hand, by far the most important predictor of variant choice is contributed by *negation* of the future eventuality. The inflected future is overwhelmingly preferred in negative contexts, as illustrated in exemple (14), where two affirmative clauses (with PF) are followed by a negative clause featuring IF:

14. « Dire que dans quatre cents ans d'ici bien, il ***va avoir*** (PF) encore des Fauteux puis ils ***vont*** encore ***parler*** (PF) français! Qu'ils ***parleront*** (IF) ***pas*** l'anglais. » (OH.004.3611)

'To think that in four hundred years from now, well, there are still **going to be** [PF] Fauteux, and they are still **going to speak** [PF] French! They **won't be speaking** [IF] English.'

	INFLECTED	PERIPHRASTIC	PRESENT
Corrected mean	.145	.727	.052
total N	725	2627	242
POLARITY			
Negative	**.99**	.01	ns
Affirmative	.36	**.65**	
TEMPORAL DISTANCE			
Distal	ns	ns	ns
Proximal			

Table 1. Contribution of linguistic factors to variant choice: 20th century [adapted from Poplack & Dion, 2009]

This spectacular contribution of negation—a probability of .99—was not even acknowledged by grammarians. Thus the major grammatical injunction—use the periphrastic future to express proximity—does not apply to speech, while the major pattern for speech—use the inflected future in negative contexts and the periphrastic future pretty much everywhere else—is absent from grammars.

Why should this be? When we first discovered these two effects, we were sure they were recent changes, possibly induced by contact with English, since this is such a heavily bilingual area.

To confirm this deduction, we had to go back to a time before the intense contact with English, which we did using another corpus, the *Récits du français québécois d'autrefois* (RFQ; Poplack & St-Amand, 2007), a sample of audio recordings made by folklorists Luc Lacourcière and Carmen Roy with insular, rural Québécois born in the second half of the 19th century. A comparison with our 20th century speech data allowed us to measure the progress of change in the expression of the future in oral French over a period of 119 years in real time. This exercise revealed that speakers born in the 19th century were already using the three variants in the same contexts, as illustrated by the examples in (15).

15. a. « Qu'il ***sera*** [IF] pendu à dix heures *demain matin* devant mon château. » (RFQ.048.1726)

'That he **will be** [IF] hanged at ten o'clock tomorrow morning in front of my castle.'

b. « Ou bien donc il ***va-t-être*** [PF] pendu à dix heures *demain matin* devant mon château. » (RFQ.048.1821)

'Or that he **is going to be** [PF] hanged at ten tomorrow morning in front of my castle.'

c. « Il dit, elle se ***marie*** [P] *demain matin*. » (RFQ.032.1202)

'He said, she **gets married** [P] tomorrow morning.'

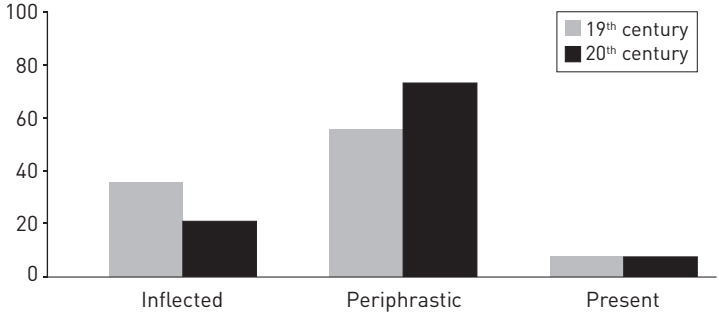


Figure 3. Distribution of temporal reference variants: 19th & 20th centuries

And these variants were even distributed more or less in the same way in the 19th century as they are today (Figure 3), despite the marked increase in the use of the periphrastic variant since the 19th century and the corresponding decrease in the use of the inflected future.

What about the conditions that govern the *choice* of variant? A comparison of the factors that contribute to the choice of one variant over another in the 19th and 20th centuries (Table 2) reveals that they are essentially the same. This indicates that the main constraints at work today were already in place more than a century ago. In particular, negative polarity was already by far the most important factor, so this effect is in no way an innovation.

Now let us examine the role of temporal distance. In the 19th century, it wielded a minimal but nevertheless statistically significant effect. This effect has been lost in contemporary French. Our study of the grammatical tradition highlights the supposed association between the periphrastic future and *proximity*, while the simple future is characterized as being rather neutral. Table 2 shows that even in the 19th century, the variants were not used this way. On the contrary, if the inflected variant had any temporal nuance at all at the

	19th century			20th century		
	INFLECTED	PERI-PHRASTIC	PRESENT	INFLECTED	PERI-PHRASTIC	PRESENT
Moyenne corrigée	.268	.514	.133	.145	.727	.052
N total	1677	2630	398	725	2627	242
POLARITÉ						
Négative	.91	.01	.69	.99	.01	ns
Affirmative	.43	.64	.48	.36	.65	
DISTANCE TEMPORELLE						
Éloignée	.62	.43	.45	ns	ns	ns
Proche	.45	.53	.52			

Table 2. Contribution of linguistic factors to variant choice: 19th vs. 20th century [adapted from Poplack & Dion, 2009]

time, it was that of *distal* future. It is in fact the periphrastic future that had (and still has) neutral value, since it is the most frequent and unmarked variant.

Conclusion

We are now in a position to return to the question that motivated this work: what *is* the standard? First and foremost, it is an idealization, and a rather arbitrary one at that. It changes from one period to the next, from one grammar to another, and even from page to page within the same grammar. In fact, when we actually deconstruct the prescriptive dictates that underlie the notion of the standard, we find far more heterogeneity, contradiction and confusion than in speech, even non-standard.

We have presented a number of different lines of evidence in support of this claim: assigning the same meaning to different variants, as in the case of proximity, assigning different meanings to the same variant, e.g., progressive and non-progressive, invoking

new and idiosyncratic readings at each time period, within a single period, and even within a single grammar, and confounding the meaning of the form with the meaning of the context.

In light of those findings, it will be instructive to revisit our assumptions going into this exercise. First, contrary to popular opinion (as well as our own, initially), prescriptive grammar cannot be qualified as the repository of correct French. Its injunctions tend to be vague, contradictory or accompanied by complex exceptions. In "rules" such as that reproduced in (16), nothing is prescribed.

16. « Le *futur simple* contient en même temps les valeurs de progressif et de non-progressif (cas non-marqué). » (Dubois, 1965, p. 117)

'The inflected future [IF] contains the values of progressive and non-progressive (unmarked case) at the same time.'

It is unclear how others are to be implemented. Can an ordinary speaker really determine whether a given predication instantiates "possible values of promise or prediction which are less certain than the process expressed by the periphrastic future" (example 11c), and then *apply* this information when she goes to select a variant? Even if she could, how would she know which one to choose, since the standard is *not* a well-defined set of conventions accepted and promulgated by all grammarians. On the contrary, perhaps the most striking finding of our research is the pervasive lack of consensus, whether over time or within a given period, across grammars or within a single grammar. This means that when speakers attempt to select variant forms according to prescribed norms, they are likely to be met with conflicting information. Following one grammarian's rules (should this be possible) may result in breaking another's.

Another issue concerns the ways in which normative discourse moulds speech. By confronting the prescriptive rules we could operationalize with the implicit variable rules governing speech, we learned that none of them coincided. The wide variety of contexts and conditions prescribed to govern variant choice are simply not

operative in speech. On the other hand, a whole set of implicit variable constraints has arisen in the speech community, which demonstrably *do* play a major role in expressing future temporal reference. And these, in turn, are opaque to the grammatical tradition. The take-home message is: the "standard" is not a surrogate for the language. It fails to capture the major facts of actual usage, while at the same time leading us down the garden path of trying to associate with each form a unique reading or context. Nor is it a reliable benchmark for assessing change. This refutes the idea that spoken French is standard French with mistakes.

We conclude with a couple of questions prompted by this work. First, what is the source of the expert intuitions about French grammar that constitute the prescriptive discourse we have analysed?

Some of these intuitions originate in the desire to ratify (if not beautify) the French language by making it conform to classical models. The trajectory of the periphrastic future is a perfect example of this. As far back as 1660, the Port Royal grammarians, who were already trying to distinguish the variants, associated the PF with the Greek *paulopost futurum*, which denoted an action to take place soon after speech time. A century later, L'Abbé Antonini dubbed this form the "futur prochain," and grammarians have been struggling to fit it into that mould ever since.

Other intuitions stem from efforts to impose order on the perceived chaos of linguistic variability by associating with each of the competing forms a dedicated meaning or function: if the inflected future expresses doubt, the periphrastic future should express certainty, or vice-versa.

Still others arise when the meaning of the relevant *context* is attributed to the form itself. This is how the inflected future comes to be variously characterized as a future of command, invitation, plea, wish, prudent attenuation, probability bordering on certainty, conclusion drawn without reflection, among many others. Our

meta-analysis shows that these efforts are arbitrary and inconsistent, not just occasionally, but massively so.

Now compare with the systematic, if implicit, rules that govern future temporal reference in speech. The variability they reveal is often deemed to be a reflection of the quantitative weakening or disappearance of original grammatical rules, or, when the constraints on variant choice have not been previously attested, independent innovations. But with the possible exception of temporal distance, we have not detected any evidence of change here. Quite the contrary. Some of the rules governing speech are the opposite of the prescriptive rules, such as the neutrality reading for the inflected future, when in fact we have shown that its use is actually very limited. Others have nothing to do with those rules, such as the overwhelming trend toward the inflected future in negative contexts.

Our study suggests why speakers tend not to follow prescriptive injunctions in many areas of the grammar: not only would one have to be a rocket scientist to understand and apply the myriad rules and exceptions for the prescriptively endorsed uses of many of these variables, but even those are likely to vary according to which grammar one consults. But why have grammars remain uninformed by the structure of *speech*?

The normative tradition has assumed the responsibility of transmitting the *ideology* of the standard, an effort which, in contrast to transmitting the *stuff* of the standard, has achieved great success. This of course is where we get our ideas about what is right and wrong, good and bad, even though, almost paradoxically, we do not apply them in our speech. Indeed, we cannot, really, because our speech, like our dress and many of our other social attributes, has to conform to the norms of the speech community in which we find ourselves. And this, in turn, leads to the great and widening gulf between prescription and praxis.

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BIOGRAPHY

Since 2008, Joseph Yvon Thériault has been a full Professor of Sociology at the Université du Québec à Montréal, where he holds the Canada Research Chair in Globalization, Citizenship and Democracy. He was full Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Ottawa (1978-2008), where he held the Research Chair in Identity and Francophonie (2004-2008) and was the Founding Director of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Citizenship and Minorities (CIRCEM, 2000-2007).
His research centres on the relationship between collective identities and democracy or citizenship. It is conducted from the perspective of the history of ideas and comparative analysis of small societies and national minorities, with particular emphasis on the context of Quebec, Acadian and Canadian francophone minority societies. He has published widely on these issues, most notably *La société civile ou la chimère insaisissable* (1985); *L'identité à l'épreuve de la modernité*, a book for which he received the Prix France-Acadie (1996); *Critique de l'américanité, mémoire et démocratie au Québec*, which won the Prix Richard Arès and the Prix de la présidence de l'assemblée nationale du Québec 2003; and *Faire société, société civile et espaces francophones* (2007). He has directed several research groups, collective publications and specialized journals related to the issues at the focus of his research: citizenship, democracy, the welfare state, memory, the French-speaking world and collective identity.

Joseph Yvon Thériault is a respected academic involved in both the university community and society at large. Over the years at the University of Ottawa he has served as director of the Department of

Sociology, Associate Dean of Research, interim Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Director of the University of Ottawa Press, and Chair of the Commission on Graduate Studies in the Humanities of the Graduate Faculty. He has played a key role in creating research networks to study both the Canadian and international French-speaking societies, as well as organizing research networks on small societies for the Association internationale des sociologies de langue française (AISLF). He chaired the Association canadienne des sociologues de langue française (ACSALF) and was vice-president (Americas) of the Biennale de la langue française and chair of the Biennale Amérique de la langue française. His many public addresses attract varied audiences, from international colloquia and universities to public policy planners and civil society activists. He regularly presents a feature on the program "Ouvert le samedi" on the Radio-Canada national radio network.

He received his Ph.D. from the École des hautes études en sciences sociales (Paris) in 1981 and his M.A. from the University of Ottawa in 1973. He was elected a member of the Royal Society of Canada in 2004 and was nominated a Trudeau Fellow in 2007.

ABSTRACT

Over 40 years ago, in *Lament for a Nation*, Georges P. Grant pronounced the theoretical impossibility of Canada in the face of continental integration and the advent of the technological age. Since this pessimistic statement was penned, Canada has evolved in the exact directions that Grant perceived as the root of its impossibility as a nation: free-trade agreement, abandoning its reference to two founding peoples, non-British immigration, multiculturalism, and constitutionalization of a Human Rights Charter that rules Parliament. Paradoxically, a number of contemporary analysts of Canadian and even Quebec society see these transformations as ingredients in a new Canadian identity that set it apart even from the United States. Through multiculturalism, ecumenicalism, Chartism, and a civic definition of nationhood, Canada has become the world's leading post-modern, or perhaps cosmopolitan, society. This is its true national identity. "The world needs more Canada," as international rock star Bono proclaimed at the Liberal leadership convention in 2003.

But is Canada really a cosmopolitan society? To answer this question, we need to turn back to a question already suggested in Grant's argument: isn't cosmopolitanism incompatible with the idea of nationhood, and perhaps even with the idea of society?

LECTURE

Is Canada a Truly Cosmopolitan Society?

Carleton University (Ontario)

MAY 26, 2009

Organized in partnership with the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences and Congress 2009 (Research in Society Lecture)

I was hesitant about using Canada and its cosmopolitan nature as a subject for this conference. After all, I told myself this type of awards conference is a chance to talk about all the work I have done so far, to provide a kind of brief retrospective of my area of study and how it is progressing.

Honestly speaking, Canada was not my area of study, so am I perhaps venturing into unknown territory here?

After thinking about it, I assured myself such was not the case. In some way, I have always worked on Canada. I have grown up, completed my studies, with the exception of a stay in Europe for my doctorate, and been a professor, until very recently at least, in Canada. What I mean here is Canada outside Quebec—the ROC (Rest of Canada). So it is a society I know from the inside out. The book that taught me the history of Canada was based on English Canadian historiography (Brown *et al.*, 1950). As Marcel Trudel noted in a report submitted to the Commission on Bilingualism and Multiculturalism, it cheered the conquest of 1760: "New France had fallen at last!" The French translator thought it wise to narrow the scope, for us young Acadians, by toning it down somewhat: "La

Nouvelle-France était tombée!" [New France had fallen] (Trudel & Jain, 1969, p. 16).

This brief anecdote reminds me, however, that I always perceived my Canada through the prism of the national duality. Even in the New Brunswick Acadia of my childhood, Canada was a derived reality; my first identity, my strong identity, was that of Acadia. This conception became even more marked during my adolescence and my university studies which, though pursued outside Quebec, but in French, were necessarily submerged in the world of the Quiet Revolution happening in Quebec. I viewed Canada, at that time, from the logic of two nations, as Henri Bourassa had formulated it in the early 19th century and as André Laurendeau still dreamed about when he co-chaired the Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. I learned to become French Canadian, me, who, as an Acadian, was no such person, at the time when the idea of French Canada was collapsing.

My university work, at least that concerning a specific social reality, focused on identity and politics in Acadia, in the French-speaking minority, and in Quebec. It was a continuation of my perception of Canada as a political society formed of two separate national communities—today we would add the First Nations. A political society where, as Charles Taylor put it, "a plurality of ways of belonging" can be recognized and accepted (Taylor, 1993, p. 183). Our perception of the country is not—does not have to be—the same, whether one comes from Quebec, from an ethnic community in English Canada, or from a First Nation. I am not speaking here about two or three "solitudes" that do not understand each other and that would have to be reconciled, brought together beyond their divisions, as Governor-General Michaëlle Jean said in her acceptance speech. Rather it involves different conceptions of belonging to the world that are to be valued, made to coexist, and whose differences are to be recognized.

It is from this perspective, that of multinationalism, at least analytically, because I have no specific political agenda in mind here, that I will be talking today about Canada. So I will be talking from the inside, but from an inside that never assimilates into the whole. Besides I will be referring to English Canada—not Canada as a whole. Thus a reading of English Canada as seen through thick French-Quebec or French-Canadian glasses.

I will have a chance to get back to this, but this conception of a multinational Canada has few fans today in the political and cultural circles (in either Quebec or the Rest of Canada). It was replaced in Quebec by separatism or sovereignty, conceptions in which Canada is mostly missing, and in English Canada by the idea of multiculturalism and its political extension, cosmopolitanism, conceptions in which, if Quebec is present—as in the expression *My Canada includes Quebec*, an expression made popular by "Canadians" during the last Quebec referendum on separation, to remind Quebec of their love—in this expression then, if Quebec is present, it is absorbed by the great universal leveller of differences.

Although this idea of a multinational Canada may seem politically moribund today, it remains a powerful analytical tool that still guides the reading of Canadian intellectuals as important as Charles Taylor, Will Kymlicka, Kenneth McRoberts, Philip Resnick and James Tully.[1] In Quebec, this idea appears in the works of Guy Laforest and Alain G. Gagnon, and it may actually have a political future, given that the separatist project is failing while the population remains strongly driven by a nationalist intent to form a separate society, in French, in North America.

1. As Kenneth McRoberts fittingly recalls "Multinationalism has become no less than an important and influential Canadian school of political thought. Yet, contemporary political life in Canada shows little trace of these ideas" (2001, p. 694).

Grant: The Impossibility of Canada

Reading today's reality from the lens of a politically moribund idea is a good introduction to George Grant and his text *Lament for a Nation*, which I would like to use as a springboard to talk about the Canadian identity. Grant actually wrote this small text in 1965, immediately following the defeat of the Diefenbaker government, a defeat largely due to dickering concerning the issue of integrating Canadian defence with that of the United States. For Grant, Diefenbaker's failure is far from being that of an indecisive leader, as the press put it then, but rather the result of the uncomfortable, impossible position in which he had placed himself by wanting to defend both a conservative idea of Canada—its affiliation with the British Commonwealth—and a modern idea—the modernization of Canada embodied in its continental integration. Diefenbaker's failure was, for Grant, Canada's failure, the very impossibility of Canada. That is why his text was a lament: he was lamenting the loss of a valuable asset that could never be brought back, only cherished, as one does the final remains of a loved one who has passed on.

What was this society that Grant felt had died? "A society," he said, "only articulates itself as a nation through some common intention among its people" (2007, p. 67). Canada, he felt, was created around a conservative intent, that of building, north of America, a society where, contrary to democratic American individualism, a "greater sense of order and restraint" (p. 69) would reign, drawn from the English Protestant roots of its British populace. These roots hearkened back to the times "before the age of progress" (p. 64). In describing this society, he was in effect, describing English Canada; French Canada, like Quebec in the sixties, would never have accepted having its identity embodied in such a tribute to British civilization. Grant was aware of that and even attributed part of Canada's failure to its inability to cement a pact with the other people, the other tradition, which, for completely different reasons, also had a

conservative intent. In the words of Seymour Martin Lipset (1991), Canada might thus have been founded on an imaginary double "counterrevolution," that of the defeat on the Plains of Abraham and that of the defeat of the American Loyalists.

Grant felt that such a pact could have delayed the demise of Canada, but would not have been enough to ensure its survival. Because more profound reasons were militating in favour of the impossibility of Canada. On one hand, there was the gravitational pull of the continent. Americanization was, so to speak, built into the country's geography. And the United States was, for Grant, "the only society on earth that has no traditions from before the age of progress" (2007, p. 64) and, as a consequence, a society resistant to the intent of filiation that guided the idea of Canada.

The US America was more than America, however. It incarnated a praxis and a representation of modernity that made America the centre of an empire devoted to propagating the liberal ideas and technical progressivism of the modern world.[2] But, both in its ideological version—liberalism—and technical version—progressivism—modernity rejected any conservative idea, even any national intent. The modern world's political horizon is "the universal and homogeneous State" (p. 53), a world where individual rights take precedence over tradition and the conceptions of the good that were associated with them, and where the social universe becomes subject to the dictatorship of the technical. Sharing the continent with the

2. One will note here the similarity of Grant's concept of the United States as a foreshadowing of an original form of society with that recently proposed by the neo-Marxist thinkers Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, in *Empire* (2000). A similar description, but one that is critical of post-modernity, has also been developed by Michel Freitag in "La métamorphose: Genèse et développement d'une société postmoderne en Amérique" (1994). For Grant, America, like the American Empire, is not a dialectical extension of modernity (Hardt & Negri), or a post-modern aporia (Freitag) but more simply the full realization of the antipolitical potential of modernity.

beast, it is no surprise the Canadian intent fizzled out and that both its economic elites and the Canadian population in general came to broadly share the American worldview: technical and continental. Thus the impossibility of Canada.

Grant's thinking is that it is not only the Canadian national intent that is the impossibility, the loss of which is to be lamented. "Modern civilization makes all local cultures anachronistic" (p. 53), as it does for all national intents, even all vague political desires. The "dominant nations" (p. 68) can still delude themselves, the capitalists are still loyal to them, and their interests still correspond to those of the empire. But for the little nation, like Canada, history is over.

The Grantian Paradigm

We will not pass judgment, for now at least, on Grant's pessimism about either Canada or the end of politics in the modern world. We will have to distance ourselves from such a position later. On the contrary, for the moment, I would prefer to pursue his reasoning by applying it to Canada's events and identity transformations since he wrote *Lament for a Nation* almost forty years ago. In other words, I will use the Grantian paradigm to interpret contemporary development, to pursue the reading he had undertaken of the unavoidable dissolution of Canada.

Certainly, the most significant event in the past forty years for the Grantian paradigm is the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement. It is a confirmation of the inescapable continentalization of the Canadian economy and the abdication of the economic and political elites from maintaining a national economy north of the 45th parallel. Without a safeguard, Canada would thus be subject to the dictates of American progressist and technicist liberalism. Grant's apprehensions would again be reinforced by the fact that this agreement was negotiated by a Conservative government in Ottawa and widely supported by the driving forces of Quebec society—even the sovereignist elites backed it. These two places, I

would like to stress—the great Canadian Conservative party and the French-Canadian resistance—recalled the Canadian intent. Even those two were seduced by the call of the continent.

The ethno-demographic transformation and its political consequences would be another manifestation of the impossibility of Canada. Canada has of course always been a society of immigration. But until the sixties, that immigration, mostly European, was assimilated to the British roots of the population (even in Quebec, let us recall) to create a Canadian political culture that boldly vaunted its British parentage. After all, Diefenbaker, the last Canadian prime minister, in Grant's opinion, to defend such a posture, actually came from a recently immigrated non-British family. Since then, Canadian immigration has diversified considerably, welcoming populations from Asian, Latin American and African sources, thus diluting the British base of the host society. Faced with such facts, English Canada, for many, and especially for the individuals using that language, no longer existed. It would only be a communication space where people with different identities, cultures and religions could talk to each other. For Grant, who associated the Canadian intent with the existence of an English Canada and its possibility of forming an alliance with French Canadians (and today, he would most likely add, with First Nations), such a disappearance of English Canada would truly confirm the impossibility of Canada.

But there is more. It is one thing to note the new ethno-cultural diversity of the Canadian population and another to make of it a political and cultural base for the new Canadian identity, a new story substituting those of the founding peoples. After all, as the Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism recommended, Canada could well have made the founding peoples of Canada politico-cultural host communities that welcomed and invited immigrants to integrate at one of those two cultures of convergence—in other words, associate bilingualism with multinationalism. Most European societies have opted for a variation of such a formula—

making diversity part of a national or multinational base. Quebec is stumbling awkwardly down this path with its interculturalism.[3] No, Canada chose to make multiculturalism a policy and preferred maintaining cultural diversity (it has even become a champion of the virtues of multiculturalism: such would be "our [the Canadian] way", Kymlicka, 2003).

In the Grantian paradigm, multiculturalism, before being a policy, was an American virtue, specific to societies where freedom —from which arises the claim to respect its authenticity—takes precedence over any idea of the common good. By opting for multiculturalism, Canada made sure to dissolve culturally into the American culture, to join this exceptional culture, the only one, at the time, in Grant's opinion, where no tradition limited the unavoidable march of progress.

The Charter of Rights appeared from then on as the political counterpart of the economic impossibility of Canada—the free trade agreement—and of the cultural impossibility of Canada—multiculturalism. The political primacy of Parliament was at the heart of Canadian political culture, a legacy of its relationship with the old English parliament. The Charter gave precedence to the Constitution and its interpretation by the courts. That provoked a double political transformation. A parliamentary regime changed, on one hand, to constitutionalism and government by judges. The Charter created, on the other hand, Charter citizens (see Cairns, 1992), thereby bestowing new powers on individualized and fragmented citizens (see Bourque & Duchastel, 1996). In this double transformation, the authorities of political mediations and, above

3. I say "awkwardly" because Quebec's interculturalist propositions, though claiming a common culture, as opposed to Canadian multiculturalism, also avoid, beyond language, defining a political tradition to which that tradition would belong. An example of this problem can be found in the recent Bouchard-Taylor report (2008). See Joseph Yvon Thériault (in press).

all, the organs of political representation, including Parliament, are the ones which had to face the consequences.

Constitutionalism is an American invention born of the Founding Fathers' fear of the political expression of the people.[4] It is also how global governance, which relies on the deployment of international law, not on the political powers of nations, is expressed today. Constitutionalism is the political régime that replaces the deliquescent political intents of the old national democracies.

I want to include a final phenomenon in the Grantian paradigm of the impossible Canada. *Lament for a Nation*, remember, was written in reaction to the 1962 missile crisis, which Grant saw as Canada's final attempt at having an independent military policy, the ultimate act of sovereignty. The submission of military policy to NATO, a policy directed by the United States, thus made Canadian sovereignty a brief parenthesis between its status as a British colony and its new status as a colony of the American techno-capitalist empire. Canada became a branch that could be managed by technocrats, not politicians. Grant had already noted that Diefenbaker's successor, the Liberal Pearson, was a career public servant who had claimed his political legitimacy, not in reference to Canadian political life but by his international action during the Suez Canal crisis.

Canadian military policy would later become characterized by its humanitarian action under the auspices of the United Nations, which would confirm that Canada had militarily ceded its sovereignty to globalized technocracy. In that regard, even the act of not participating in the second Iraq war was justified, not in the name of a sovereign power, but because such a military action was not authorized by the United Nations.

4. Pierre Rosanvallon (2008, p. 24) claims this tradition of "*government by constitution*" as opposed to "*government by will*" goes back to 1773 in the writings of the English philosopher and man of politics Henry St. John Bolingbroke.

The Optimistic Reversal of the Grantian paradigm

But an optimistic version of the Grantian paradigm exists—that of Canada as a post-modern, cosmopolitan society, the world's first cosmopolitan society. Referring to Canada's international role, the rock singer Bono, one of those globalized stars who defend humanitarian aid on a global scale against the cupidity of rich Northern states, invited to the Liberal Party Convention held to appoint Paul Martin party leader, said: "The Canadian voice is hard-wired in my heart. I am a fan because a certain kind of idealism lives and still seems to be alive in this country. You are not an insular place. You have always looked outside yourself, beyond the line of the horizon, you are not so self-obsessed [...] I believe the world needs more Canada" (Bono, 2003).

The idea Bono expressed here of a Canada open to the world, a true post-national reality, has gained widespread credence both abroad and in Canada. The eminent English sociologist who conceived Tony Blair's third way, Anthony Giddens, had, in 1993, already defined Canada as "the first post-modern state," which repeated the affirmation of the German-American specialist on the globalized economy, Peter Katzenstein, for whom Canada is "arguably the first post-modem state par excellence" (cited in McRoberts, 2001, p. 700). This idea is also making the rounds in both Canadian literary and journalistic circles. Richard Gwyn commented on Canada's post-modern nature, taking up Margaret Atwood's idea whereby Canada, as a symbol of survival, represented the feminine principle in North America. It is a way, he said, of restoring Canadian nationalism in contemporary cosmopolitan and emancipatory vocabulary. In the early 1990s, journalist Robert Fulford and literary critic Linda Hutcheon also popularized, this vision of Canada as the "world's first post-modern nation"(see Potter, 2007).

What does all this mean? That Canada has moved beyond the classical idea of a nation-state to become a post-nation, even a non-

nation. We are witnessing the "excentration"[5] of identity, a process whereby everything is now measured against the yardstick of exogenous, so called universal, criteria. Its interiority would no longer refer to certain substantial elements—common language, shared ethnicity, historical stories—but the Canadian idea would rather be defined by diversity, social mixing, mixed origins, impermanence, mutability, plasticity, fragility. The director of Environics Research, Michael Adams, wanted to confirm this orientation empirically. (Adams, 2003) While the Americans would support a more classical, more modern "nationalist"—even Hobbesian—dimension of the world, Canadians would commit to immaterial post-modern values, tolerance, creativity, a cosmopolitanism coloured with idealism and self-realization, where the national idea is barely present.

I prefer the word cosmopolitan to post-modern to express this reality. While post-modernity refers to a state arising from modernity that has yet to attain firm consistency, cosmopolitanism proclaims the nature of the regime that thus replaces modernity.[6] A governance model specific to societies with more individualized or globalized identities—diasporas—than recorded in national stories, to cultures that shift from local to global—glocalization[7]—disregarding national mediations, to a networked global economy that renders the old idea of national economy obsolete. Such societies would require organizations and international law increasingly defining State policies outside of national sovereignties (Held, 2000).

Canada would thus be the outpost of this new political and societal form.

5. In French: "désaxement." The expression is borrowed from Hubert Aquin (1977), who at the same time as Grant, lamented the impossibility of French Canada in these terms.

6. I use cosmopolitanism in its political and programmatic sense that will be found especially in Beck (2004).

7. Expression largely used in the context of globalization research to signify the co-presence of the global and the local.

This is an optimistic account of the Grantian paradigm because what Grant saw as a problem, what signaled the very impossibility of Canada—rejection of historical stories, fragility of identity, excentration of feeling and national sovereignty towards England, the United States, the World—now becomes the very intent of Canada. Grant criticized the lack of awareness among Canadian leaders of the impossibility of their society, so the intellectual elites decided from then on to make this impossibility a virtue.

Canada's intent, or one should say, rather, the intent of English Canada, even though it refuses to call itself that, no longer having endogenous stories. Because, in such a picture, the permanence of Quebec nationalism—which is often described as inward focused, ethnic, and conveying an outdated vision—is embarrassing. And that is despite the fact that, in Quebec, perhaps even more than in English Canada, intellectual circles have done their utmost in the past thirty years to present Quebec, once again, as an open, mixed society with fluid borders and an exclusively civic nationalism, "advanced proof of a post-modern society," as the historian Yvan Lamonde puts it (1996). It is this intellectual tradition that I brought up again in my book, *Critique de l'américanité* (2002). I say "intent of English Canada" because, despite the fact that in Quebec, too, the national intent is propelled into the stratosphere of globalization, cutting off the branch on which it is sitting, it is obvious that such a cosmopolitizing idea of Canada will never be able to reintegrate the story of a French nation that is a co-founder and co-partner of Canada. This last story, which remains, despite everything, a permanent feature of the Quebec political identity, cannot be dissolved into the plasticity of the cosmopolitan identity.

Also embarrassing is the First Nations presence in such a story. After all, like French Quebec, they have a desire to build a society that would not be reduced to the cosmopolitan recognition of identity as an individualized patchwork. Unless of course, as John Saul

recently suggested, First Nations people are made into the world's first post-moderns, those who introduced us to miscegenation, those who would be the depositories of a hidden tradition—that would nevertheless be ours, as if something we do not know could define us all the same—thus a hidden tradition, neither French, nor British, nor European, nor American. A hidden tradition comprising fluidity, anti-rationalism, that ultimately joins the values of alterglobalist cosmopolitan youth. A Métis tradition that the great historical stories were incapable of capturing but that the judges wisely imposed (Saul, 2008; Findlay, 2004). Traditions of peace and dialogue that are confirmed in Canadian international military action for peace and humanitarianism.

Is This Really the End of Politics?

How can we reflect on such analyses, both in Grant's pessimistic paradigm and in its euphoric version of cosmopolitanism? Is Canada really an impossibility given the march of humanity towards what Grant called, according to Hegel, "the universal and homogeneous State" and what post-modern thought calls cosmopolitanism? Is cosmopolitan modernity really a substitute for national political life, for governance without government, that is, with no room for sovereign democratic power?

The thesis is strong, even compelling. The events we brought to light under the Grantian paradigm are true. They illustrate a real trend, both in Canada and globally, toward the etiolation of national solidarities in the name of a republic of universal rights, a kind of global governance managed, for the moment, by the easy-going American Empire, but that eliminates political sovereignty, that is, the ability of specific communities to act on the world by giving it an intent. Such was the modern definition of democratic politics: a sovereign people choosing by itself to act consciously on the world. Whether lamented or celebrated, the impossibility of Canada is described as the impossibility of politics in advanced modernity.

But the problem with this paradigm is not that it is wrong. It is that it acts as if the strong trend of the modern world to its depoliticization were a done deal, not a trend. As was pointed out earlier, however, this depoliticization has as its source the very principles of modernity: individual foundation in freedom, constitutionalism and the primacy of law, the unfettered deployment of technoscientific civilizing forces. These elements are even inherent in modern democracy.

Such a trend towards depoliticization is not new; it is the driving force of the socio-political processes we have been experiencing for the past five centuries. It was what frightened Hobbes in Leviathan: the absence of a body politic in a society thrown back to an almost natural state. That is why such a body politic had to be artificially created. Such a trend is exactly what democracy, in its political form, has conjured up: prevent the end of the political life that would result from a world governed on a global scale by law, the market and the technical.

Where this reading fools us is in its lack of democratic confidence. It is in forgetting that the democratic imagination has managed to counter the depoliticizing forces of modernity for five centuries. Indeed, the more the rationalizing world has strived to make politics impossible, as it makes Canada impossible, the more democracy, by introducing the other face of the modern world, the political subjectivities, has continually renewed politics. Democracy as a process, as an ongoing invention, refuses to make the planet a place without political communities (see Lefort, 1981). Of course, this continual "democratic" return of subjectivities, intents, desire to act on the world, must assume the part of the world in which it lives. It could not remove itself from the world, as Grant implies, by moving back to the world of the ancients. Politics is always, somewhere, the difficult art of taking on the world as it is—compared to the revolutionary or conservative temptation—and nevertheless trying to change it.

So what about the present era? Are we not witnessing a kind of return of politics?

Just about everywhere on the planet, the past twenty years have been marked by the phenomena of political, cultural, economic, legal, etc., globalization that have caused some to say that history is over and that our societies are entering into a new form of governance without politics. More recent phenomena have shown us that such is not the case and that politics is not dead. The Iraq and Afghanistan wars, for example, waged following the destruction of the World Trade Center towers in September 2001, were started in the name of political values, if not in national interests. In most Western countries, debates about national history and values in the face of the hegemony of multiculturalism—a multiculturalism, you will remember, that Canada championed—recall the importance for populations of writing a national story, if not an all-inclusive story. We find the same motivation in a certain European disenchantment with the promises of the European Union deemed apolitical, technocratic and too liberal. The recent economic crisis has revived the idea of national regulation and social policies, realities that we believed had long since been buried by the globalization of markets. As happens often in modernity, following a period where its political dimension seems to get carried away, we are witnessing the return of politics. Or so these events lead us to believe. What we will do with them is another thing altogether.

Returning Home

I started preparing this paper, which borrows heavily from George Grant's book *Lament for a Nation,* before Michael Ignatieff published his latest work *True Patriot Love* (2009), or in French *Terre de nos aïeux* (translations always change the author's intent). The work deals with the conception of Canada through three generations of Ignatieff's maternal ancestors, the Grants. Ignatieff is George Grant's

nephew, and a chapter of the book is reserved for him. I cannot finish this paper without referring to it.

At the publication of this work, commentators reminded us that Ignatieff is supposed to have written this book to free himself of the label of "cosmopolitan" that his intellectual globetrotter past has given him. It is true that, in both his writing and his press articles, Ignatieff has, during his English and American stays, developed a sense of belonging to a global community and of adhering to a universal concept of rights that have considerably intensified his uncle's laments. Moreover, Ignatieff strongly objects to his Uncle George's work on the impossible Canada. He recalls that "[i]n the twenty years after *Lament for a Nation* was published, Canada staged Expo 67, the most triumphant affirmation of pride before or since; we had the Quiet Revolution and the resurgent affirmation of Quebec identity in North America; we had the promotion of official bilingualism; the modern Canadian constitution, [...], and the creation of the Charter of Rights and Freedom, incarnating a distinctive national rights culture; and we gave ourselves a national anthem and a flag. And last but not least, we opened our doors to immigration from the four corners of the world, transforming the population and internationalizing our identity as never before" (pp. 148-49).

I am not sure that the assessment that Ignatieff opposes to his uncle's thesis would convince the latter (Expo 67 vs. free trade). What could shake his thesis, however, is Ignatieff's return. Indeed, if one steps back from the enveloping cynicism of journalists for whom Ignatieff is renouncing his cosmopolitan past to adopt a "nationalist" position through pure electoral calculation, and one can ask, rather: Why has he come back? Why does he believe today that national patriotism is a virtue? Why would the Canadian political and cultural elite want to agree to talk patriotism while it has been singing the praises of cosmopolitanism for twenty years?

Because, the answer goes, like many members of his generation who heard the siren call of cosmopolitanism in the 1980s, he has understood that to act politically in the world meant having a place on earth. As he himself says "I've come back home" (p. 39) to his Canada, because it is the only place where he feels he can act and make sense of the world. This is an acknowledgement of the political need felt today by someone who believed it was over. Someone who could still say in 2000 that he felt like a Martian looking down from this commanding height at the evolution of rights in Canadian society (Ignatieff, 2000[8]). From that chest height, if one can use the expression, it is obvious he cannot see his house and where its boundaries lie.

I am not too sure how the old uncle would respond to this constant desire to act politically and, for that, to feel the need to restore meaning to a national intent. George Grant already believed in 1960 that this crazy old dream, to build society, had to be lamented. But this dream seemed too rooted in the democratic imagination to fade away before the siren call of cosmopolitanism.

8. In the 2nd edition (2007), the preface is different.

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