

The Trudeau Foundation

# PAPERS

VOLUME IV, 2 • 2012

FONDATION  
TRUDEAU  
FOUNDATION



The Trudeau Foundation

# PAPERS

VOLUME IV, 2 • 2012

FONDATION  
TRUDEAU  
FOUNDATION



A Canadian institution with a national purpose, the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation is an independent and non-partisan charity. It was established in 2001 as a living memorial to the former prime minister by his family, friends, and colleagues. In 2002, the Government of Canada endowed the Foundation with a donation of \$125 million with the unanimous support of the House of Commons. In addition, the Foundation benefits from private sector donations in support of specific initiatives. Through its scholarship, fellowship, mentorship, and public interaction programs, the Foundation supports outstanding individuals who make meaningful contributions to critical public issues.

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

PRESIDENT

Pierre-Gerlier Forest

DIRECTORS

Michel Bastarache, Ottawa, Ontario

William G. Davis, Toronto, Ontario

Roy L. Heenan, Montreal, Quebec

Alexander Himelfarb, Ottawa, Ontario

Chaviva Hošek, Toronto, Ontario

Edward Johnson, Montreal, Quebec

Marc Lalonde, Montreal, Quebec

Paule Leduc, Montreal, Quebec

John H. McCall MacBain, Geneva, Switzerland

L. Jacques Ménard, Montreal, Quebec

Heather Munroe-Blum, Montreal, Quebec

Patrick Pichette, Mountain View, California

Marc Renaud, Montreal, Quebec

Sean E. Riley, Antigonish, Nova Scotia

Emőke J. E. Szathmáry, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Alexandre Trudeau, Montreal, Quebec

---

THE PIERRE ELLIOTT TRUDEAU FOUNDATION

1514 Docteur-Penfield Ave.

Montreal QC Canada H3G 1B9

**[trudeaufoundation.ca](http://trudeaufoundation.ca)**

The Trudeau Foundation Papers, Volume 4, 2 • 2012

ISBN 978-2-924202-01-2 (print version)

ISBN 978-2-924202-02-9 (PDF)

Legal Deposit—Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2012

Legal Deposit—Library and Archives Canada, 2012

# Table of Contents

Preface  
**JOHN H. MCCALL MACBAIN**  
*Chairman, The Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation* 5

To Open a Door  
**PIERRE-GERLIER FOREST**  
*President, The Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation* 7

## Trudeau Position Papers

**WILLIAM REES**  
*2007 Trudeau Fellow*  
University of British Columbia  
“People and the Environment”  
BIOGRAPHY / ABSTRACT / PAPER 10

**WILL KYMLICKA**  
*2005 Trudeau Fellow*  
Queen’s University  
“Responsible Citizenship”  
BIOGRAPHY / ABSTRACT / PAPER 56

TAYLOR OWEN

*2008 Trudeau Scholar*

Columbia School of Journalism

“Disruption: Foreign Policy in a Networked World”

BIOGRAPHY / ABSTRACT / PAPER

88

MAY CHAZAN

*2006 Trudeau Scholar*

University of Toronto

In collaboration with Laura Madokoro

*2009 Trudeau Scholar*, Columbia University

“Social Justice, Rights, and Dignity:

A Call for a Critical Feminist Framework”

BIOGRAPHY / ABSTRACT / PAPER

118

## Preface

Pierre Elliott Trudeau left a legacy not only for Canada, but for the world. Through its scholarship and fellowship programs, the Foundation seeks to encourage intellectual leadership in four areas so that, some day, Trudeau scholars and fellows, all leaders in their fields, can help Canada and thereby help the world. The Foundation's mentorship programs enable these people to connect with the world of public policy outside academia. Our public interaction program events are the link that brings the Trudeau community and the general public together. The four themes of the Trudeau Foundation — Human Rights and Dignity, Responsible Citizenship, Canada in the World, and People and Their Natural Environment — are fundamental to all of the Foundation's work.

When I examine our first theme, Human Rights and Dignity, I am encouraged that Western society has made great progress. I recently read two books on two seminal figures in human rights in the United States, Abraham Lincoln and Lyndon Johnson. Although I saw little change in society's attitude toward race when major policy change was undertaken in the 100 years between these two presidents, I am encouraged by the attitudinal change that has taken place with respect to this issue in the almost half-century since Johnson became president.

For our second theme, Responsible Citizenship, we need look no further than the Arab Spring for an outstanding example of citizens pushing for responsible government at a time of great inequities in their countries. The challenge is to develop government systems that maintain and support the passion of these citizens.

Our third theme, Canada and the World, is as important today as it was during the leadership of Pierre Trudeau. An encouraging sign is that Canadians themselves have taken leadership roles in international business, educational, and other institutions. We need to evaluate, however, whether Canada's policies are consistent with the long-term well-being of the world itself.

The last Trudeau Foundation theme, People and Their Environment, is perhaps the most important and yet one with respect to which Canada seems to be outside the world consensus, especially in terms of climate change forums. Although carbon dioxide emissions and their negative effect on global warming are less visible to the general public than the uprisings of the Arab Spring, their importance cannot be understated. The work of Trudeau Foundation scholars, fellows, and mentors, it is hoped, will return Canada's role to one of leadership in the years to come.

This year, my first year as chair of the Trudeau Foundation, I am determined to ensure that its work remains relevant to Canada's future leadership needs.

JOHN H. MCCALL MACBAIN

Geneva, Switzerland

*Chairman*, The Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation

January 2013

## To Open a Door

*Ahhh, so easy to say, but another matter to open a door, step out,  
and close it behind me. Leaving what I know to explore what I don't.  
That takes more than just a simple wish or a passing thought.*

—Hiromi Goto, Chorus of Mushrooms (1994)

Many people believe that innovation does not exist in the social sciences, even less so in the humanities. The questions are always the same, the answers change but little, the truths are eternal. In contrast, in the performing or visual arts, we generally acknowledge both the existence of progress of a technical nature and the periodic emergence of new perspectives. But new research methods in the humanities and the social sciences are often met with scorn, and many a result is ignored if it diverges from the canon established by the tradition's great authors. As pointed out by Lord Bryce in a foundational text of modern political science, we even choose consciously to overlook obvious errors (those of Tocqueville, for example) because long-held intuitions reinforce our ideas about democracy. This should not be seen as the simple triumph of ideology, since humanities or social science discourse usually remains subject to the requirements of scholarly conversation, with its assumptions of consistency, reason and experience. However, it is difficult to perceive any movement or advanced thinking.

A foundation such as ours cannot ignore this problem. Do we exist only to disseminate proven ideas, known solutions, formulas,



certainties? Even in the “applied” humanities can be found people who believe that all solutions are already known and should suffice to overcome any resistance in coping with the worst calamities, to resolve the most complex and difficult problems. Instead of being focused on the research, the difficult formulation of new knowledge, they say we should dedicate ourselves exclusively to knowledge transfer, when it is not to social and political action.

There are also those who believe that new knowledge, when it emerges amid the noise and repetition that Thomas Kuhn famously called “normal” science, has no origins in intellectual exchange. Few concrete examples support this hypothesis; the great scientific revolutions have all been carried out by men and women with superior command of all the science of their time. Yet it is true that some cultural ferment does affect the changing of perspectives. The histories of disciplines such as physics or biology are full of such coincidences.

Of course, it is far too early to say whether the four texts featured in this edition of *The Trudeau Foundation Papers* contribute to a genuine insurrection in our world view. The authors were invited to open doors and to take risks. Perhaps one day we will say that the adventure was worth it and that our world has gained in intelligibility. We also may say that some of the ideas expressed here, despite apparently leaning toward slight abstraction or excessiveness, ultimately contributed to make things happen in the areas of social justice, peace, and respect for the environment.

The text by William Rees that opens this collection is a good example of the foregoing. The author does not hesitate to advance into the landscape of one of the more established social science disciplines and courageously plant new guideposts. What if the economy, he seems to ask, is a smokescreen to hide the brutal and systematic destruction of the ecosphere? And what if in our somewhat morbid fascination with measures that allow action in the social and (especially) physical worlds, we have forgotten the real cost of our manipulations: destruction, waste, and exclusion? To be

fair, it should be added that Professor Rees, a 2007 Trudeau fellow, did not wait for our invitation to attempt this incursion.

It will come as no surprise either that the 2005 Trudeau fellow Will Kymlicka, political philosopher of Queen's University, has chosen to pursue a reflection begun years before with an ambitious aim of nothing less than the redefinition of civic identity in democracy. The door was flung wide open long ago, but here we find the elements of an original research program designed to support an unstinting conception of societal life.

The reflections of Taylor Owen, 2008 Trudeau scholar, will certainly make a lasting impression. He reveals realities about which little is yet known—shadows, reflections, possibilities. The approach is all the more daring in that it applies to a reality that ever boasts of being the most tangible of all: the relations between states, of war and peace. As illustrated by the author's conclusion, we do not yet know how we must consider this universe of networks or how power within it is concentrated or distributed.

May Chazan, 2006 Trudeau scholar, and Laura Madokoro, 2009 Trudeau scholar, chose to let disorder and oppression, injustice and violence and discrimination enter the established categories of social theory, which they accuse of being disembodied and inoperative. It is a text at once militant, engaged, and critical that calls for action beyond indignation or protest. It reflects a strong desire to see thought serve something, and do so on the side of justice, human rights, and human dignity.

We know the shortest chapter of *The Spirit of Laws* is one of few words, through which Montesquieu exhorts his readers to continue reading: "I shall not be able to make myself rightly understood till the reader has perused the four following chapters." I agree wholeheartedly with this invitation.

PIERRE-GERLIER FOREST

President, The Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation

January 2013

# WILLIAM E. REES

2007 *Trudeau Fellow*, University of British Columbia

## **BIOGRAPHY**

William Rees received his PhD in population ecology from the University of Toronto and taught at the University of British Columbia's School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) from 1969 to 2011. He founded SCARP's Environment and Resource Planning concentration and from 1994 to 1999 served as director of the school.

Professor Rees's 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, he 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 PhD 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. His current book project asks, Is humanity inherently unsustainable? He draws parts of his answer from various disciplines.

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, aimed at defining the ecological and political requirements for biodiversity preservation while sustaining human population health. Professor Rees's work is widely recognized. He has been invited to lecture on his research in 25 countries around the

world and in 2012 won the Kenneth E. Boulding Award in Ecological Economics, as well as the 2012 Blue Planet Prize, jointly with his former doctoral student Dr. Mathis Wackernagel. In 2006, Professor Rees was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada; he was nominated a Trudeau fellow in 2007.

### **ABSTRACT**

Civil society is unlikely to organize spontaneously to force the necessary eco-revolution. However, if the leader of any major country or economy were to acknowledge formally that the world is on a self-destructive tack and propose a strategy to turn things around, the effect could be galvanizing. Global society may be close to a psychological tipping point at which such a dramatic call to action would “go viral,” seizing the imagination of the world community. There is no reason why a Canadian prime minister should not be that leader. (Pierre Elliott Trudeau might have taken up the challenge.) Canada has nothing to lose and a future to gain by breaking from the herd in response to clear and present danger. At the very least, stepping out to facilitate negotiation of a global treaty for sustainability would serve to polish the nation’s faded reputation as a significant force for economic stability, ecological integrity, and social justice.

# People and the Environment

## Introduction and Purpose

The natural world is of passionate concern to nature lovers, poets, and other romantics; “people and the environment” is a topic of almost obsessive interest to deep ecologists and environmentalists. But while many of the latter may wince at the fact, the reality is that the material relationships between people and the environment in capitalist techno-industrial societies are shaped mainly by *economic* factors.

And even if nothing else were involved, this would be problematic. Economic models often assume people to be self-interested utility maximizers with fixed preferences and insatiable material demands—certainly not romantic or even the type of character one would wish to invite to dinner! *Homo economicus* as described would wreak havoc in any environment, at any scale, from dinner table to entire planet. Nevertheless, discovering how to serve that insatiable demand as efficiently as possible is one of the principal goals that economists set for their discipline.

Not surprisingly, the economists’ description of *H. economicus* is often criticized as a shallow, unidimensional caricature of real people (i.e., your friends and mine). Be that as it may, there is little doubt that human material demands, insatiable or not, are seriously

degrading whole ecosystems and compromising vital life-support functions upon which we all depend. No one has captured the flavour of contemporary people–environment relationships better than award-winning Canadian environmental journalist and author Andrew Nikiforuk:

Let's face it: *Homo economicus* is one hell of an over-achiever. He has invaded more than three-quarters of the globe's surface and monopolized nearly half of all plant life to help make dinner. He has netted most of the ocean's fish and will soon eat his way through the world's last great apes. For good measure, he has fouled most of the world's rivers. And his gluttonous appetites have started a wave of extinctions that could trigger the demise of 25 percent of the world's creatures within 50 years. The more godlike he becomes the less godly *Homo economicus* behaves. (Nikiforuk, 2006)

In this light, the major goal of this paper is to highlight the need to seriously revisit the conceptual, scientific, and cultural foundations of modern society's economic relationships with its environment (is there really any such thing?). The daily cascade of bad news—record temperatures, unprecedented flooding and drought, acidifying oceans and sea-level rise, peak oil and accelerating biodiversity loss, and so on—is proof enough for reasonable people that humanity's current mode of engagement with the natural world is dangerously maladaptive. Ecological health and long-term sustainability require that we stimulate a very public *reconstruction* of the material relationships between people and the rest of nature, one that better reflects emerging ecological reality, both nationally and globally.

### **The Environment as Social Construct**

*An object seen in isolation from the Whole is not the real thing.*  
—Masanobu Fukuoka (1978)

Not all Canadians' interactions with nature are material relationships, but even on the psychological level, most of us seem to have

an increasingly ambiguous and distant relationship to the natural environment. True, nature—often wild nature—figures prominently in our cultural self-image, in everything from folk music to fine art. The Group of Seven’s iconic portrayals of the Arctic and north woods are burned into the national mind and resonate as truth to more adventurous Canadians everywhere. Authors as disparate as Pierre Burton, Mordecai Richler, Farley Mowat, and Margaret Atwood have set their histories and fantasies in natural settings that range from the romantically pristine to the fatally dystopic. Roch Carrier’s poignant portrayals of life in rural Quebec trigger nostalgia in both official languages. But belying the myth of Canadians as a nature-loving, outdoorsy people is a different reality: Canada’s population is among the most heavily urbanized peoples in the world population, and if we visit the wilderness—or even the rural countryside—at all, it is likely to be in a well-appointed SUV. For most of our citizens most of the time, the environment has become remote, cold, and even vaguely foreboding. (How else could we tolerate the wholesale ecological destruction associated with such economic activities as clearcut logging, ocean bottom trawling, and oil-sands strip-mining?) And it seems that the inclination to engage intimately with nature is fading with each passing generation. Even visits to the relatively safe havens of our national parks and nature reserves are in steepening decline.

These facts and trends are, in part, the result of an important but largely subconscious human cognitive process. People acquire their perceptions and understanding of both society and the environment (of everything, in fact) simply by growing up in a particular cultural milieu. By being immersed in and repeatedly exposed to contemporary beliefs, values, assumptions, and behavioural norms, most individuals acquire the ancient myths and contemporary narratives (read world views, paradigms and ideologies) that characterize their native “tribe.” Indeed, cognitive neuroscientists tell us that oft-repeated



experiences, teachings, and thought patterns help to shape the developing brain—they literally acquire a physical presence in our synaptic circuitry (Wexler, 2006). Members of every culture thus acquire a socially constructed cognitive model of what constitutes normal humankind–nature relationships, and it is this construct that determines how individuals and society “act out” in the real world (see Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

As noted at the outset, contemporary society’s “acting out” in nature is increasingly problematic. The world community is facing an unprecedented global ecological crisis. Anthropogenic greenhouse gases (GHGs) are accumulating in the atmosphere and resultant climate change is a fact; floating Arctic sea ice is disappearing; 75 percent of the world’s fish stocks are overexploited; ocean dead (anoxic) zones are spreading and the seas are acidifying; deserts are expanding; tropical deforestation wreaks havoc with biodiversity; half the land area of Earth has been appropriated for human purposes; soil degradation and rising energy costs threaten future food production; water scarcity is an urgent and growing problem for millions of people, particularly in densely populated poor countries—the list goes on. While each of these problems is serious in itself, all are merely symptoms of a greater systemic malaise—*gross human ecological dysfunction*. None can be solved without addressing the general syndrome producing them all. In effect, *H. sapiens* has become a rogue species that seems not to acknowledge its dependence on the natural world and whose increasingly global consumption-oriented way of life is destroying the functional integrity of that natural world (the only habitat *H. sapiens* is ever likely to know).

One source of human ecological roguishness is industrial capitalist society’s social construction of man-in-nature—our contemporary model grossly misrepresents biophysical reality. To begin, the citizens of most modern nations, including Canada, learn to perceive the environment as separate from the human enterprise, as a distant “other” that serves primarily as a resource trove and physical

backdrop for human affairs. This cognitive alienation of humans from nature has deep cultural roots traceable at least to ancient Greece; its modern expression flowered during the Enlightenment with the articulation of what we now know as Cartesian dualism; and it has only recently found its most ebullient (and environmentally violent) expression in the ongoing scientific/industrial revolution. Bottom line? By the time a typical denizen of the modern world becomes an active citizen, he or she has been preprogrammed with a nearly unassailable, socially constructed psychological barrier that distances him or her from the natural world.

At its simplest level, this cognitive separation fosters a dangerous illusion. If humanity is safely “in here” and the environment is at some distance “out there,” then perhaps so-called environmental problems are not really all that critical—what happens to the other will not necessarily turn around to bite us when we are not looking. Consistent with this perception, the ethical foundation for human relationships with the environment in industrial societies is *utilitarian, anthropocentric, and instrumentalist*. It is utilitarian in that other species matter only to the extent that people value them, anthropocentric in that humans are assigning the values, and instrumental in that all of nature is regarded as a resource trove that exists strictly for human satisfaction (Randall, 1988). Certainly there is nothing about the distant other that might constrain human ambitions, including perpetual growth.

It does not help that urbanization and technology serve to reinforce the illusion. Many urban sophisticates, spellbound by the latest electronic gadgetry and surrounded by concrete see the wired (and wireless) city as their natural habitat, and it is a habitat far removed spatially and psychologically from the wilderness. So complete is this alienation that, despite the cascade of human-caused environmental bad news, most people today do not perceive of themselves as ecological agents. Indeed, we seem somewhat embarrassed by basic facts of our own biology—we may concede that *H. sapiens*

is an animal, but in the collective modern mind, humans not only differ from, but are clearly superior to, all other species. Many people still take offence at the evolutionary *fact* that humans and the other great apes descended from a common ancestor.

*Human exceptionalism: alive and well in the 21st century*

Such human exceptionalism, along with ordinary anthropocentrism, permeates the Canadian identity. Consider the Law Reform Commission of Canada's 1985 report, *Crimes Against the Environment*. The commission argued that the Criminal Code should be reformed to prohibit acts that "seriously compromise a fundamental societal value and right, that of a safe environment or the right to a reasonable level of environmental quality." At the same time, the 1985 report emphasized "that the scope of a Criminal Code offence against the environment should not extend to protecting the environment for its own sake, apart from human values and interests." The commissioners thus remained wedded to the existing humanistic framing of the Criminal Code, which while defending persons and property, "does not, in any explicit manner, prohibit offences against the natural environment itself" (LRCC, 1985).

In responding to this report, Canadian "deep ecologist" Stan Rowe went straight to the core of the issue, regretting that the commission's findings reflected the entrenched anthropocentrism of society and thus missed an opportunity for deeper reform. According to Rowe, *Crimes Against the Environment* took "environment to be exactly what its etymology suggests: the context and surroundings of things of greater importance—namely people." As he had on other occasions, Rowe noted that, to the popular mind (and thus to the commission), "environment is peripheral." The very word "is its own pejorative" meekly setting itself aside from the thing of real interest at the centre (Rowe, 1989). (Rowe wondered whether "the environment" was even a useful concept.)

## The Ethereal Economy

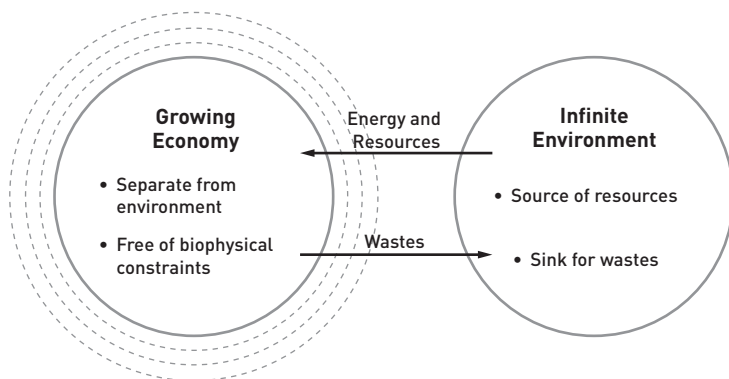
Most of our mainstream academic disciplines also reflect the cognitive gulf between people and nature. This is true even of ecology and economics—the two domains of knowledge that one might expect to have the most to offer in resolving the evolving sustainability crisis. Historically, academic ecologists have studied mainly non-human species and ecosystems, ignoring *H. sapiens*; meanwhile, economists focus exclusively on the material demands of humans, either ignoring the environment altogether or considering the collateral damage caused by economic activity to be mere unfortunate “externalities.” Bottom line? Neither discipline has a solid grip on the whole; neither yet operates from a pre-analytic vision of the human enterprise as an inseparable, integral component of the ecosphere.

This is no trivial perceptual lapse. The *ecosphere* is in dire peril, but it is the *economy* that remains the primary focus of, or provides the context for, almost all policy initiatives by governments everywhere. Economists are therefore the first to be consulted by policy-makers (not to mention the media) on most issues relevant to national well-being, including ecological threats at both the local and global scales.

Again, the systemic problem is that mainstream economics embodies the prevailing cultural paradigm. The discipline is utilitarian and anthropocentric to its core and, true to the Cartesian divide, its models treat the human enterprise as if suspended in space, aloof from the environment. The traditional starting point for neoliberal economic analysis is the circular flow of exchange value, typically portrayed in standard texts as “a pendulum movement between production and consumption within a completely closed system” (Georgescu-Roegen, 1971). Value embodied in goods and services flows from firms to households in exchange for spending by households (national product). A supposedly equal value, represented by factors of production (labour, knowledge, finance capital),

flows back to firms from households in exchange for wages, rents, dividend, and so on (national income). Some academic economists have described this stripped-down economy as a form of perpetual motion machine that generates a “flow of output that is circular, self-renewing, self-feeding” (Heilbroner and Thurow, 1981). Indeed, the circular flows model makes no reference whatever to the energy and resources required to produce the goods and to generate the income flows that the model does represent. Thus, in economists’ minds “the circular flow is an isolated, self-renewing system with no inlets or outlets, no possible point of contact with anything outside itself” (Daly, 1991, 196). As ecological economist Herman Daly graphically observes, considering the economic process as a circular flow without considering the unidirectional throughput of energy and matter is akin to studying physiology in terms of the circulatory system with no reference to the digestive tract. One might as well ask engineering students to fathom how a car can run on its own exhaust or biology students to accept that an organism can metabolize its own excretia (Daly, 1991, 197).

The emergence of major ecological problems in the 1960s forced economists to adapt their thinking and at least acknowledge the existence of something outside the economy. Figure 1 shows the still-prevailing vision of the economy–environment relationship from the perspective of mainstream *environmental* economics. Note that there are still two separate systems. And while the economy may draw on the environmental other for resources, this is not really a critical relationship—economists generally argue that, abetted by free-market incentives, human ingenuity will find technological substitutes for any product of nature that humans may deplete. Similarly, we can solve problems arising from pollution (the overflowing of environmental waste sinks) by “internalizing the externalities”—putting a market price on waste sink functions. (Consider contemporary efforts around the world to put an effective price on carbon emissions.)



**Figure 1.** Growth-based neoliberal economics treats the economy as a separate, open, growing, quasi-independent system lacking any important connectedness to an inanimate environment.

Consistent with this perspective, some economists persist in their attempts to unshackle the economy from its annoying ties to the environment. Using abstract money-based models, they suggest that the human enterprise is actually “dematerializing,” that economic activities are “decoupling” from the natural world. The critical implication is that the human enterprise should be able to continue growing and consuming, unaffected by resource depletion or changes in the state of the ecosphere.

In effect, then, mainstream economic theory dissolves ecological constraints—or takes the environment to be limitless—thus freeing the economy for perpetual growth. Little wonder that politicians and policy-makers rarely hesitate to trade off ecological concerns for economic gain (with a generally willing populace cheering from the bleachers). Economic growth has thus become the strongest plank in the policy platforms of most governments in Canada and around the world for at least the last half century (see Victor, 2008).

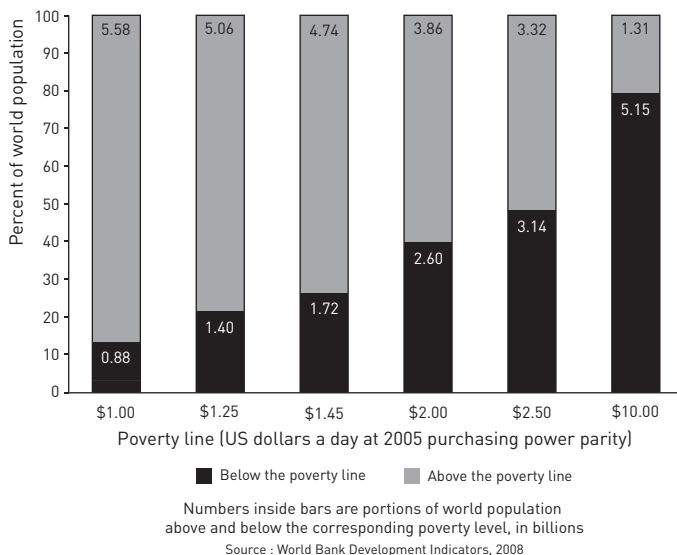
## **Beyond Perceptual Lapses: Environment and Social Justice**

Trading off the environment for economic gain does not mean there are no ecological costs, only that the latter are deemed to be less than the benefits. However, there is an ethical problem. While the benefits of economic growth accrue mainly to the rich and powerful, the burden of resource depletion, land degradation, and pollution falls mostly on the weak and poor. A growing body of research reveals that economically disadvantaged (low-income) communities suffer more consequences of ecological decline than do wealthier communities (e.g., Agyeman et al., 2009; Buzzelli, 2008). Poor people everywhere are losing their livelihoods and lives because of floods, drought and desertification, toxic spills and dump sites, hydroelectric projects, strip mines, radiation exposure, clearcut logging, soil erosion, and other forms of “economic” landscape abuse. Negative impacts fall particularly heavily on the urban poor in the burgeoning cities of low-income countries, but also on economically marginal groups and racial minorities in high-income countries. In effect, we are seeing the emergence, both globally and nationally, of *eco-apartheid*, the segregation of the people along ecological gradients, with the poor and racial minorities suffering the worst environments and consequences.

Even Canada suffers the syndrome. Does anyone doubt that people living in impoverished urban neighbourhoods (such as the Downtown Eastside in Vancouver or St-Henri in Montreal) and many First Nations reserves endure some of the most degraded and degrading physical and social environments in the nation? Native people in the north, already suffering from the industrial contamination of their traditional country foods (courtesy of climate patterns that carry industrial and agricultural wastes pole-ward from all over the world) confront the immediate impacts of climate change: the melting of sea ice and permafrost. Physical and mental health statistics tally the human costs. Meanwhile, wealthy Canadians enjoy the

best-manicured of urban neighbourhoods (increasingly in the form of gated communities) and often spend part of each year in second homes in the most nearly pristine natural habitats on Earth.

Indeed, income is the obvious critical independent variable (figure 2). The wealthiest 20 percent of the human family account for 76.5 percent of private consumption, while the poorest 20 percent get by on 1.5 percent (Shah, 2010). Thus, the rich can buy their way to ecological safety while the poor, particularly women and racial minorities living in wasted habitats, suffer the health, aesthetic, and spiritual impacts of polluted soil, air, and water. An estimated 22,000 children die each *day* from poverty-related causes. Consider that, in 2000, more than 600 million of the urban poor lived without sanitary sewers and 450 million do not have safe drinking water.



**Figure 2.** Percentage and numbers of the world’s people living at different poverty levels. Nearly half of the human family (over 3 billion people) live on less than \$2.50 per day and nearly 1 billion survive on less than \$1.00 per day.



Even today, some 1.1 billion people in developing countries have inadequate access to water, and 2.6 billion lack basic sanitation. Not surprisingly, millions die every year from environmentally borne diseases, including 1.8 million children from diarrhea alone (UNCHS, 2001; Shah, 2010).

Both ecological degradation and moral imperatives urge society to look beyond sheer material growth for ways to relieve poverty, reduce social inequity, and reverse ecological apartheid. Progressive tax regimes designed explicitly to redistribute income constitute one possible solution, but there is little enthusiasm for redistributive policies in today's conservative political climate. Indeed, despite an already egregious income distribution (figure 2), 80 percent of the world's population live in countries where the income gap is widening (Shah, 2010) (including in the United States and Canada where regressive tax *breaks* are channelling additional income to the already wealthy). Canadians' growing environmental concerns have obviously not generated adequate political pressure to confront environmental injustice (Buzzelli, 2008), either domestically or internationally. One indication is that Canada's contribution to international development assistance is stagnant—at only 0.3 percent of gross national income (GNI)—or falling, despite our having committed to 0.7 percent in 1970. It seems that concern for environmental justice in Canada is largely confined to a few non-governmental organizations (the United States is a worse offender, with official development aid at only 0.2% percent of GNI [OECD, 2010, cited in Shah, 2011]).

As noted, the proximate reason for such generally poor moral performance is the inequitable distribution of benefits and costs. The winners, those most able to force serious reform (and who can afford it) have no direct—that is, economic—incentive to act, and the losers, those most in need of reform, are economically and politically powerless. This situation is unlikely to change peacefully in the near future—the rich–poor income gap is increasing between

and within many nations with the spread and entrenchment of neo-conservative values.<sup>1</sup> As a result, eco-apartheid is almost certain to worsen with the threat of climate change and incipient resource shortages. Of particular concern is the fact that urban populations, particularly in poorer developing countries, are projected to explode by an additional 2.9 billion in the next four decades (UN, 2009).<sup>2</sup> This means that in the coming 40 years, the world's cities are expected to add more people with all their "furniture" than had accumulated on Earth in the entire history of *H. sapiens* up until 1957!

### **Biophysical Reality: The Human Enterprise as "Dissipative Structure"**

*You may say, if you wish, that all "reality" is a social construction, but you cannot deny that some constructions are "truer" than others. They are not "truer" because they are privileged, they [become] privileged because they are "truer."*

—Neil Postman (1999, 76)

Any effort to articulate a truer alternative construct of humankind–environment relationships must include a sound understanding of the biophysical laws underlying those relationships. The fact is that, technological illusions aside, human beings are subject to the laws of nature. One of the most fruitful ways to conceptually reconnect people to the ecosphere is through contemporary interpretations of "far-from-equilibrium" thermodynamics. The starting point for this approach is the second law of thermodynamics, the entropy law.

In its simplest form, the second law states that any spontaneous change in an isolated system—a system that can exchange neither energy nor material with its environment—increases the system's

1. The shift to the political right has been accompanied by reduced social cohesion—the erosion of community, a diminished sense of mutual responsibility, and increasing ecological injustice.

2. Most urban immigrants will settle in the expanding barrios, *favelas*, and slums of low-income cities.

entropy. This is a technical way of stating that things naturally tend to wear out and run down. With each successive change, an isolated system loses potential—it becomes more randomly structured, energy dissipates, concentrations disperse, gradients disappear. Eventually, the system reaches thermodynamic equilibrium, a state of maximum entropy in which no point is distinguishable from any other and nothing further can happen.

Of course, many complex real-world systems—from new-born infants, through cities, to the entire ecosphere—are neither isolated nor sliding toward equilibrium. The ecosphere, for example, is a highly ordered self-organizing system of mind-boggling complexity, multi-layered structure, and steep gradients represented by millions of distinct species, complex functional dynamics, and accumulating biomass. Over geological time, its internal diversity, structural/functional complexity, and energy/material flows have generally increased—that is, the ecosphere has been moving *ever further* from the equilibrium state. Indeed, this phenomenon may well be the measure of life. As Prigogine (1997) asserts, “distance from equilibrium becomes an essential parameter in describing nature, much like temperature [is] in [standard] equilibrium thermodynamics.”

Since living systems *gain* in structural mass and functional complexity over time, scientists and philosophers long thought they were exempt from the second law. This is not the case—all systems are subject to the same processes of entropic decay. (There are no known violations of the second law.) The paradox dissolves only when we recognize that all living systems, from cellular organelles to entire ecosystems and the ecosphere, are *open* systems that freely exchange energy and matter with their host environments.

Most critically, systems biologists have begun to emphasize that living systems exist in overlapping nested hierarchies in which each component subsystem (“holon”) is contained by the next level up and itself comprises a complex of linked subsystems at lower levels. (Think of Russian nesting dolls). This organizational form

is the basis for self-organizing holarchic open (SOHO) systems theory (see Kay and Regier, 2002). Within the hierarchy, each subsystem (or holon) grows and develops using energy and material (negentropy) extracted from its environment—its host system—one level up. It processes some of this energy/matter internally to produce and maintain its own structure/function and exports the resultant degraded energy and material wastes (entropy) back into its environment. In short, all living organisms produce and maintain their *local* organization as far-from-equilibrium systems at the expense of increased *global* entropy, particularly the entropy of their immediate host systems (Schneider and Kay, 1994, 1995). Because all self-organizing systems survive by continuously degrading and dissipating available energy and matter they are called “dissipative structures” (Prigogine, 1997). Table 1 compares pristine with fully humanized ecosystems.<sup>3</sup>

SOHO thermodynamics obviously has profound implications for our understanding of the concept of humans in nature. Like the ecosphere, the human economy—indeed, the entire human enterprise—is a self-organizing, far-from-equilibrium, dissipative structure. However, the human enterprise is also an open, growing, dependent *subsystem* of the materially closed, non-growing, finite ecosphere. Thus, while the ecosphere evolves and maintains

3. Renegade economist Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen (1971a, 1971b) was among the first to understand the implications of the second law for the human economy. Since all economic activity must draw low entropy resources out of nature and dump useless high entropy waste back in, he reasoned first that “in a finite space there can be only a finite amount of low entropy and, second, that low entropy continuously and irrevocably dwindles away.” He further speculated that since modern humans are unlikely to practise restraint in their use of resources, nature and human nature may combine to ensure that “the destiny of man is to have a short but fiery, exciting, and extravagant life” (Georgescu-Roegen, 1975). This view naturally remains controversial with opponents relying on resource substitutions and human technological ingenuity to defeat such second-law pessimism.

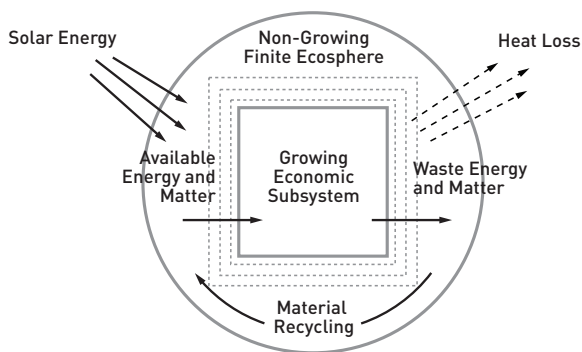
itself by “feeding” on an extraterrestrial source of energy and by continuously recycling matter, the human subsystem grows and maintains itself by feeding on its supportive ecosystems and ejecting its wastes back into them. In effect, the increasingly consumption

ECOSYSTEMS WITHOUT HUMANS	HUMANIZED ECOSYSTEMS
Such systems grow and evolve by assimilating, degrading, and dissipating high-grade solar energy through photosynthesis and evapo-transpiration.	Such systems are dedicated to economic processes involving the extraction, processing, and consumptive degradation of fossil energy and other material resources that have accumulated in the ecosphere, including biomass and non-human species.
Anabolic processes (bio-production) exceed catabolic processes (respiration and dissipation).	Catabolism (destructive dissipation) exceeds anabolism (production of goods, services, and manufactured capital).
Available energy and matter (biomass and other resource gradients) accumulate, species proliferate, ecosystems differentiate, and complexity increases.	Human populations and artifacts accumulate, but resource stocks are depleted and dissipated; biodiversity declines; ecosystems unravel and simplify.
Waste heat dissipates off-Earth; material resources are fully recycled; while the complexity of ecosystems increases, the entropy of the solar system and the universe increases.	Waste heat dissipates off-Earth; material wastes (often toxic) accumulate in the ecosphere; the human enterprise expands and complexifies at the expense of the structural and functional integrity of the ecosystem; the entropy of the ecosphere (and ultimately the universe) increases.

**Table 1.** A second-law comparison of human-less and humanized ecosystems

-based human enterprise is thermodynamically positioned to consume and dissipate the ecosphere from the inside out (Rees, 1999). (It is no stretch to recognize that humanity is currently living as a parasite on Earth—a parasite is an organism that gains its vitality at the expense of the vitality of its host.) Figure 3 illustrates this economy-inside-ecosphere relationship as perceived by ecological economists. The latter argue that the most important flows in the economy are not the circular flows of money values but rather the one-way, irreversible flows of energy and material.

Let's pause to ponder the socio-economic implications of this relationship. To reiterate, SOHO theory and far-from-equilibrium thermodynamics dictate that the human subsystem can grow and maintain its internal order (negentropy) *only* by degrading the ecosphere and increasing global entropy. The production of *anything*—an e-mail message, our own bodies, an ocean liner—requires the extraction from nature of vastly more useful energy and material



**Figure 3.** Steady state or “ecological” economics sees the human enterprise as an open, fully contained dependent subsystem of the living but non-growing ecosphere. This hierarchical relationship imposes strict limits on growth and the scale of the human enterprise.

than are embodied in the product, and the ejection back into nature of a quantity of useless (and often toxic) waste equivalent to the total amount of resources originally extracted.

These are irreversible processes. The energy consumed is almost immediately permanently radiated off the planet and, while the material may remain in the system, much of it is chemically transformed and widely dispersed into the air, soil, and water. Recapturing such dissipated material is economically impossible. Even recycling or reusing consolidated wastes (such as aluminum cans and glass bottles) invariably requires the consumption/dissipation of additional energy. Bottom line: *Any* so-called productive activity that raises the human system ever further from equilibrium is actually mostly a consumptive process that simultaneously degrades the ecosphere.

All of which means that, contrary to popular belief and political fantasy, *there is an inevitable and unavoidable conflict between continuous material economic growth and the maintenance of ecosystems integrity*. Indeed, every so-called environmental problem from fisheries collapses and deforestation (overexploitation) to marine dead zones and GHG accumulation (excess waste pollution), can be explained by reference to second-law relationships. Most importantly, there is no escape from the grip of the second law. As physicist Sir Arthur Eddington famously observed:

[Thermodynamics]...holds the supreme position among the laws of nature...If your theory is found to be against the Second Law of Thermodynamics, I can give you no hope; there is nothing for it but to collapse in deepest humiliation. (Eddington, 1929)

## **The Increasing Human Load on Earth**

I have made the case that contemporary growth-oriented techno-industrial society has become dangerously parasitic on its supportive ecosystems. Humans are fuelling their current consumption and growth, in part, by depleting in mere decades stocks of so-called natural capital—fish stocks, soils, forests, groundwater, fossil fuels,

and so on—that required thousands or millions of years to accumulate in the ecosphere.

Since people live in the moment and take their own times to be “normal”, few are conscious of how recently and rapidly humans have come to dominate the planet. The human population had begun to edge up from about half a billion in 1600 but took over 200 years to reach its first billion sometime in the first half of the 19th century. However, it was during that century, when fossil fuels began to energize the human enterprise, that the modern human explosion got under way. The population increased over six-fold in the subsequent less than 200 years up to 2000 (and will reach 6.9 billion in 2011). So spectacular was this acceleration “that roughly 90% of the increase in human numbers since the beginning of time has occurred since 1650, in fewer than 350 years” (Cohen, 1995).

The increase in resource consumption and pollution is even more dramatic. In the 20th century alone, a 16-fold increase in energy use powered a 40-fold increase in industrial output, a 35-fold increase in fish catches, and a 9-fold increase in water use (mostly in agriculture to support burgeoning human numbers). Of course, the entropic burden on ecosystems increased apace—carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions increased by a factor of 17; sulphur dioxide emissions by a factor of 10 and myriad other contaminants infected the air, soil, and water all over the planet. By the end of the century, the scale of human activities had approached the scale of natural processes—industrial activities were fixing more atmospheric nitrogen and injecting it into terrestrial ecosystems than were all natural terrestrial processes combined; humans had directly transformed half of the land area of Earth; people were using more than half of the planet’s accessible fresh water (data from Vitousek et al., 1997; Lubchenco, 1998; McNeill, 2000). Perhaps most significantly, *H. sapiens* was directly or indirectly appropriating at least 40 percent of the products of terrestrial photosynthesis for human use (Haberl, 1997; Vitousek et al., 1986), resulting in the accelerated competitive

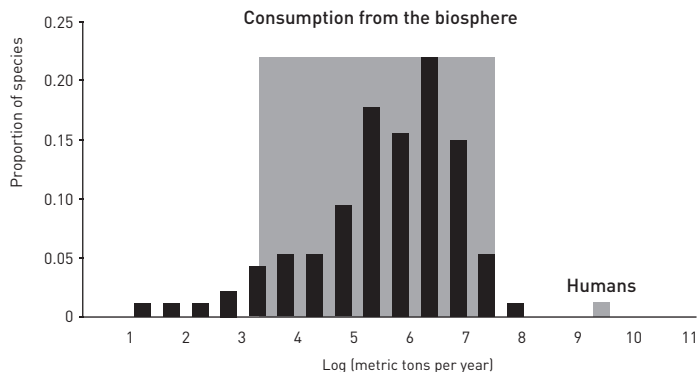


displacement of other species from their ecological niches. (Biomass appropriated to grow the human enterprise is irreversibly unavailable to consumer organisms.)

### **H. sapiens, *the Ultimate Predator?***

Consider the impact on fish stocks, just one of humanity's critical bioresources. By the end of the 20th century a mere 50 years of high-tech industrial fishing had reduced the large predatory fish biomass of the world's oceans to about 10 percent of pre-industrial levels (Christensen et al., 2003; Myers and Worm, 2003). In some cases, stocks have been reduced to less than 1 percent of historic norms. Pressure on stocks increased through this period despite steadily diminishing returns to fishing effort, the collapse of major fisheries, and the warnings of fisheries scientists that catches were unsustainable. As early as 1993, Ludwig, Walters, and Hilborn (1993) concluded a review of modern bioresource management with the observation that 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."

Such alarming data stimulated Fowler and Hobbs (2003) to consider whether *H. sapiens* is "ecologically normal," that is, do humans fall within the normal range of natural variation observed among ecologically similar species for a variety of relevant measures? The researchers found that humans rarely showed normal tendencies for the variables tested. For example, in terms of population size, energy use, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, biomass consumption, and geographical range, humans differ from 95 ecologically similar species by orders of magnitude. It seems that humanity is an "outlier" species in many of the ways that we exploit the goods and services of nature (figure 4). The fact that human consumption of biomass was almost two orders of magnitude (100 times) greater than the upper 95 percent confidence limits for the range of species assessed in itself goes a long way toward explaining fisheries collapses and related biodiversity losses.



**Figure 4.** Human ingestion of biomass from ecosystems (black bars) in comparison with 95 other ecologically similar mammals. The 95 percent confidence limits among non-human species are indicated by the left and right margins of the large pale-shaded rectangle (from Fowler and Hobbs, 2003).

Fowler and Hobbs' analysis support the notion that *H. sapiens* may well be “the most voraciously successful predatory and herbivorous vertebrate ever to walk the earth” (Rees, 2008). People are more indebted to more ecosystems than ever (as is necessary to feed and otherwise provision our expanding population and insatiable “industrial metabolism”). Contrary to economic analyses, the economy is not significantly dematerializing; humanity is not decoupling from nature. On the contrary, in the aggregate, human economic activities have become the major biological and geological force changing the face of the Earth.

### Success as Prelude to Failure

It is no small irony that this increasingly dysfunctional relationship is actually testament to humanity's remarkable evolutionary success. The contributing factors are both biological and cultural. Consider that *H. sapiens* shares certain critical innate behavioural predispositions with all other species. In particular, unless or until constrained by negative feedback (e.g., disease, starvation, other critical resource

shortages) humans will expand into any accessible habitat and tend to use all available resources (in the case of humans, availability is determined by our steadily evolving technology).<sup>4</sup> Such tendencies are actually essential for individual and therefore species survival in the Darwinian struggle for existence.

But humans have proved superior to other advanced species in the evolutionary game. Our capacity for language—particularly written language—and our unmatched technological prowess have given us a significant leg up in the competition. Recorded knowledge is cumulative, so people have been getting continuously better both at suppressing negative feedback and at exploiting their ecosystems for thousands of years. (The pace of cultural evolution vastly exceeds that of biological evolution.) As a result, we have the greatest geographic range of any advanced vertebrate species and a history of depleting resource stocks in serial fashion wherever on Earth we find ourselves (Ponting, 1991).

The problem is that, while we have already breached safe biophysical limits to growth, contemporary humans continue to be driven by Cro-Magnon's expansionist instincts. And it doesn't help that our contemporary socially constructed perpetual growth ethic *reinforces* humanity's innate expansionism. Nurture augments nature. Industrial societies thus show little constraint in their exploitation of the environment. In effect, environmental behaviours that once conferred a selective advantage on individuals have become hazardous to the species in the rapidly changing world created by the unrelenting expression of those same traits.

4. If this is difficult to accept, consider the recent history of petroleum exploitation in some of the most remote and dangerous environments on Earth (including deepwater Gulf of Mexico and Canada's oil sands). Or, on a more personal level, think of the credit card. This is an invention that enables people to consume resources that they don't have after they have consumed their way through the income that they do. Household indebtedness in Canada is now equivalent to 160 percent of annual family income.

Fowler and Hobbs (2003) were moved to ask, Is humanity sustainable? Warren Hern argues that at present it is not. He likens our species to a kind of planetary disease—the sum of human activities over time “exhibits all four major characteristics of a malignant process: rapid uncontrolled growth; invasion and destruction of adjacent tissues (ecosystems, in this case); metastasis (colonization and urbanization, in this case); and dedifferentiation (loss of distinctiveness in individual components)” (Hern, 1997). It seems that humanity’s evolutionary success is literally killing us.

The good news is that, despite this apparent pathology, there is nothing *inherently* unsustainable about life in the SOHO hierarchy. Indeed, until recently, net primary production by producer species (mostly green plants) has been more than adequate to sustain the world’s entire complement of consumer organisms, including humans. From this perspective, far-from-equilibrium thermodynamic theory provides a simple double-barrelled criterion for sustainability: the human enterprise must not persistently consume more bioresources than nature produces nor generate more waste than nature can assimilate (taking into account a generous allowance for the thousands of other consumer species with whom we share the planet).

### **The Human Ecological Footprint**

Consistent with the foregoing, the first questions of human ecology should be How much of Earth’s biocapacity is required to sustain any specified human population? and How does this compare with available supplies? We can produce approximate answers to these questions using ecological footprint analysis (EFA). EFA is a quantitative tool I have developed with my students, particularly Dr. Mathis Wackernagel, specifically to reopen the debate on human carrying capacity and to assess the sustainability of the human enterprise (Rees and Wackernagel, 1994; Wackernagel and Rees, 1996; WWF, 2008, 2010, 2012; Rees, 2006, 2013).

EFA starts from a series of inarguable premises:

- Conscious of it or not, *H.sapiens* is an integral and fully dependent component of supportive ecosystems and the ecosphere.
- Most human impacts on ecosystems are associated with energy and material extraction and waste disposal (i.e., economic activities).
- We can convert many of these energy and material flows to corresponding productive or assimilative ecosystems areas.
- There is a finite area of productive land and water ecosystems on Earth.

As previously detailed, all human populations extract a continuous supply of material resources and waste assimilation services from their supportive ecosystems to sustain themselves and grow. Therefore the ecological footprint of any specified population is formally defined as:

The aggregate area of land and water ecosystems required, on a continuous basis, to produce the bioresources that the population consumes, and to assimilate (some of) the wastes that the population produces, wherever on Earth the relevant land/water may be located. (Rees, 2006)

The size of a population's eco-footprint depends on four factors: the population size, its average material standard of living, the average productivity of land/water ecosystems, and the efficiency of resource harvesting, processing, and use. Regardless of the relative importance of these factors and how they interact, *every population has an ecological footprint* and the productive land and water captured by EFA represents much of the natural capital (productive natural resource base) required to meet that population's consumptive demands.<sup>5</sup>

5. EFA is not intended to represent all human impacts, only those material demands that can readily be converted to a corresponding ecosystem area. Toxic wastes, for which there is no assimilative capacity, are not represented; similarly, such impacts as stratospheric ozone depletion are excluded

Eco-footprints are based on final demand for goods and services. The first step in population EFA is to estimate the total annualized consumption of all significant categories of commodities and consumer goods consumed by that population. It is possible to obtain domestic production and trade data from national statistical offices and other sources such as the Food and Agriculture Organization and United Nations statistical publications. When possible, all consumption estimates are trade-corrected. Thus a population's consumption of wheat is estimated as follows:

$$\text{domestic consumption}_{\text{wheat}} = \text{domestic production}_{\text{wheat}} + \text{imports}_{\text{wheat}} - \text{exports}_{\text{wheat}}$$

EFA builds on material flows analysis by adding the additional step of converting the material inputs and output into a corresponding area of productive and assimilative ecosystems. The total national eco-footprint is the sum of contributions from all individual commodities plus the area of carbon sink lands. Per capita eco-footprints are estimated simply by dividing national footprint estimates by total population.<sup>6</sup> To facilitate comparison among nations, all domestic eco-footprint estimates are converted into hectares of global average productivity. It is important to recognize that population eco-footprints constitute *mutually exclusive* appropriations of productive capacity. The biocapacity used by one population is not available for use by another. *All human populations are therefore competing for the available biocapacity of Earth.*

Note also that ecological footprints can be interpreted in terms of thermodynamic theory. I have described the human enterprise

because they cannot be converted into a corresponding ecosystem area. We also err on the side of caution whenever data are sparse or conflicting. For all these reasons, EFA generates a conservative estimate of total human load.

6. A major strength of EFA is that it connects people and their lifestyles to their impacts on nature using two indicators everyone can readily understand—consumption (everyone is a consumer) and productive land.

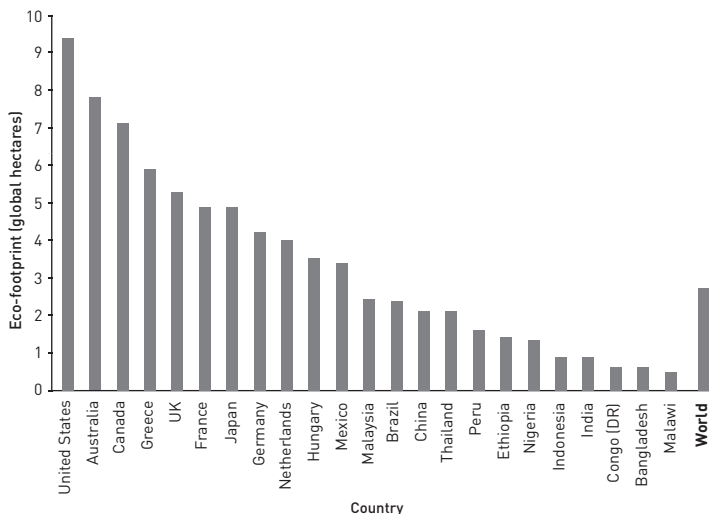
as a dissipative structure whose metabolic activities irreversibly dissipate useful energy and material (negentropy) and increase global entropy. It follows that, since the production of renewable resources is driven by solar energy, a population's ecological footprint is the ecosystem area required, on a continuous basis, to regenerate photosynthetically the energy and biomass equivalent of the negentropy being consumed by that population. A given rate of consumption is theoretically sustainable as long as there is a corresponding, adequate exclusive area of productive ecosystems (biocapacity) available to supply the demand.

### **The Comparative Eco-Footprints of Nations**

Because consumption depends on income, per capita eco-footprints are strongly correlated with gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. Figure 5 shows the average per capita eco-footprints for a cross-section of countries. The citizens of rich countries like the United States and Canada need an average of 4 to 10 global hectares (gha) (10 to 25 acres) to support their consumer lifestyles. (Canada's per capita eco-footprint is greater than 7 gha.) Meanwhile, the chronically impoverished get by on less than 0.5 hectare (1 acre) (WWE, 2008).

Unlike abstract monetary measures (such as per capita GDP) that have no theoretical limits, eco-footprints estimate land and water areas that can be compared to finite available supplies. Significantly, EFA shows that many (mostly rich) countries have eco-footprints several times larger than the area of their domestic productive land- and waterscapes. The Netherlands, for example uses four times as much productive ecosystem area as is contained within its own borders; Japan's eco-footprint is *eight* times greater than the country's domestic biocapacity.

Even when they have fiscal surpluses, all such countries are running ecological deficits with the rest of the world. This means that their populations survive mostly on biocapacity (both productive



**Figure 5.** Per capita ecological footprints of selected countries (2005 data from WWF, 2008).

and assimilative capacity) appropriated from poorer countries, a few large relatively low-density countries such as Canada, and the global commons. Globalization and trade have enabled deficit regions and countries to degrade their own natural capital and expand far beyond their domestic carrying capacities with (short-term) impunity.<sup>7</sup> The problem is that such long-distance exploitation accelerates the degradation and pollution of the foreign ecosystems upon which the importing populations now depend, and this risks the long-term sustainability of both trading partners. In today’s trade-oriented world, our eco-footprints are increasingly wandering all over the planet but, by separating production from consumption, globalization blinds consumers to the fact that their survival may depend

7. Trade in biocapacity is just one of the many ways in which modern humans have undermined the negative feedback—food and other resource scarcity, in this case—that would otherwise keep regional populations and economic growth in check.



on the sustainable management of land- and waterscapes half a world away. Globalization has enabled an increasingly unsustainable entanglement of nations in which the world's moneyed elites gain market access to remaining pockets of productive natural capital at the expense of the poor (Kissinger and Rees, 2009).

*Eco-footprints, global equity, and social justice*

All of which brings us back to environmental (in)justice and eco-apartheid. EFA clearly highlights the gross economic inequity among the world's peoples. By 2007, North Americans were enjoying an average eco-footprint of about 8 gha. Meanwhile, the average citizen of Earth had an eco-footprint of 2.7 gha, and there are only 1.8 gha of bio-productive land and water per person on the planet (WWF, 2010, 2012). These data underscore the fact that the world is well into a state of unequal "overshoot"—even with half the population still in poverty the human enterprise is using about 50 percent more bio-production and waste sink capacity annually than the ecosphere can regenerate. The world community is living, in part, by depleting natural capital and degrading ecosystems essential for survival—the very definition of unsustainability.<sup>8</sup>

The biophysical data also draw out a sobering socio-economic reality. Extending the wealthy lifestyles of North Americans or Europeans to all the world's poor is wishful thinking on the part of growth economists. To raise just the present global population to Canadian material standards using existing technologies would require the biocapacity of about 4.1 Earth-like planets. Since appropriate miracle technologies are not yet available, and we are unlikely to acquire the services of even one more Earth, we will probably have to do with the one we have. Perhaps we should get used to it!

8. One does not need EFA to confirm this. Accumulating GHGs, climate change, fisheries collapses, and so on, are all symptoms of general overshoot.

What might getting used to it mean in moral and practical terms? First, we must recognize that environmental justice must be an integral goal of any sustainability strategy. EFA shows that, on a per capita basis, Canadians are major players on the world's ecological stage. Indeed, *Canada's per capita demand on global biocapacity is 2.5 times that of the average Earthly citizen and almost 4 times our equitable Earth-share*. Meanwhile, the poorest of the poor consume only a quarter of their fair entitlement.

These data show that, on a per capita basis, depletion and pollution traceable to consumption by Canadians has generated more ecological damage than consumption by almost any other peoples. Arguably, therefore, Canadians are disproportionately accountable for global change and any human-induced eco-violence currently being visited on disadvantaged people (e.g., from the drought, floods, and rising food prices resulting from anthropogenic climate change).

This is not to say that Canadians should be condemned and shamed for harming others merely by their pursuit of the good life. Certainly it could be argued that our failing to date is due to innocent ignorance of the consequence of past actions. However, once the fact of anthropogenic global change and its violent impact on others has been established and raised to consciousness, would Canada not be guilty of at least moral negligence in failing to act on that knowledge? As I have argued elsewhere (Rees and Westra, 2003), if this really is a global village, the world community should be working vigorously, in the name of environmental justice, to establish legal grounds for transnational negligent actions.

Canadian common law provides useful guidance on the principles in play. A negligence action may be launched in Canada in the event of environmental damage to one party by another. The plaintiff must establish five key elements of the tort—legal duty, breach of the standard of care, cause in fact, proximate cause, and damage to the plaintiff. Environmental negligence actions focus on compensation for loss caused by unreasonable conduct that

damages legally protected interests. Unreasonable conduct means doing something that a prudent or reasonable person would not do, or failing to do something that a reasonable person would do. Note that fault may be found even in the case of *unintended* harm if it stems from *unreasonable* conduct.

The Criminal Code (section 219) is even clearer that lack of intent to harm is no defence if the damage results from conscious acts performed in careless disregard for others: “Everyone is criminally negligent who (a) in doing anything, or (b) in omitting to do anything that it is his duty to do, shows wanton or reckless disregard for the lives or safety of other persons” (where “duty” means a duty imposed by law). Significantly, section 222(5)(b) states that “a person commits homicide when, directly or indirectly, by any means, he causes the death of a human being, by being negligent.”

Obviously, Canadian law does not apply in the international arena and, because international law doesn’t even acknowledge the offence, it cannot create or enforce a legal duty to act. However, the main point here is that there is no *prima facie* reason why the behavioural standards imposed by international law should not be as rigorous as those required by domestic law.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has established with greater than 90 percent certainty that GHG emissions from human activities have caused most of the observed increase in globally averaged temperatures since the mid 20th century and that climate change is capable of causing catastrophic damage. In these circumstances, the failure or refusal of major CO<sub>2</sub> emitters to reduce their emissions arguably breaches a reasonable standard of care. Thus, if human-induced climate change is already causing property damage and death, are not Canada, the United States, and other countries with among the highest per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on the planet morally, if not legally, guilty of “wanton or reckless disregard for the lives or safety of other persons”?

On a more general level, if humanity is indeed confined to this one Earth and we are in a state of overshoot, ethics and social justice compel the world community to come together to negotiate the means by which to achieve a more equitable redistribution of global biocapacity (sometimes referred to as ecological or environmental space). On what grounds should Canadians be permitted to continue appropriating four times their equitable share? Why should impoverished people in the poorest countries be restricted to only a quarter of their entitlement? Any equity-oriented global accord for sustainability would almost certainly require that Canadians and other rich peoples significantly reduce their appropriations from the ecosphere in order to create the ecological space required for justifiable growth in the developing world.

This *really* “inconvenient truth” has actually been known for some time. As early as 1993, a report of the World Business Council on Sustainable Development (WBCSD) found that “Industrialised world reductions in material throughput, energy use, and environmental degradation of over 90% will be required by 2040 to meet the needs of a growing world population fairly within the planet’s ecological means” (WBCSD, 1993). Even our more conservative eco-footprint results show that, to achieve equitable sustainability, Canadians would have to reduce their ecological footprints by about 75 percent (from seven gha to our “fair Earth-share” of 1.8 gha). Other rich countries would have to contract theirs in proportion.

These numbers are consistent with the 80 percent plus reductions in GHG emissions from rich countries required by mid-century if the world is to avoid catastrophic climate change. From this perspective, the 2009 Copenhagen and the 2010 Cancun climate conferences can be judged only as abject failures. Neither the world community at large nor any individual nation has even hinted at its preparedness to implement GHG emissions reduction policies that would meet the stabilization targets demanded by climate science.

On the contrary. The United Nations' Rio+20 Earth Summit (the biggest UN conference on the economy and the environment ever) ended in June 2012 with a vapid statement, *The Future We Want*, that was little more than a bland renewal of commitment to sustainable development and endless reassurances of international dedication to previously failed initiatives. *The Future We Want* commits no national government to anything and essentially equates "sustainable development" to "sustained economic growth" (see UN, 2012). The inimitable environmental journalist George Monbiot accused governments of concentrating "not on defending the living Earth from destruction, but on defending the machine that is destroying it." According to Monbiot, Rio+20 was "perhaps, the greatest failure of collective leadership since the first world war" (Monbiot, 2012).

It is a testament to the power of addiction to growth that our best science and even the threats of overshoot, climate meltdown, resource shortages, and geopolitical chaos are insufficient to induce the world's nations seriously to consider restructuring their economies in the service of sustainability (i.e., long-term survival).<sup>9</sup>

9. Consider Canada's economic and energy development policies in light of the above arguments. The present Conservative government ignores the warnings of the world's best science, holds (alleged) market efficiency and material growth above all other values, and defines international relationships mainly in terms of economic ties. Indeed, the national interest is assumed to coincide with ecologically bankrupt neoliberal economic ideals; international capital and competitive global markets should determine how national assets should be allocated. Thus, even as climate extremes ravage the world—climate change is perhaps our most global example of market failure—the government declares that markets will drive the development of Canada's oil-sands, markets will determine which pipelines are built, markets will decide who gets the oil, and markets seem set to override rising ecological and social concerns. (Environmental impact procedures have been simplified, the Fisheries Act diluted, and other regulations abandoned, presumably to facilitate oil-sands and pipeline development.) Certainly, too, there has been no consideration of the ethical implications of the country becoming a major exporter of climate change, given the ecological violence the latter is already visiting (mostly) on the world's poorest citizens.

## **Rewriting Our Cultural Narrative**

If we are ever to overcome this addiction, we will have to draw on certain human qualities that, if not unique, we exhibit to a far greater degree than any other earthly species. Five such qualities are particularly relevant to sustainability:

1. High intelligence and the capacity for logical thought
2. The ability to plan ahead, to affect how the future unfolds
3. The capacity for moral judgment, to distinguish right from wrong
4. The ability to feel compassion both for other people and other species
5. A predisposition to cooperate

If exploited effectively, these critical attributes should enable global society to override both expansionist instincts and the ill-considered economic models that support them. In the best of all possible worlds, the global community would therefore organize in ways that demonstrated each of these attributes in full flight.

For example, assume that the world's nations could agree to apply their collective intelligence to the goal of cooperating in consciously rewriting their shared global development narrative. The world needs an unprecedented "International Protocol for Mutual Sustainability". The motivating principle is simple: if civilization is to survive without resource wars and ecological devastation, the human community must learn to live more equitably within the means of nature. This in turn requires recognition that (a) no country can become sustainable on its own—sustainability is a collective problem that demands collective solutions<sup>10</sup>; (b) perhaps for the first time in history, individual and national interests are converging with humanity's collective interests—everyone and all nations are in the same frail boat; and (c) we can no longer implement economic

10. Even if Canada (or any other individual nation) were exemplary in its ecological behaviour, it would be dragged down by the global impacts generated by other countries staying the present course.

policy without ecological and social policy. In short, we must be prepared simultaneously to contemplate the end of material growth, the redistribution of economic and natural wealth, and the design of a “steady-state” economy based, in part, on the principles of ecological economics. The latter recognizes that the economy is a fully contained dependent subsystem of the ecosphere severely constrained by far-from-equilibrium thermodynamics and related biophysical law (see figure 3).

We might start the process by organizing to generate several inspiring alternative scenarios for comparison with the grim future that is unfolding under the status quo. (For an example of a global scenarios-building exercise, see Raskin et al., 2002). Finally, we also need to devise new global forums in which to publicize and debate the relative merits of feasible alternatives as widely as possible. People will take ownership of scenarios that ensure positive improvements in their security and well-being, even if substantial changes to their way of life are required.

Consider the upside of just one such radical change. Any progressive sustainability scenario must address the fundamental injustice associated with today’s global economic disparity. Fortunately, this turns out to be a win-win proposition. Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) show that a widening income gap (more than poverty itself) is associated with declining population health and civil unrest, and even increases competitive consumption. Stability and sustainability are associated with greater equity. Logic therefore dictates that even powerful nations should be willing accept the need for greater equity—it is in their long-term self-interest to do so (and compassion for others should facilitate people’s acceptance of any short-term pain).

Of course, a moment’s reflection reveals that nothing remotely resembling the planning process described above is playing out on the real world’s stage (and certainly not in Canada—see note 9). The threat to global civilization is real and increasing, yet the cascade

of hard evidence accumulating in academic journals goes largely unheeded. When the data do occasionally get out, the hopeful flash of popular interest quickly fades. Entrenched beliefs and values, hopes and fears (to say nothing of powerful interests with a major stake in the status quo) generally triumph over reason in the policy arena. Ironically, society cannot seem to exercise those special intellectual qualities that make people truly human in circumstances where primitive instincts and base emotions are aroused (Rees, 2010).<sup>11</sup> This is truly disheartening. Diamond (2005) shows that only those distressed societies able to abandon deeply entrenched but ultimately destructive core values, and commit to long-term planning, are able to pull back from the brink of collapse.

### *A role for Canada*

This conundrum presents Canada with an unprecedented opportunity to demonstrate real leadership in the global quest for sustainability. This nation was previously in the front ranks on environmental issues. For example, in October 1988, Canada hosted the Toronto Conference on the Changing Atmosphere, the first major international meeting bringing governments and scientists together to discuss action on climate change.<sup>12</sup> Since then, the country has become something of an environmental pariah: Canadian mining and petroleum companies have been implicated in various local ecological disasters in different countries around the world; neither

11. The role of instinct- and emotion-based behaviours in human affairs is as evident in economics as it is in human ecology. Building on Keynes's idea that that people do not always act rationally in their economic pursuits but are often under the spell of "animal spirits" (e.g., hope, suspicion, greed, fear, jealousy), Akerlof and Shiller (2009) have recently elevated animal spirits to a central role in their new theory of how the world economy *really* works.

12. This conference established the so-called Toronto target for emissions reductions (industrialized countries pledged voluntarily to cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 20 percent by the year 2005), the first of such targets to fall in the face of economic priorities and the growth imperative.



Liberal nor Conservative governments have taken the economically difficult measures necessary to meet Canada's obligations under the Kyoto climate protocol; Canada has been vilified as one of the principal game-spoilers at recent international climate change conferences in Copenhagen (2009) and Cancun (2010)—the country was labelled “the dirty old man of the climate world” by *The Guardian* during the Copenhagen meetings (Adam and Randerson, 2009)—and at Rio+20. Most recently, by declaring synthetic petroleum from the Alberta oil sands to be “ethical oil,” Canada's prime minister and environment minister are promoting development of one of the world's least efficient—it takes the equivalent of a barrel of oil to produce three to four barrels of oil-sands crude—and most polluting hydrocarbon deposits, all in the name of economic growth.<sup>13</sup>

There couldn't be a better time for Canada to re-establish its moral reputation and ecological credibility. Millions of people worldwide are waiting for true political leadership on the ecological crisis. Civil society is unlikely to organize spontaneously to force the necessary eco-revolution until the crisis is irreversible, but the effect could be galvanizing if the leader of any major country or economy acknowledged pre-emptively, publically, and formally that the world is on a self-destructive tack and proposed a strategy to turn things around. We may even be close to a psychological tipping point at which such a dramatic call to action would go viral, seizing the imagination of the world community.

There is no reason why a Canadian prime minister should not be that leader. (Pierre Elliott Trudeau might have taken up the challenge.) Let us invite the world to a special forum on the future of the human species on Earth, a forum to set in motion the process needed to articulate the aforementioned International Protocol for

13. Ironically, current energy policy forces much of the eastern part of the nation to live on unethical oil imported from Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Mutual Sustainability. Again, the goal of this initiative would be nothing less than to rewrite our increasingly global cultural narrative in conformity with biophysical laws and social justice.

In many respects, this should not be a difficult task. Intelligent, well-informed citizens should be able to appreciate that in already rich countries further income growth produces no additional improvements in either population health or subjective well-being.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, ecological economist Herman Daly argues that the world may well have entered a new era of *uneconomic growth*—growth that generates more costs than benefits at the margin. This is *growth that makes us poorer rather than richer* (Daly, 1999, 2012). Certainly incomes in wealthy countries are often three or four times higher than necessary for optimal returns—further material growth merely degrades the environment and appropriates ecological space needed for justifiable growth in the developing world.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, the rationale and guiding principles of steady state (ecological) economics have long been in the public domain (e.g., Daly, 1991), and a fully compatible handbook for redesigning humankind–nature relationships is being promoted in the form of *The Earth Charter*. The real novelty resides in the leader of a middle power having the courage to break through the cognitive shell of denial, admit that the world is in ecological crisis, and argue that the

14. For example, the Canadian economy has grown by 130 percent since 1976 and GDP per capita is 70 percent higher. Nevertheless, there has been no change in the percentage of people in poverty or unemployed, and the absolute numbers of both have increased (Victor, 2008). Meanwhile, subjective well-being is constant or declining.

15. Economists and others who argue that the end of economic growth would be disastrous have an obligation to refute such arguments. Which is more ruinous (and foolish), learning to live more equitably in a steady-state economy within the means of nature, or ignoring the data and tempting climate/ecological implosion by clinging to a growth model that wrecks the environment while providing no net economic benefits?

receding hope for solutions can be realized only through unprecedented international cooperation for the common good.

The era of growth-based, resource-depleting, ecosystem-destroying competitive international relations will come to an end in coming years or decades either because humans will it to or because global change and geopolitical chaos brings the whole system down. So far, however, the world has been content to sleepwalk into the future. Philosopher John Ralston Saul put it this way:

We have all by our actions or lack of them—in particular over the last quarter-century [now 40 years]—agreed to deny reality... If we are unable to identify reality and therefore unable to act upon what we see, then we are not simply childish but have reduced ourselves to figures of fun—ridiculous figures of our unconscious. (Saul, 1995)

In this light, Canada has nothing to lose and a future to gain by breaking from the herd in response to clear and present danger. At the least, stepping out to facilitate negotiation of a new human-kind-to-environment relationship would serve to polish the nation's faded reputation among those who care as a force for global ecological integrity, economic stability, and social justice. At best, it might catalyze the triumph of collective reason over tribal instinct, thus enabling yet another chapter in humanity's evolutionary story.

## Bibliography

- Adam, D., and J. Randerson (2009), "Copenhagen Conference: The Countries to Watch," *The Guardian*, November 30.
- Agyeman, J., P. Cole, R. Haluza-DeLay, and P. O'Riley (eds.) (2009), *Speaking for Ourselves: Environmental Justice in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Akerlof, G.A., and R.J. Shiller (2009), *Animal Spirits: How Human Psychology Drives the Economy, and Why It Matters for Global Capitalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Anderson, Kevin, and Alice Bows (2008), "Reframing the Climate Change Challenge in Light of Post-2000 Emission Trends," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A (Phil. Trans. R. Soc. A)*, doi:10.1098/rsta.2008.0138.

- Berger, P.L., and T. Luckmann (1966), *The Social Construction of Reality*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Buzzelli, M. (2008), *Environmental Justice in Canada—It Matters Where You Live*. CPRN Research Report. Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks.
- Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) (2007), *The Age of Consequences: The Foreign Policy and National Security Implications of Climate Change*. Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies. Available at [http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/071105\\_ageofconsequences.pdf](http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/071105_ageofconsequences.pdf)
- Christensen V., S. Guénette, J. Heymans, C. Walters, R. Watson, D. Zeller, and D. Pauly (2003), “Hundred-year decline of North Atlantic predatory fishes,” *Fish and Fisheries*, vol. 4, 1-24.
- Cohen, J.E. (1995), *How Many People Can the Earth Support?* New York: W.W. Norton.
- Daly, H. (2012), “Uneconomic Growth Deepens Depression,” *The Daly News* (Centre for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy [CASSE]). Available at <http://steadystate.org/uneconomic-growth-deepens-depression/>
- Daly, H. (1999), *Uneconomic Growth in Theory and in Fact* (The First Annual Feasta Lecture), *Feasta Review*, no. 1. Available at <http://www.feasta.org/documents/feastareview/daly.htm>
- Daly, H. (1991), *Steady-State Economics* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Diamond, J. (2005), *Collapse: How Societies Chose to Fail or Succeed*. New York: Viking.
- Earth Charter, The*. Available at <http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/pages/Read-the-Charter.html>
- Eddington, A.S. (1929), *The Nature of the Physical World*. New York: Macmillan Company; [re]published by Kessinger Publishing, 2005.
- Fowler, C.W. and L. Hobbs (2003), “Is humanity sustainable?,” *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London, Series B: Biological Sciences*, vol. 270, 2579-2583.
- Fukuoka, Masanobu (1978), *The One-Straw Revolution*. New York: Rodale Press.
- Georgescu-Roegen, N. (1975), “Energy and Economic Myths,” *Southern Economic Journal*, vol. 41, no. 3.

- Georgescu-Roegen, N. (1971a), *The Entropy Law and the Economic Problem*. Distinguished Lecture Series, no. 1. University of Alabama, Department of Economics.
- Georgescu-Roegen, N. (1971b), *The Entropy Law and the Economic Process*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Haberl, H. (1997), "Human Appropriation of Net Primary Production as An Environmental Indicator: Implications for Sustainable Development," *Ambio*, vol. 26, 143-146.
- Heilbroner, R., and L. Thurow (1981), *The Economic Problem*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Hern, W.M. (1997), "Is human culture oncogenic for uncontrolled population growth and ecological destruction?," *Human Evolution*, vol. 1-2, 97-105.
- Kay J., and H. Regier (2001), "Uncertainty, complexity, and ecological integrity," in Crabbé P., A. Holland, L. Ryszkowski, and L. Westra (eds.), *Implementing Ecological Integrity: Restoring Regional and Global Environment and Human Health* (NATO Science Series IV: Earth and Environmental Sciences), Dordrecht, NL: Kluwer Academic Publishers, vol. 1, 121-156.
- Kissinger, M., and W.E. Rees (2009), "Footprints on the Prairies: Degradation and Sustainability of Canadian Agricultural Land in a Globalizing World," *Ecological Economics*, vol. 68, 2309-2315.
- Law Reform Commission of Canada (LRCC) (1985), *Crimes Against the Environment*, working paper 44.
- Lubchenco, J. (1998), "Entering the century of the environment: A new social contract for science," *Science*, vol. 297, 491-497.
- Ludwig, D., C. Walters, and R. Hilborn (1993), "Uncertainty, Resource Exploitation, and Conservation: Lessons from History," *Science*, vol. 260, 17.
- McNeill, J.R. (2000), *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Monbiot, G. (2012), "After Rio, we know. Governments have given up on the planet," *The Guardian*, June 25. Available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jun/25/rio-governments-will-not-save-planet#start-of-comments>
- Myers, R.A., and B. Worm (2003), "Rapid worldwide depletion of predatory fish communities," *Nature*, vol. 423, 280-283.

- Nikiforuk, A. (2006), "At war with our planet," review of *The Weather Makers: How We Are Changing the Climate and What It Means for Life on Earth*, by Tim Flannery (Harper Collins, 2006), *The Globe and Mail* (Section D; Toronto), March 4.
- Pauly, D., and V. Christensen (1995), "Primary production required to sustain global fisheries," *Nature*, vol. 374, 255-257.
- Ponting, C. (1991), *A Green History of the World*. London: Sinclair-Stevenson.
- Postman, Neil (1999), *Building a Bridge to the 18th Century*. New York: Alfred Knopf.
- Prigogine, I. (1997), *The End of Certainty: Time, Chaos and the New Laws of Nature*. New York: The Free Press.
- Randall, A. (1988), "What Mainstream Economists Have to Say about the Value of Biodiversity," in E.O. Wilson (ed.), *Biodiversity*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 217-223.
- Raskin, P., T. Banuri, G. Gallopin, P. Gutman, A. Hammond, R. Kates, and R. Swart (2002), *Great Transition—The Promise and Lure of the Times Ahead*. A report of the Global Scenario Group Stockholm Environment Institute, Tellus Institute. Boston: Tellus Institute. Available at [http://www.tellus.org/documents/Great\\_Transition.pdf](http://www.tellus.org/documents/Great_Transition.pdf)
- Rees, W.E. (2013), "Ecological Footprint, Concept of," in Simon Levin (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Biodiversity* (2nd ed). Academic Press/Elsevier (in press).
- Rees, W.E. (2010), "What's Blocking Sustainability: Human Nature, Cognition and Denial," *Sustainability: Science, Practice, & Policy*, vol. 6, no. 2, 13-25. Published online Oct 14, 2010. Available at: <http://sspp.proquest.com/archives/vol6iss2/1001-012.rees.html>
- Rees, W.E. (2008), "Human nature, eco-footprints and environmental injustice," *Local Environment*, vol. 13, no. 8, 685-701.
- Rees, W.E. (2006), "Ecological footprints and bio-capacity: essential elements in sustainability assessment," in J. Dewulf and H. Van Langenhove (eds.), *Renewables-based Technology: Sustainability Assessment*. Chichester, UK: Wiley, chapter 9.
- Rees, W.E. (1999), "Consuming the Earth: The Biophysics of Sustainability," *Ecological Economics*, vol. 29, 23-27.
- Rees, W.E., and M. Wackernagel (1994), "Ecological Footprints and Appropriated Carrying Capacity: Measuring the Natural Capital Requirements of the Human Economy," in A.-M. Jansson, M.

- Hammer, C. Folke, and R. Costanza (eds.), *Investing in Natural Capital: The Ecological Economics Approach to Sustainability*. Washington, DC: Island Press, chapter 20.
- Rees, W.E., and L. Westra (1993), "When Consumption Does Violence: Can There be Sustainability and Environmental Justice in a Resource-Limited World?," in J. Agyeman, Robert. D. Bullard, and Bob Evans (eds.), *Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Rowe, S. (1989), "Crimes Against the Ecosphere," in R. Bradley and S. Duguid, *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 2. Burnaby, BC: Simon Fraser University.
- Saul, J.R. (1995), *The Unconscious Civilization*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press.
- Schneider, E.D., and J.J. Kay (1995), "Order from Disorder: The Thermodynamics of Complexity in Biology," in M.P. Murphy, and L.A.J. O'Neill (eds.), *What Is Life: The Next Fifty Years*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Schneider, E.D., and J.J. Kay (1994), "Complexity and Thermodynamics: Toward a New Ecology," *Futures*, vol. 26, 626-647.
- Shah, A. (2011), "Global Issues—Causes of Poverty" (updated January 2). Available at <http://www.globalissues.org/issue/2/causes-of-poverty>
- Shah, A. (2010), "Global Issues—Poverty Facts and Stats" (updated September 20). Available at <http://www.globalissues.org/article/26/poverty-facts-and-stats>
- Solow, Robert (1974), "The Economics of Resources or the Resources of Economics," *American Economics Review*, vol. 64, no. 2, 1-14.
- United Nations (UN) (2012), *The Future We Want* (Outcome document adopted at Rio +20). New York: United Nations. Available at: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/727The%20Future%20We%20Want%2019%20June%201230pm.pdf>
- United Nations (UN) (2009), *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2009 Revision*. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division. New York: United Nations.
- United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) (2001), *Cities in a Globalizing World: Global Report on Human Settlements 2001*. London: Earthscan Publications (for United Nations Centre for Human Settlements).

- Victor, P. (2008), *Managing Without Growth*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.
- Vitousek, P., P.R. Ehrlich, A.H. Ehrlich, and P. Matson (1986), "Human appropriation of the products of photosynthesis," *BioScience*, vol. 36, 368-374.
- Vitousek, P., H.A. Mooney, J. Lubchenco, and J.M. Melillo (1997), "Human domination of Earth's ecosystems," *Science*, vol. 277, 494-499.
- Wackernagel, M., and W. Rees (1996), *Our Ecological Footprint*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.
- Wexler, B. (2006), *Brain and Culture—Neurobiology, Ideology and Social Change*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Wilkinson, R., and K. Pickett (2009), *The Spirit Level: Why Equality Is Better for Everyone*. London: Penguin Books.
- World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) (1993), *Getting Eco-Efficient*. Report of the WBCSD First Antwerp Eco-Efficiency Workshop, November. Geneva: World Business Council for Sustainable Development.
- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) (2012), *Living Planet Report 2012*. Gland, Switzerland: World Wide Fund for Nature.
- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) (2010), *Living Planet Report 2010*. Gland, Switzerland: World Wide Fund for Nature.
- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) (2008), *Living Planet Report 2008*. Gland, Switzerland: World Wide Fund for Nature.



# WILL KYMLICKA

*2005 Trudeau Fellow, Queen's University*

## BIOGRAPHY

Will Kymlicka is the Canada Research Chair in Political Philosophy at Queen's University. He is recognized as one of the world's most influential political philosophers, and his work on the link between justice and diversity has helped to shape the debate on the rights and status of ethnocultural groups in liberal democracies. At present, he is investigating the role of the international community in promoting ideas of multiculturalism and minority rights, and exploring how Canada is sometimes invoked as a model for the rest of the world.

Elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 2003, he has also been a visiting professor at universities around the world, with a recurring role in the Nationalism Studies Program at the Central European University in Budapest. He was the president of the American Society for Political and Legal Philosophy from 2004 to 2006. He has won numerous awards and honours, such as the Killam Prize in 2004 and the Trudeau Fellowship in 2005.

Professor Kymlicka is the author of many books and articles, and has edited numerous publications. His works have been translated into 34 languages. His best-known books include *Contemporary Political Philosophy* (1990; 2002); *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada* (1998); *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Citizenship* (2001), *Multicultural Citizenship* (1995), which was awarded the C.B. Macpherson Prize by the Canadian Political Science Association, and the Ralph Bunche Award by the American Political Science Association, and *Multicultural Odysseys: Navigating the New International Politics of Diversity* (2007), awarded the North American Society for Social

Philosophy Book Award. His most recent book is *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights* (2011), co-authored with Sue Donaldson.

Will Kymlicka received his bachelor's degree in philosophy and politics from Queen's University in 1984, and his D.Phil. in philosophy from the University of Oxford in 1987.

## **ABSTRACT**

Debates on responsible citizenship are as old as democracy itself. In every generation, people have worried about whether citizens are able and willing to enact their citizenship in responsible ways. Some worry about the apparent decline of public-spiritedness among citizens; others worry that even public-spirited citizens lack meaningful opportunities to exercise their citizenship. The solution typically is to propose reforms (educational, social, economic, political) that would instill a greater sense of civic virtue among citizens, and/or provide them greater spaces to be active and responsible.

In this paper, I take a different tack on the debate. Rather than starting with a static list of the desired virtues or sites of responsible citizenship, I suggest we should instead think about the dynamic and relational process of *citizenization*. Building relations of democratic citizenship is a historical and social project. It requires a commitment by society to reorder social relationships on the basis of fundamental political values of freedom and democracy. To promote responsible citizenship in a meaningful and durable way, we need to understand better the nature of this social project of citizenization, and why it is so often fragile and incomplete.

I begin, in section 1, with a review of the traditional debate on responsible citizenship and then offer the alternative citizenization framework in section 2, and conclude with some suggestions about the sort of research agenda that would flow from this alternative framework (section 3), and the potential role of the Foundation in it (section 4).

# Responsible Citizenship

## 1. The Traditional Debate on Responsible Citizenship

Debates on responsible citizenship typically start from the assumption that the formal/legal status of citizenship is relatively unproblematic—we all know who citizens are—and the key question is how to ensure that people are able and willing to enact their citizenship in responsible ways. There is a perennial debate about responsible citizenship in this sense, which largely takes the following form:

- devising a list of the relevant traits and dispositions of active and responsible citizens (virtues such as self-restraint, concern for others, tolerance of differences, open-mindedness, prudence, public-interestedness, etc.) and their corresponding vices (selfishness, indifference, apathy, intolerance, dogmatism, shortsightedness);<sup>1</sup>

1. One typical list, adapted from William Galston, includes (i) general virtues: courage; law-abidingness; loyalty; (ii) social virtues: independence; open-mindedness; (iii) economic virtues: work ethic; capacity to delay self-gratification; adaptability to economic and technological change; and (iv) political virtues: capacity to discern and respect the rights of others; willingness to demand only what can be paid for; ability to evaluate the performance of those in office; willingness to engage in public discourse (Galston, 1991).

- identifying the “seedbeds” of responsible citizenship so defined—i.e., asking what role different institutions such as schools, media, churches, families, workplaces, NGOs, etc. play in fostering these dispositions;
- identifying the “sites” of responsible citizenship—i.e., asking what role different institutions play in creating public spaces or forums for the exercise of responsible citizenship (political parties, media, NGOs, local community associations, unions);
- speculating about whether these seedbeds and sites of responsible citizenship are still functioning effectively. Some critics worry that the seedbeds of responsible citizenship are being eroded or corrupted (e.g., the decline of churches, the decline of the traditional two-parent family, the dumbing down of the media, the commercialization of education, the weakening of local community due to increased mobility or increased diversity, etc.), leading to a decline in solidarity, participation, public reasonableness, and so on. Other critics worry that the sites of responsible citizenship are being eroded or corrupted (e.g., the corporate takeover of the media, the over-centralization of the legislative process, the increased role of money in the political process), or at least that they are systematically biased against particular groups, defined to suit the interests and perspectives of dominant groups, leading to forms of exclusion and marginalization. Citizenship may be threatened either by a declining sense of public spiritedness, and/or by barriers to the exercise of responsible citizenship.

This conceptual framework of dispositions, sites, and seedbeds underpins much of the academic research, public policy initiatives, and NGO or philanthropic activity on citizenship education and citizenship promotion.

Indeed, it has done so for many years now, although the focus of concern has changed over the years. We have seen several waves of concern for citizenship promotion, in response to perceived deficits or declines in the desired dispositions, sites, and seedbeds. In the past, for example, there has been concern that youth as a group was disaffected or apathetic, and hence active efforts were needed to promote responsible citizenship among the younger generation. At

other times, there was a concern that a certain type of materialism or “possessive individualism” was coming to dominate society, displacing earlier commitments to more civic or public-spirited values, encouraging people to see themselves first and foremost as consumers rather than as citizens.<sup>2</sup>

Today, however, the overwhelming focus of citizenship debates concerns issues of ethnic and religious diversity in general, and immigration in particular. Immigration has led to a dramatic increase in ethnic and racial diversity across the Western democracies, and this is seen by many commentators as putting stress on the traditional supports of responsible citizenship. Immigrant groups are often seen as lacking the necessary dispositions of responsible citizenship, particularly if they came from non-democratic countries, and moreover, the increase in racial and religious diversity in the population is often seen as eroding general levels of solidarity and trust in society, even among native-born citizens. This is the sobering conclusion of Robert Putnam’s enormously influential studies, which seem to show a consistently negative correlation between levels of ethnic diversity and levels of social capital across the United States (Putnam, 2007).

Across the Western democracies, therefore, we have witnessed a new “citizenship agenda” in the past decade, as governments attempt to renew or rebuild the sites and seedbeds of responsible citizenship in the face of growing diversity. Citizenship is to be promoted by, among other things, adding or strengthening citizenship education in schools, providing citizenship classes to immigrants, imposing new citizenship tests for naturalization, and holding citizenship ceremonies. As this list makes clear, the focus of much of this anxiety

2. Some commentators view this shift from citizens to consumers as a product of the neoliberal ideology that came to dominance in the 1980s and 1990s, but we can find versions of this concern much earlier, at least back to the 1950s. I will return to the relationship between neoliberalism and citizenship below.

is immigrants and their perceived lack of integration, and the impact of their “otherness” on the dispositions of responsible citizenship.

Much has been written about this new citizenship agenda, and in particular about the ways that immigration (and multiculturalism) is being implicitly or explicitly blamed for the decline of active citizenship.<sup>3</sup> Critics argue that this new citizenship agenda panders to xenophobic sentiments (Wright, 2008) and reproduces ideological assumptions about the essential national homogeneity of existing citizens and of the alien otherness of newcomers (Blackledge, 2004; Stevenson, 2006; Milani, 2008). Defenders argue that it is needed to avoid the “multicultural tragedy” of growing ethnic segregation and polarization, and is based on a good-faith commitment to enabling full participation of diverse groups by encouraging (or indeed compelling) the formation of the appropriate dispositions, sites, and seedbeds of citizenship. On this view, a renewed emphasis on citizenship is sometimes offered as an alternative to older (failed) ideas of multiculturalism—David Blunkett in the United Kingdom repeatedly contrasted a citizenship agenda with a multiculturalism agenda (McGhee, 2009, 48).

I have argued elsewhere that this debate over the new citizenship agenda rests on a series of empirical assumptions about the link between immigration, diversity, and citizenship that are false, at least in relation to Canada (Kymlicka, 2010). It is simply not true that immigrants lack the dispositions of responsible citizenship, or that increased diversity due to immigration erodes solidarity and civic participation in Canada (Soroka, Johnston, and Banting, 2007;

3. In the British case, this growing preoccupation with immigration as the cause of declining citizenship is particularly clear. The government’s 1998 Crick Report on citizenship education was initiated by perceptions of growing apathy among youth, but the subsequent public debate and resulting public policy was overwhelmingly driven by issues of immigration (Kiwon, 2008, 62). See also McGhee (2009) for a genealogy of how concerns about “community cohesion” in Britain became focused on immigrants.

Bloemraad, 2006; Kazemipur, 2009; Kesler and Bloemraad, 2010). There is no “multicultural tragedy” in Canada that needs to be fixed or solved through a new citizenship agenda.

In this discussion paper, however, I want to set aside the empirical debates on immigration, multiculturalism, and citizenship, and to focus instead on the underlying conceptualization of responsible citizenship itself. Rather than asking how this traditional framework of dispositions, seedbeds, and sites has been (mis)applied to immigrants in Canada, I want to raise a deeper question about whether this framework is the right way to think about responsible citizenship in the first place.

In my view, framing responsible citizenship in terms of a list of dispositions, seedbeds, and sites is too narrow, and overly static. Reducing citizenship to a set of traits and sites misses the dynamic and relational quality of democratic citizenship. In the next section, therefore, I will offer an alternative framework for conceptualizing responsible citizenship.

## **2. Citizenization: An Alternative Framework**

In place of static lists of desirable traits and sites, I suggest we should reframe the debate by thinking instead in terms of “citizenization,” understood as both a historic process and a social project.<sup>4</sup> Citizenization is a commitment by society to reordering social relationships on the basis of fundamental political values of freedom and democracy.

It might help to begin with an example. Consider the case of ethnic diversity. Historically, relations between ethnic groups have often been defined in illiberal and undemocratic ways—including

4. I take the term from James Tully, who has talked briefly but suggestively about the idea of citizenization as a central historical process and normative goal (Tully, 2001, 25). However, I adapt it for my own purposes, and he might not agree with my interpretation of it.



relations of conqueror and conquered, colonizer and colonized, settler and indigenous, racialized and unmarked, normalized and deviant, orthodox and heretic, civilized and backward, ally and enemy, master and slave. The task for all liberal democracies has been to turn this catalogue of uncivil relations into relationships of liberal-democratic citizenship, both in terms of the vertical relationship between the members of minorities and the state, and the horizontal relationships among the members of different groups. This is the origin of the models of “multicultural citizenship,” minority rights, and indigenous rights that we see across various Western democracies.

We can see similar historical dynamics in other spheres, whether in relation to gender, sexual orientation, or the treatment of the mentally ill or people with disabilities. In all of these cases, we can see efforts to replace earlier uncivil relations of domination, coercion, and intolerance with newer relations of democratic citizenship. Indeed, all these movements have had similar trajectories starting in the 1960s, and have often borrowed arguments and strategies from each other.

Citizenization in this sense is a profound historical process, which we largely take for granted in the perennial debate about responsible citizenship. But it is a fragile and incomplete achievement, with complex social and political preconditions that need to be continually created or sustained. It means much more than simply extending formal citizenship to disadvantaged or excluded groups, since this can be done in a unilateral and paternalistic way. This indeed is how Canadian citizenship was extended to Aboriginal peoples in 1960. Citizenization, by contrast, involves a willingness to negotiate as equals the terms of belonging with the goal of reaching consent. In the case of Aboriginal peoples, this process arguably only really began in the 1970s, when the Canadian government abandoned its paternalistic and assimilationist approach, and decided instead to enter into good-faith negotiations over land claims and

self-government. Notice that citizenization in this context not only goes beyond formal citizenship, but also includes the willingness to consider challenges to the state's legitimacy and jurisdiction upon which that formal citizenship is based. Insofar as state authority was initially imposed by force on Aboriginal peoples, the commitment to replacing force and paternalism with democratic consent and autonomy requires renegotiating as equals the terms of belonging. In that sense, when some Aboriginal leaders insist they never consented to being Canadian citizens, this can nonetheless be seen as part of a process of citizenization. So long as the goal is to replace force with democratic consent, and to replace hierarchy with non-domination, then we have citizenization.

Similarly, homosexuals and people with disabilities have always had the legal status of citizens, but it is only with the disability rights and gay rights movements that we see the initial stages of genuine citizenization.<sup>5</sup>

But if citizenization is about more than the formal status of citizenship, what more or what else does it involve? Tully says that it involves a commitment to allowing all who are affected by common rules to help determine those rules (*quod omnes tangit*—what touches all must be agreed to by all). But this in turn rests on a deeper set of values. Citizenization, I would argue, is premised on values such as autonomy, agency, consent, trust, participation, authenticity, and self-determination. Part of what it is to treat people as

5. In his 2007 position paper “Human Rights and Social Justice” for the Foundation, Roderick A. Macdonald argued that human rights are too formalistic and individualistic to achieve human dignity and social inclusion, which require a focus instead on organic relationships. In a way, the idea of citizenization is likewise intended to emphasize that the historic task is not only to endow individuals with this or that citizenship right, but also to build new social relationships based on social values of trust, autonomy, participation, and so on. But I would insist more strongly than Macdonald that human rights (and minority rights) are an absolute precondition for citizenization.

democratic citizens is to treat them in ways that affirm and respect these values. Citizenization assumes that citizens have a subjective good that they are able to express, and that our shared rules must be responsive to those expressions, and that we trust each other to negotiate those shared rules in ways that respect each other's autonomy and identity, and to cooperate in good faith.

As I said, citizenization in this sense is both fragile and incomplete. The "securitization" of Muslims in the West after 9/11 is an example of a retreat from citizenization: a withdrawal of trust, a resort to force and coercion and *raison d'État* rather than dialogue (Cesari, 2009; Ibrahim, 2005; Brown, 2010). The treatment of the poor is also always vulnerable to retreat from citizenization to force and paternalism (Geutzkow, 2010). And the treatment of people with mental disabilities is an example of the incomplete nature of citizenization (Prince, 2009; Carey, 2009). Too often, they remain subject to forms of paternalistic and coercive rule, rather than receiving our best efforts to solicit and be responsive to their own subjective good. We still have trouble conceptualizing how we can turn our relations to people with mental disabilities into relations based on values of citizenship.

It should be clear, I hope, how this alternative framework offers a different perspective on responsible citizenship than the traditional approach. On the citizenization model, promoting responsible citizenship is first and foremost about identifying inherited patterns of social relationships—in particular, identifying those social relationships that have historically been defined on the basis of values other than democratic consent and autonomy—and then asking what sorts of measures would remedy that historic failing.

All of this is related, of course, to the old debate about responsible citizenship. Much of what I have just said can be rephrased in the familiar language about the seedbeds and sites of responsible citizenship. If the status of Muslims, people with mental disabilities, or the poor is inadequate from a democratic point of view, we can

ask about the potential seedbeds of greater tolerance, and about the potential sites where the democratic agency of under-represented groups can be enhanced. But that familiar language misses the historic and relational aspects of the problem. The problem is not (or not only) that this or that group of citizens is unable or unwilling to exercise their citizenship, which can be remedied by strengthening one or another seedbed or site of citizenship. The problem, rather, is that we have inherited a society in which certain relationships have not been defined as relationships that should be governed by the values of citizenship—those relationships have not been fully or adequately subject to the process of citizenization. We can answer questions about the appropriate traits and sites of citizenship only if we first determine how the relevant relationships have historically been defined in uncivil ways, and then consider to what extent society has truly committed itself to reordering those relationships on the basis of citizenship, and identify the obstacles to that process.

### **3. Toward a New Research Agenda**

I believe that recasting old debates about responsible citizenship in the frame of citizenization could lead to a more productive set of research questions, and also potentially to a more constructive public debate, and even to better policy responses. Let me explore a few such implications.

First, if we think of citizenization as a process, not a static list of traits or sites, then we need to ask, In what contexts can relationships of citizenship be established, among which individuals or groups? The idea of citizenization encourages us to expand our sense of the possibilities. At the moment, some groups in our society are—children, the mentally disabled, animals—seen as lacking the capacities to enter into relations of citizenship. We have trouble conceptualizing how our relations with such groups can be one of citizenship, rather than one of (purportedly) benign paternalism, given that these groups cannot engage in public reason or political

deliberation. We rule over them, rather than engage in any process of shared rule.

In my view, this is a mistake, which flows from thinking of citizenship as a set of traits rather than a relationship that is structured according to core civic values. The reality is that these relationships can be subject to processes of citizenization if we learn how to better understand individuals' agency, to identify their expressions of subjective good, and to create mechanisms that are more responsive to their good. Of course, some degree of paternalism will inevitably remain (but that is true even in the case of "normal" adults). But citizenization is a commitment to building relationships upon values such as autonomy, agency, consent, trust, participation, authenticity, and self-determination. Those values are absolutely relevant to relations with children, the mentally disabled, and at least certain categories of animals (particularly domesticated animals). Many commentators will worry that this stretches the concept of citizenship too far, but I would argue that we can judge the outer limits of citizenization only by actually trying to engage in it, and there are many encouraging experiments in citizenization in relation to these groups. The historic presumption that these groups can be ruled only by force and paternalism has inhibited both academic research and public debate into the possibilities of reordering these relationships on the basis of agency and participation, but in the past few years, the beginnings of a potentially revolutionary change in our thinking and our practices has occurred.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, we can also ask about citizenization beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. The traditional debate on responsible citizenship presupposes a certain degree of "boundedness." Citizens

6. Excellent work has been done recently on new models of citizenship for people with mental disabilities (e.g., Arneil, 2009; Francis and Silvers, 2007), and for children (e.g., Rehfeld, 2010; Archard and Macleod, 2002). I apply a citizenization framework to the rights of domesticated animals in Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011).

are defined as the long-term members of a bounded political community, and it is relations among these members that have, to date, been subject to (incomplete, fragile) processes of citizenization. But we clearly have politically relevant relationships with people beyond our borders, as well as with temporary residents within our borders (such as tourists, business visitors, temporary asylum-seekers, or migrant workers) who are not (or not yet) formal citizens. At the moment, we typically think that in relation to such people we have a duty to respect their universal human rights, but that we do not have a duty to reorder our relationships on the basis of citizenship values. We relate to them as, say, guests to whom we have a duty of hospitality, but no duty to give them the democratic opportunity to reshape the rules of the house in which they are guests.

This reluctance to restructure these relationships on the basis of values of democratic consent and autonomy is explained, at least in part, by the thought that it is implausible to extend the status of formal citizenship to such persons. To accord formal citizenship to foreigners beyond our borders, or to temporary visitors within our borders, would be inconsistent with the principle of popular sovereignty upon which the legitimacy of modern states is based (Saward, 2000; Yack, 2001). But as we've seen, citizenization is a broader and deeper idea than that of formal citizenship. Thinking of citizenization as a process, rather than a fixed list of traits or sites, opens up space for thinking about new political possibilities. Given that so many of our decisions affect the well-being of people outside our borders, and given that seemingly temporary residents may end up spending long periods of time within our borders (consider seasonal farm workers who come year after year from Mexico), we may have an obligation to "citizenize" some of these relationships as well. The outcome need not be to extend the formal status of Canadian citizenship to such people (e.g., to seasonal workers). Perhaps the outcome would be some new political status, such as "denizenship," which better reflects the actual nature of the interests

and interdependencies at stake.<sup>7</sup> What matters, from a citizenization perspective, is not a static list of rights or formal status, but rather the commitment to build new relationships based on values of consent, autonomy, self-determination, recognition, and so on. Here again, there are relevant experiments in citizenizing relationships beyond the bounds of popular sovereignty and the nation-state that are worthy of exploration.<sup>8</sup>

So we have unresolved issues about the frontiers of citizenization, which are obscured in the traditional debate on responsible citizenship, since it typically presupposes that the status of citizen is already settled. In the traditional debate, we all know who the citizens are, and the contexts within which citizenship operates. But once we think of citizenization as a dynamic historical process, it is far from clear how far citizenization extends (or should extend).<sup>9</sup>

7. For an interesting analysis of the rights of migrant workers that appeals to the values of citizenization (e.g., values of consent and autonomy) but that leads to a legal and political status other than formal citizenship, see Ottonelli and Torresi (2012).

8. In his position paper on responsible citizenship for the Foundation's 2007 Summer Institute, Daniel Weinstock suggested something similar in reverse: namely, that people who inherited or acquired Canadian citizenship but who have lived abroad long-term might have their citizenship status reduced. The result would be a new political status (say, non-resident citizen), but one that better reflects the real nature of the interests and interdependencies at stake. I do not necessarily support this idea, but it confirms the point that citizenization should be understood as a process for structuring relationships according to core democratic values, rather than in terms of any specific formal legal status. The process of citizenization can lead to a range of legal statuses that reflect the autonomy and consent of the parties to the relationship.

9. A different issue regarding the frontiers of citizenization concerns the relevant social spheres in which the ideal applies. We typically think that people have no obligation to reorder their purely "private" relationships on the basis of ideals of citizenization. For example, it is permissible for the Catholic Church to order its internal life on non-democratic principles, at least within certain limits. Citizenization does not go all the way down: not

So the idea of citizenization opens up new possibilities in terms of the range of actors and relationships that we consider as subject to citizenship values, within and beyond the nation-state. But even if we focus on the more traditional set of relationships among already recognized citizens of a nation-state, the idea of citizenization opens up new perspectives not captured in the traditional debate about traits and sites of responsible citizenship.

*Immigration and the New Citizenship Agenda:* As I noted earlier, many Western democracies have recently embraced a new “citizenship agenda” to address the (alleged) challenges that immigration poses to the practice of responsible citizenship. This citizenship agenda has been based on the premise that (a) immigrants are likely to have deficits in their citizenship skills and dispositions, and/or (b) that increasing ethnic and religious diversity due to immigration erodes solidarity and trust in the general population. I mentioned earlier that both of these premises are empirically contestable, particularly in the Canadian case. But it should be clear, I hope, that a citizenization framework would ask entirely different questions.

From a citizenization perspective, the question is whether the social relationship between the native-born and newcomers is one that is typically governed by democratic values of deliberation, consent, and autonomy, or whether it is prone to being governed by uncivil practices of force and paternalism. Insofar as the latter is the case—as it surely is—then we must ensure that programs and projects of citizenship promotion do not reproduce the very assumptions and stereotypes that feed practices of force and paternalism. If the new citizenship policies and projects are premised on assumptions of paternalism and distrust—as is arguably the case

all associations and relationships need to think of themselves as either seedbeds or sites of citizenship. But how precisely we define the relevant “private” sphere within which citizenization is not required is a complex question. For thoughtful exploration of this issue, see Rosenblum (2000).



with coercive “civic integration” policies toward Muslim immigrants in Western Europe—then they contradict the goal of citizenization, even if they seek to build new seedbeds and sites of responsible citizenship.<sup>10</sup> To promote responsible citizenship through policies that stigmatize a group as incompetent and untrustworthy is counter-productive.

It does not follow that all aspects of these new immigrant-focused citizenship agendas are unsound. I do not think that citizenship tests or citizenship ceremonies are, in and of themselves, good or bad. The question, rather, is whether they respect the core assumptions and values of citizenization—to repeat, that citizens have a subjective good that they are competent to express, that our shared rules must be responsive to those expressions, and that we trust each other to negotiate those shared rules in ways that respect one another’s autonomy and identity, and to cooperate in good faith. Viewed this way, it seems clear that citizenship policies vary enormously across countries and, over time, in whether they advance or impede the goals of citizenization.<sup>11</sup>

*Deep Diversity:* While I believe that much of the anxiety over the corrosive impact of immigrant diversity on civic values of trust

10. These policies compel newcomers to attend integration classes, and to pass various language and civic knowledge tests, in order to maintain their residency or welfare benefits. Even defenders of these new civic integration policies such as Christian Joppke acknowledge that they use illiberal means in pursuit of liberal-democratic citizenship (Joppke, 2007). Phil Triadafilopoulos (2011) describes these policies as a manifestation of “Schmittian liberalism.”

11. For an interesting comparison of citizenship tests in Canada and Denmark, illustrating the very different assumptions that govern the relationship between the native-born and newcomers in the two countries, see Adamo (2008). See also Paquet (2012) for a similar comparison of citizenship tests in Canada and Britain. See also the website of the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (<http://www.icc-icc.ca/en/>) (co-founded by Adrienne Clarkson and John Ralston Saul) for an example of a citizenship agenda in relation to immigrants that is clearly informed by a citizenization model.

and solidarity is overstated, there is a separate issue about the relationship between diversity and citizenization that deserves more attention. I mentioned earlier that citizenization presupposes some idea of boundedness, which traditionally has been understood in terms of the nation-state, defined as the possession of a single nation or people. This model has always been a poor fit in Canada, due to the persistence of distinct national identities among French Canadians/Quebecois and Aboriginal peoples, compounded by the extraordinary diversity arising from recent waves of immigration. In the traditional debate on responsible citizenship, the challenge of this “deep diversity” is understood in terms of traits (e.g., the need for tolerance, intercultural communication) and sites (e.g., how to build public spaces open to the expression of difference).<sup>12</sup> But if we think instead in terms of citizenization, the challenge becomes more complex and multi-layered. Insofar as citizenization is a social project to reorder older relations of hierarchy and exclusion, then it operates in Canada at multiple levels, both across long-standing national divisions (e.g., trying to citizenize relations between English and French, or between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people), but also within each national project (e.g., trying to citizenize relations within Quebec between old-stock Quebecois and immigrant communities). We have a palimpsest of incomplete or ongoing citizenization projects: we have unresolved issues relating to Canada’s origins as a settler state on indigenous lands, unresolved issues relating to English and French, and unresolved issues relating to racialized

12. I take the term “deep diversity” from Taylor (1992), who argues that “the politics of recognition” takes very different forms in the case of Aboriginal people, Quebec, and racialized ethnic groups. I think that this diversity in demands for “recognition” is itself rooted in the diversity of their respective projects of citizenization. While Taylor’s writings often display great sensitivity to the connection between demands for recognition and citizenization projects, his theoretical formulation of the “politics of recognition” does not sufficiently stress the connection.

ethnic groups, and all of these unresolved issues interact in complex and sometimes pathological ways.

For example, the federal multiculturalism policies adopted to help citizenize relations with ethno-racial minorities are seen by some as undermining the policies needed to citizenize relations with Quebec or with Aboriginal peoples. I believe this perception is misguided, but it is an issue that can be resolved only by understanding it as the intersection of multiple citizenization projects. The challenge of deep diversity is not just a matter of needing new traits or sites of citizenship, rather, the challenge is that it calls forth multiple citizenization projects whose interaction is unpredictable and unstable.

*Domestic and Global Citizenship:* We can ask a similar question about the relationship between citizenization at the domestic and global levels. Citizenization has traditionally been understood in relation to the nation-state, and that remains true even of the more “multicultural” and “multinational” conception of citizenization we have developed in Canada to address issues of deep diversity. But increasingly Canadians seek to enact their citizenship at transnational or global levels, engaging in international projects or campaigns relating to climate change, global poverty, endangered species, refugees, foreign intervention and civil wars, free trade agreements, and so on. But how does this global citizenship relate to national citizenship? How should we integrate our responsibilities as domestic and global citizens?

Here we see contradictory trends. On the one hand, it is often said that part of what it means to be a good Canadian is to be a good citizen of the world, and indeed a recent study by Alison Brysk describes Canada as a “global good Samaritan” because of the way we’ve seen internationalism as part of our national identity (Brysk, 2009). On the other hand, Canada is routinely (and perhaps rightly) described as a “rogue state” (Broadhead, 2001) because of our hard-nosed and self-centred opposition to various international

initiatives (from climate change to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to the international rules on asbestos). What is striking is how little consistency there is across these debates: we switch from more or less untrammelled national egoism to genuinely cosmopolitan sentiments. This suggests that we do not yet have a clear idea of how to reconcile our domestic responsibilities to our co-citizens with our global responsibilities to the rest of the world. There is a growing intellectual debate about ideas of “rooted cosmopolitanism”—that is, the idea that being a good citizen of the world does not require transcending one’s local loyalties and identities, but rather is rooted in the ethos and practices of local patriotism. For rooted cosmopolitans, the commitment to being a good Canadian is itself a source of, and not an obstacle to, the commitment to being a good cosmopolitan citizen of the world. There is surely some merit in this idea, but also much mythology, and we need to separate out the reality and the myths. Here again, I think this challenge is best parsed not just as an issue of creating new traits and sites of global citizenship, but as figuring out the dynamic interaction between historic projects of domestic citizenization and newer social projects of transnational citizenization.<sup>13</sup>

*Neoliberalism:* Finally, consider the impact of neoliberalism on the prospects for citizenization. Starting in the 1980s, we have lived through an era of dramatic changes in the global political economy, with the expansion of global trade and free trade agreements, the deregulation of financial markets, the weakening of trade unions and “flexibilization” of labour markets, and the privatization of industries and pensions. These changes—often labelled as neoliberalism (or “market fundamentalism” to its critics)—have challenged many of the key institutions and actors that helped underpin postwar struggles for citizenization. As I noted earlier, many of the most

13. For some preliminary efforts to investigate this interaction, see the essays in Kymlicka and Walker (2012).

visible struggles for citizenization—those of women, gays, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and indigenous peoples—have had a similar trajectory, one that is intimately bound up with the traditional national welfare state. These movements emerged in the 1960s, and insofar as they were successful, it was in part by becoming embedded within the institutions of the welfare state, gaining representation on government advisory boards, public funding for advocacy, and recognition in anti-discrimination and affirmative action policies. This entire infrastructure of “interest intermediation” connecting citizenization movements to the state has been weakened, if not entirely dissolved, in the era of neoliberalism. Indeed, one of the first goals of neoliberal reformers was precisely to attack what they viewed as the inappropriate strings connecting the state to advocacy groups and social movements.

Neoliberalism not only undermined the institutional infrastructure of citizenization movements, it has also attempted to undermine the ideological basis of these movements. Neoliberalism has valorized the hard-working taxpayers over “special interests.” As Matt James puts it, neoliberals invoked discourses that “valorized the so-called “ordinary Canadian,” figured as a taxpayer and consumer, to delegitimize group experiences and identities as positive considerations in civic deliberation and debate” (James, 2013).

These changes have been seen by some commentators as essentially eroding any space for meaningful citizenship. Viewed from within the traditional framework of responsible citizenship, neoliberalism is seen as eroding both the traits of good citizenship (e.g., by valorizing “consumers” over “citizens,” or by valorizing greed over public-interestedness) and the spaces of citizenship (e.g., by commercializing the media, privatizing public goods and public spaces, etc.). From a citizenization perspective, neoliberalism has been seen as inherently at odds with any commitment to an ethos or practice of citizenization. According to Margaret Somers, for example, neoliberalism is about extending the reach of markets

in people's lives, and hence about turning social relationships into market relationships rather than citizenship relationships (Somers, 2008). Neoliberalism is about encouraging and enabling people to be effective actors in global markets, not about encouraging and enabling them to be effective citizens in democratic deliberation and self-government. Even when neoliberals seemed to embrace some of the discourses of earlier citizenization movements—as in the neoliberal embrace of multiculturalism—the similarity in discourse hides very different substantive commitments. Multiculturalism, from a neoliberal perspective, is valuable insofar as cultural diversity and transnational bonds are market assets, promoting innovation or global economic linkages. Neoliberal multiculturalism affirms—even valorizes—ethnic immigrant entrepreneurship and transnational commercial linkages, but ignores issues about how to build new relations of democratic citizenship in the face of histories of ethnic and racial hierarchy.<sup>14</sup>

I think there is some truth in this pessimistic reading of the impact of neoliberalism on the prospects for citizenization. The golden age of citizenization movements in the West may well have peaked in the 1970s and 1980s, and many of these movements have been on the defensive since then. And as I noted earlier, in the case of immigrant groups, this retreat from citizenization has been hastened by other global changes, most obviously 9/11, the perceived “clash of civilizations” between the West and Islam, and the resulting securitization of immigration. The combination of a neoliberal state and a security state is hardly propitious grounds for citizenization struggles.

However, we should not overestimate the hegemony of neoliberalism as policy or ideology. Neoliberal ideas have never succeeded in displacing deep-seated public commitments to principles and

14. For influential discussions of the shift from a (left-liberal) social movement multiculturalism to a neoliberal corporate multiculturalism in Canada, see Abu-Laban and Gabriel (2002), Abu-Laban (2009; 2013), Mitchell (2003), and James (2013), discussed further in Kymlicka (2013).

practices of democratic citizenship, and some citizenization movements (such as those of gays) have had marked successes even in the era of neoliberalism. Moreover, while it is true that neoliberalism is fundamentally about enabling people to be market actors rather than democratic citizens, we should not ignore the extent to which neoliberalism offers its own conception of citizenship that we need to take seriously. Paradoxically, at the core of this conception of citizenship is precisely the idea of responsibility. Jacob Hacker has defined neoliberalism as a “personal responsibility crusade,” in which risks that used to be seen as a matter of collective responsibility (such as unemployment or health or pensions) are said to be a matter of personal responsibility (Hacker, 2006). In this view, when people look to society to pay for the costs of their own reckless or imprudent choices, it is they who are acting selfishly, externalizing the costs of their choices onto others. For neoliberals, the old welfare state condones irresponsibility, whereas neoliberal reforms ensure that we are responsible citizens.

As Hacker shows, the outcome of this personal responsibility crusade in the United States has been pathological and destructive, but the neoliberal conception of individual responsibility retains broad public appeal. In this context, it is not enough to bemoan the impact of neoliberalism on the virtues and sites of citizenship. The deeper challenge is to respond to the underlying presuppositions about the role of personal responsibility within our conception of citizenship. We need a more sophisticated account of how to integrate the logic of shared responsibility inherent in citizenization with the logic of individual responsibility. I believe that reforms aimed at redressing historic relations of hierarchy can often be seen as enabling people to take greater responsibility for their lives and their choices, and not as part of a “nanny state” that usurps that responsibility. But the tenor of public debate suggests that this connection is not clear to many people, perhaps due to the way neoliberalism has demonized “hand outs” to “special interests.” The

era of neoliberal “market fundamentalism” may now be over, but it continues to have enduring effects on how we think about responsibility, and about what we owe each other, and hence about what forms of citizenization are appropriate, in relation to which sorts of social relationships.

In sum, framing issues of responsible citizenship in terms of the historic process and social project of citizenization, rather than as a static list of traits and sites, helps to deepen the analysis and bring fresh insights. It helps point us beyond traditional debates about the seedbeds and sites of responsible citizenship to focus on the restructuring of social relationships on the basis of values of democratic consent and autonomy.

#### **4. The Role of the Foundation**

There is an exciting research agenda here, and I believe that the Foundation has a distinctive advantage in pursuing it. The traditional framework for debating responsible citizenship has largely been monopolized by three disciplines: political science, law, and education. This sort of disciplinary “ownership” of citizenship makes sense on the traditional framework: assessing the formal legal status of citizenship engages the discipline of law; assessing whether individuals have the political dispositions and political sites needed to enact their formal citizenship engages political science; and insofar as schools are given a special role and responsibility to educate people for citizenship, it engages the discipline of education. This sort of specialized disciplinary research into the formal status of citizenship, the political dispositions and behaviour of citizens, and citizenship education has been reasonably well supported in Canada by SSHRC and other funding bodies.<sup>15</sup>

If we reframe the debate in terms of citizenization, however, we immediately engage a much broader range of disciplines, including

15. Federal departments, such as Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and provincial ministries of education, have also funded research in this field.



history, economics, sociology, psychology, geography, media studies, and others. While law and politics are still the most visible sites of citizenization struggles, the social project of citizenization is also intimately bound up with processes of cultural representation (e.g., in the media or museums), the use of public space, the formation of social identities and of historic narratives, and patterns of economic and social interdependency.

Consider the current Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), established to deal with the legacy of the Indian residential schools. It is in many ways a paradigmatic example of citizenization, intended to acknowledge the wrongs of earlier uncivil relations based on force and paternalism (“a sincere indication and acknowledgement of the injustices and harms experienced by Aboriginal people”), and to restructure those relationships on the basis of equality and consent (“a profound commitment to establishing new relationships embedded in mutual recognition and respect”).<sup>16</sup> But the ways and means of achieving this goal, in the view of the TRC, involves a “holistic” process of “healing” that includes such things as commemorations, witnessing, and artistic representations, and hence needing the expertise and experience of practitioners and scholars of history (written and oral), cultural studies, literature, the visual arts, psychology, and anthropology. One can certainly give a narrow political science or legal analysis of this process—the TRC was after all the product of political negotiation and a legal settlement—but such an analysis would almost certainly miss many of its most distinctive features, and many of the factors that will determine its success or failure.<sup>17</sup>

16. For an overview of the TRC’s mandate, see the “Our Mandate” page on the TRC website, <http://www.trc-cvr.ca/overview.html>

17. It is interesting in this respect to note that the most sustained analyses of the TRC in Canada have come from within the humanities rather than law or political science—see the essays collected in Henderson and Wakeham (2013).

Or consider the challenge of citizenization in relation to those who lack complex cognitive skills, such as children or animals. If, as I argued earlier, the values of citizenization should nonetheless inform our relations with them, then we clearly need to draw heavily on fields such as developmental psychology (for children) or ethology (for animals).

Citizenization, in short, is a complex social, cultural, legal, and political project, and needs to be studied as such. In my view, the Foundation is in a unique position to advance this sort of agenda because of the way it can work outside of traditional disciplinary silos, and can bridge and connect the humanities and social sciences. I should also note that pursuing this agenda offers potential benefits to the Foundation, since it would more securely tie “Responsible Citizenship” to the Foundation’s other themes.

Consider the theme of “Human Rights and Dignity.” I noted earlier that in the traditional view, citizenship is tied to membership in bounded communities, whereas human rights are owed to all persons as such—that is to say, citizenship is about membership rights, but human rights are independent of membership. Viewed this way, citizenship and human rights are locked into separate analytical categories. But if we shift our focus from the formal status of citizenship to the process of citizenization, then the important linkages with human rights emerge into view. In fact, I would argue that the human rights revolution and struggles for citizenization are two sides of the same coin, both rooted in the same commitment to repudiating and redressing older ideologies of hierarchy that have historically legitimated the mistreatment or neglect of particular individuals or groups. Exploring the links between citizenization struggles and human rights struggles would help illuminate both, helping us to avoid overly formal or legalistic accounts of the former, and overly abstract or atomistic conceptions of the latter. Citizenization struggles are never just about formal legal status, and human rights struggles are never just about respecting abstract

personhood. Rather, both are struggles against particular practices and ideologies that have historically condemned particular individuals or groups to oppression or invisibility.

A citizenization framework would also help strengthen ties to the theme of “Canada in the World.” Here again, the traditional conception of responsible citizenship is tied to membership in a bounded community, and so has trouble conceiving our international obligations as obligations of citizenship. But if we shift to the idea of citizenization, then, as I noted earlier, there is no reason why citizenization as a process should stop at national borders, or should be restricted to those who hold the formal status of national citizens. A citizenization framework can not only help us see the links between domestic citizenship and international responsibilities, but also make sense of the fact that are our international responsibilities (like our domestic responsibilities) likely to be differentiated. Just as our obligations to particular groups of domestic co-citizens are shaped by the distinctive histories of those relationships, so too are our obligations to particular countries likely to be shaped by our historic relationships with them. For example, insofar as we have recruited farm workers from Mexico, or health practitioners from sub-Saharan Africa, we may have particular obligations to those countries. These specific obligations, rooted in histories of interaction, are often ignored in more “cosmopolitan” accounts of our international obligations, which offer only an ahistorical account of what global justice requires. A citizenization perspective would force us to consider the complex ways Canada has historically been implicated in (often unjust) relations with other peoples and cultures of the world, and to consider what type of international activism would be responsive to that history. In foreign affairs, as in domestic affairs, citizenization offers a more dynamic and relational perspective.

And, finally, albeit more speculatively, if we take seriously the suggestion that a citizenization perspective can be applied to at least some animals, this would have profound effects on the final

Foundation theme of “People and their Natural Environment.” Animal rights advocates have long argued that animals cannot be reduced to or subsumed within the broader category of “nature” without losing sight of our unique moral obligations to them as sentient beings with a subjective good. But I would go further and argue that those obligations in turn can be illuminated by asking when, or under what conditions, our relations with animals should be restructured in light of the underlying values of citizenization. We might ask, for example, whether animals have sovereignty rights (or property rights) over particular territories, or mobility rights over particular airways or land corridors, or representation rights in decisions about resource development. If we accept this rather speculative idea, which I defend at length elsewhere (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011), then the links between responsible citizenship and the environment multiply in complexity. It is already a familiar idea in environmental ethics that our responsibilities as citizens include responsibilities for the natural world—to be a good citizen is to be environmentally conscious—and this has generated a lively literature on “environmental citizenship” or “ecological citizenship” (e.g., Eckersley, 2004). But we might contemplate the possibility not only that environmental concerns should inform our theory of responsible citizenship, but also that the values of citizenization should inform our relations to animals, acknowledging that human beings are not the only beings with citizenship rights and responsibilities in relation to the natural environment.<sup>18</sup>

18. There are other ways of connecting citizenship to the environment theme. It is widely recognized that any serious process of citizenization in relation to Aboriginal peoples will require addressing the different conceptions of land or territory held by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies in Canada. These different conceptions underpin various ongoing disputes about the nature of Aboriginal land claims and property rights, which are central to the citizenization process, but they also are potentially important for developing new perspectives on the theme of “People and their Natural Environment.”

In these and other ways, the idea of citizenization can inform the work of the Foundation, helping to connect the various disciplines and themes covered by the Foundation's mandate.

### **Bibliography**

- Abu-Laban, Yasmeen (2013), "Reform by Stealth: The Harper Conservatives and Canadian Multiculturalism," in Jack Jedwab (ed.), *Debating Multiculturalism in Canada*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, forthcoming.
- Abu-Laban, Yasmeen (2009), "The Welfare State Under Siege? Neo-liberalism, Immigration and Multiculturalism," in Alexandra Dobrowolsky (ed.), *Women and Public Policy in Canada: Neo-Liberalism and After?* Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 146-165.
- Abu-Laban, Yasmeen, and Christina Gabriel (2002), *Selling Diversity: Immigration, Multiculturalism, Employment Equity and Globalization*. Peterborough, ON: Broadview.
- Adamo, Silvia (2008) "Northern Exposure: The New Danish Model of Citizenship Test," *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, vol. 10, no. 1, 10-28.
- Archard, David, and Colin Macleod (eds.) (2002), *The Moral and Political Status of Children: New Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Arneil, Barbara (2009), "Disability, Self Image, and Modern Political Theory," *Political Theory*, vol. 37, no. 2, 218-42.
- Blackledge, A. (2004), "Constructions of identity in political discourse in multilingual Britain," in A. Pavlenko and A. Blackledge (eds.), *Negotiation of Identity in Multilingual Contexts*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Bloemraad, Irene (2006), *Becoming a Citizen: Incorporating Immigrants and Refugees in the United States and Canada*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Broadhead, Lee Ann (2001), "Canada as a Rogue State: Its Shameful Performance on Climate Change," *International Journal*, vol. 56, no. 3, 461-480.
- Brown, Katherine (2010), "Contesting the Securitization of British Muslims: Citizenship and Resistance," *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2, 171-182.

- Brysk, Alison (2009), *Global Good Samaritans: Human Rights as Foreign Policy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Carey, Allison (2009), *On the Margins of Citizenship: Intellectual Disability and Civil Rights in Twentieth-Century America*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Cesari, Jocelyne (2009), *The Securitisation of Islam in Europe* (CEPS Challenge Paper no. 15). Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies.
- Donaldson, Sue, and Will Kymlicka (2011), *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eckersely, Robyn (2004), *The Green State: Rethinking Democracy and Sovereignty*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Francis, Leslie, and Anita Silvers (2007), "Liberalism and Individually Scripted ideas of the Good: Meeting the Challenge of Dependent Agency," *Social Theory and Practice*, vol. 33, no. 2, 311-334.
- Galston, William (1991), *Liberal Purposes: Goods, Virtues, and Duties in the Liberal State*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Guetzkow, Joshua (2010), "Beyond Deservingness: Congressional Discourse on Poverty, 1964–1996," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 629, 173-197.
- Hacker, Jacob (2006), *The Great Risk Shift: The New Economic Insecurity and the Decline of the American Dream*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Henderson, Jennifer, and Pauline Wakeham (eds.) (2013), *Reconciling Canada: Critical Perspectives on the Culture of Redress*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, forthcoming.
- Ibrahim, Maggie (2005), "The Securitization of Migration: A Racial Discourse," *International Migration*, vol. 43, 163-187.
- James, Matt (2013), "Neoliberal Heritage Redress," in Jennifer Henderson and Pauline Wakeham (eds.), *Reconciling Canada: Critical Perspectives on the Culture of Redress*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, forthcoming.
- Joppke, Christian (2007), "Immigrants and Civic Integration in Western Europe," in Keith Banting, Thomas Courchene, and Leslie Seidle (eds.), *Belonging? Diversity, Recognition and Shared Citizenship in Canada*. Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy.
- Kazempur, Abdolmohammad (2009), *Social Capital and Diversity: Some Lessons from Canada*. Bern: Peter Lang.

- Kesler, Christel, and Irene Bloemraad (2010), "Does Immigration Erode Social Capital? The Conditional Effects of Immigration-Generated Diversity on Trust, Membership, and Participation across 19 Countries, 1981–2000," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 43, no. 2, 319–347.
- Kiwan, Dina (2008), "A Journey to Citizenship in the United Kingdom," *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, vol. 10, no. 1, 60–75.
- Kymlicka, Will (2013), "Neoliberal Multiculturalism?," in Peter A. Hall and Michèle Lamont (eds.), *Social Resilience in the Neo-Liberal Era*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming.
- Kymlicka, Will (2010), "Testing the Liberal Multiculturalist Hypothesis: Normative Theories and Social Science Evidence," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 43, no. 2, 257–271.
- Kymlicka, Will and Kathy Walker (eds.) (2012), *Rooted Cosmopolitanism: Canada and the World*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- McGhee, D. (2009), "The Paths to Citizenship: A critical examination of immigration policy in Britain since 2001," *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 43, no. 1, 41–64.
- Milani, T. (2008), "Language testing and citizenship: A language ideological debate in Sweden," *Language in Society*, vol. 37, 27–59.
- Mitchell, Katharyne (2003), "Educating the National Citizen in Neoliberal Times: From the Multicultural Self to the Strategic Cosmopolitan," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series*, vol. 28, no. 4, 387–403.
- Ottonelli, Valeria and Tiziana Torresi (2012), "Inclusivist Egalitarian Liberalism and Temporary Migration: A Dilemma," *Journal of Political Philosophy*, vol. 20, no. 2, 202–224.
- Paquet, Mireille (2012), "Beyond Appearances: Citizenship Tests in Canada and the UK," *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, vol. 13, no. 2, 243–260.
- Prince, Michael (2009), *Absent Citizens: Disability Politics and Policy in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Putnam, Robert (2007), "E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century," *Scandinavian Political Studies*, vol. 30, no. 2, 137–174.
- Rehfeld, Andrew (2010), "The Child as Democratic Citizen," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 633, 141–166.

- Rosenblum, Nancy (2000), *Membership and Morals: The Personal Uses of Pluralism in America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Saward, Michael (2000), "A Critique of Held," in B. Holden (ed.), *Global Democracy: Key Debates*. London: Routledge.
- Somers, Margaret (2008), *Genealogies of Citizenship: Markets, Statelessness, and the Right to Have Rights*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Soroka, Stuart, Richard Johnston, and Keith Banting (2007), "Ties That Bind: Social Cohesion and Diversity in Canada," in Keith Banting, Thomas J. Courchene, and F. Leslie Seidle (eds.), *Belonging? Diversity, Recognition and Shared Citizenship in Canada*. Montreal: Institute for Research in Public Policy, 561-600.
- Stevenson, Patrick (2006), "'National' Languages in Transnational Contexts: Language, Migration and Citizenship in Europe," in C. Mar-Molinero and P. Stevenson (eds.), *Language Ideologies, Policies and Practices*. London: Palgrave, 147-161.
- Taylor, Charles (1992), "The Politics of Recognition," in Amy Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism and the "Politics of Recognition."* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Triadafilopoulos, Triadafilos (2011), "Illiberal Means to Liberal Ends? Understanding Recent Immigrant Integration Policies in Europe," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 37, no. 6, 861-880.
- Tully, James (2001), "Introduction," in Alain Gagnon and James Tully (eds.), *Multinational Democracies*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Vorhaus, John (2005), "Citizenship, Competence and Profound Disability," *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, vol. 39, no. 3, 461-475.
- Wright S. (2008), "Citizenship Tests in Europe – Editorial Introduction," *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1-9.
- Yack, Bernard (2001), "Popular Sovereignty and Nationalism," *Political Theory*, vol. 29, 517-536.



TAYLOR OWEN

*2008 Trudeau Scholar*

Columbia School of Journalism

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Dr. Taylor Owen is the Research Director of the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at the Columbia School of Journalism. He is the Founding Editor of OpenCanada.org, the digital media platform of the Canadian International Council (CIC), is the Director of the International Relations and Digital Technology Project, an international research project exploring the intersection of information technology and international affairs, and is the Research Director of the Munk Debates. His Doctorate is from the University of Oxford where he was Trudeau scholar.

He was previously a Banting Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of British Columbia, a Fellow in the Genocide Studies Program at Yale University, a Research Fellow at the Center for Global Governance at the London School of Economics and a Researcher at the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo. His research and writing focuses on the intersection between information technology and international affairs. Taylor Owen's publications can be found on his website, at [www.taylorowen.com](http://www.taylorowen.com), and can be followed at [@taylor\\_owen](https://twitter.com/taylor_owen).

## **ABSTRACT**

Since the end of the Second World War, Canadian foreign policy has largely concerned itself with the promotion of individual rights and freedoms. This agenda began with Lester B. Pearson's insistence on the "Canadian clause" in the North Atlantic Treaty persisted through Canada's promotion of human security, and now finds expression in the government's rhetoric on the Arab Spring and its promotion of women's and gay rights internationally.

Until recently, Canada fulfilled its individual mandate by way of state-based international organizations such as NATO and the United Nations. States are, however, increasingly challenged by empowered individuals and groups. As a result, state-based institutions no longer possess the leverage to ensure the rights and freedoms of individuals.

How then does Canada as a state continue to promote the individual in a world in which states have diminishing power? This poses a challenge to foreign policy agendas, but also opens a new era of possibility, one in which the state works to protect the networks on which individuals empower themselves.

## Disruption: Foreign Policy in a Networked World

The Department of English at the University of Denmark would seem an odd place to find provocative research on the digital era.<sup>1</sup> But it is here that a group of medieval historians, folklorists, and literary scholars led by Thomas Pettitt has developed a theoretical framework that goes a long way toward explaining our current, technologically enabled cultural shift.

The idea of the “Gutenberg Parenthesis” stipulates that we are now at the culminating moment of a revolution that will be complete when all cultural and knowledge production has been digitized—when all books ever written are digitized, all art reproduced, all news online. When this occurs—when our primary modes of interaction, communication, and production all *become* digital information—we will have ended a period of human history that was enabled by Gutenberg’s printing press.

The printing press had wide-reaching consequences. In addition to allowing information to be dispersed widely, it also shaped how information itself was conceived. The printing press occasioned a

1. The author would like to thank Anouk Dey for his contributions to this paper.

shift from a chaotic, oral tradition to a linear, written one. If one wanted information to spread, one had to conform to a specific form, which was linear and bound, with beginnings, middles, and ends. Ideas were constructed to fit this form, and knowledge evolved via the constraints it imposed. Society moved from a decentralized, oral tradition of knowledge-sharing to information that could be centralized, controlled, and mass-produced.

These changes have largely determined the modern era. Some 350 years of governance, institutional design, political evolution, media, and culture have all been dictated by humankind's rapport with information technology. We are now adopting a new mode of information production, one based on digital information, with implications that are similarly destabilizing.

The Gutenberg Parenthesis is a useful lens through which to view the nature of contemporary threats and government responses. Pettitt would argue that the present and immediate security future will be marked by encounters, confrontations, and conflicts between pre-parenthetical illiterate individuals, parenthetical literate individuals, and post-parenthetical neo-literate individuals. In this construct, the pre-parenthetical insurgent and the post-parenthetical neo-literate will have more in common than the Westphalian security institutions. If this is true, then a contemporary discussion of foreign policy must move beyond the confines of state power, control and behaviour, and into the nebulous, networked world to which we have returned.

### **The Individual in Canadian Foreign Policy**

Since the end of the Second World War, the individual has held a firm place at the centre of Canadian foreign policy. As much or more than any country in the world, Canada has justified its international presence in terms of the protection of individual security and rights and the empowerment of individual freedom.

While this position was made explicit with then minister of foreign affairs Lloyd Axworthy's human security agenda, it has been present through most of our major international initiatives spanning administrations of all political ideologies. And while it is true that all governments have deviated from this agenda in a range of ways, ultimately, Canada's role in the world for the past half-century has been rooted in the purported promotion of individual rights and freedoms. Tracing this history is illustrative.

The second of the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty's 14 articles is called the "Canadian clause" because it was introduced by Lester B. Pearson, then undersecretary of international affairs, who insisted that the parties of the agreement "should be bound together not merely by their common opposition to totalitarian communist aggression, but by a common belief in the values and virtues of...democracy and a positive love of it and their fellow men" (*Documents on Canadian External Relations*, 1949, 492). The Canadian clause emphasized the social aspect of cooperation and the individual.

Soon after the formation of the United Nations (UN), Canadian John Humphrey was named director of the Human Rights Division of the UN Secretariat, where he authored the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the first time the individual was recognized by international law.

Meanwhile, the concept and practice of peacekeeping—an approach now seen in operations around the world—emerged from the Suez Crisis (1956), when Pearson developed the idea of a police force under UN control to separate warring parties. Of what is essentially a state-based concept, Pearson said that nonetheless "human sovereignty transcends national sovereignty" (Pearson, 1970, 14).

The human security agenda, too, is a literal manifestation of the promotion of the individual in Canadian foreign policy. In fact, former minister of foreign affairs Lloyd Axworthy originally referred to the human security agenda as the "individual security agenda"

(Copeland, 2001). As Axworthy explained at the UN, “the search for global peace increasingly turns on issues of personal safety...in this world, the protection of people must be central to the Council’s work” (Axworthy, 1999a, n.p.).

The human security agenda saw tangible policy success. The Kimberley Process and the UN Doctrine on the Responsibility to Protect both owe their provenance to the concept of human security. Similarly, Canada’s policy toward Kosovo was articulated in terms of the human security agenda. “It was and is the humanitarian imperative that has galvanized the alliance to act...NATO’s actions are guided primarily by concern for the human rights and welfare of Kosovo’s people,” explained Axworthy (Axworthy, 1999b, n.p.).

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, in which Canada played a formative and lasting role, was also very much seen as an accomplishment aimed at protecting the individual. At the signing of the treaty, Axworthy explained, “An independent and effective international criminal court will help to deter some of the most serious violations of international humanitarian law. It will give new meaning and global reach to protecting the vulnerable and innocent” (Axworthy, 1998, n.p.).

Another example can be found in Axworthy’s announcement of the creation of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty as a response to Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s call for new ways of addressing complex international challenges such as the Rwandan genocide and the Srebrenica massacre. “Canada’s human security agenda is all about *putting people* first [emphasis added],” Axworthy said, and “we are establishing this Commission to respond to the Secretary-General’s challenge to ensure that the indifference and inaction of the international community...are no longer an option” (Axworthy, 2000, n.p.).

The mission in Afghanistan, which was initially clearly about supporting an American-led regime change, was depicted by all governments as having a humanitarian imperative. Throughout the

mission and the evolution from 3D, to Whole of Government, to Integrated Peacebuilding, the protection and promotion of Afghan security, broadly defined, was rightly or wrongly at the centre of governments' public rhetoric.<sup>2</sup>

The omnipresence of the individual has transitioned into the Harper government's foreign policy. When the Libyan government first started attacking its citizens, Prime Minister Stephen Harper stated, "Canada urges Libyan forces to respect the human rights of demonstrators, including their right to freedom of expression and assembly" (Harper, 2011a, n.p.). A month later, he continued, "We must help the Libyan people, help them now, or the threat to them and the stability of the whole region will only increase" (Harper, 2011b, n.p.). More recently, Minister of Foreign Affairs John Baird has made forceful statements on women's and gay rights. The "criminalization of homosexuality," Baird recently stated, "is incompatible with the fundamental Commonwealth value of human rights" (Davis, 2012, n.p.).

What is important to note about this evolution is that for 50 years, Canada has promoted the rights and freedoms of individuals through state-based multinational organizations. Over the past decade, however, these institutions have proved wanting at fulfilling the mandates they were built to advance. The list of recent multilateral policy failures is sobering: Afghanistan, Iraq, Kyoto, non-proliferation, and any number of macro development initiatives.

If the human security agenda taught us that state sovereignty is insufficient for protecting individual security, an assessment of the current international system must surely add that networked individuals are now empowered both to protect and to harm themselves. The state is increasingly left out of both sides of the equation.

2. 3D refers to Diplomacy, Defence and Development. All three terms were used during the mission in Afghanistan to refer to government departments coordinating both at the headquarters level in Ottawa, and at the operational level in the field. They imply that military, development, and diplomatic tools are required in a peacebuilding mission.



How then does Canada as a state continue to promote the individual in a world where states have diminishing power? This poses a challenge to foreign policy agendas, but also opens a new era of possibility, one in which the state works to protect the network through which individuals empower themselves.

### **Anonymous**

In all areas of international affairs, some of the most successful contemporary actors are those that are leveraging online networks to disrupt traditional institutions. Perhaps none better exemplifies this than the activist collective Anonymous.

In the summer of 2010, under pressure from the US State Department and in response to the WikiLeaks release of hundreds of thousands of diplomatic cables, MasterCard, VISA, and PayPal halted all donation transactions to WikiLeaks. Soon after, all three of their sites went down due to an online attack, called Operation Payback, by the activist group Anonymous.

Anonymous was able to shut down three of the biggest financial sites on the Internet using a distributed denial-of-service (DDOS) attack. A DDOS shuts down a site by overwhelming its server with a large number of simultaneous activities. This is generally done using a low orbit ion cannon (LOIC) program that leverages a single network connection to send a firehouse of garbage requests. A LOIC program allows people to participate in a collective hacking initiative without knowing how to program.

Anonymous defines itself as a “decentralized network of individuals focused on promoting access to information, free speech, and transparency.” Starting in 2008, the collective began to retaliate against the anti-digital piracy campaign of the motion picture and recording industry. Since then, hundreds of attacks have been conducted under the Anonymous brand. Throughout 2011, Anonymous attacked the government websites of Syria, Egypt, and Libya in support of the Arab Spring. In January of 2012, Anonymous hacked into,

recorded, and made public conference calls among agents of the FBI and MI5 who were meeting on how to stop cyber-activism. Personal details have been released of the police officer who pepper-sprayed protesters at the University of California, San Diego, and of Arizona lawmakers who brought in state anti-immigration laws. In April 2012, Anonymous broke into the computer networks of the Vatican.

Anonymous has no centralized leadership and no country of origin. Individuals loosely coordinate, and apply the Anonymous label to their action as attribution. As one self-identified Anonymous hacker put it, “We have this agenda that we all agree on and we all coordinate and act, but all act independently toward it, without any want for recognition. We just want to get something that we feel is important done.”

In a recent *Foreign Affairs* article, Yochai Benkler, professor at Harvard’s Berkman Center, argued, “Anonymous demonstrates one of the new core aspects of power in a networked, democratic society: individuals are vastly more effective and less susceptible to manipulation, control, and suppression by traditional sources of power than they were even a decade ago” (Benkler, 2012).

Members of Anonymous are neither pranksters nor terrorists, Benkler continued. Instead, they “play the role of the audacious provocateur, straddling the boundaries between destructive, disruptive, and instructive” (Benkler, 2012) Like many of the individuals and organizations innovating online, they confound the institutions, boundaries, categories, and actors that have held power throughout the 20th century.

### **Leveraging the Networked Architecture**

If the new international architecture is an environment in which threats are focused on people rather than on states, and the power to cause and mitigate harm is decentralized to individuals, then understanding the networks within which individuals act becomes a central foreign policy prerogative. Networked actors are no more

morally bound than actors that operate within the traditional state system. They use their power for both positive and negative acts. It is therefore their ability to act, and the new forms of action that are enabled by networked technology, that should be the focus of our study.

While Anonymous is by no means representative of all networked organizations, it is an archetype of a new type of institution—one that has proved remarkably successful. For this reason, Anonymous is a useful case study for online networked behaviour.

### *Technologically enabled*

The principal characteristic of the networked world is the individual enabled by information technology. Instead of seeing advances in how we communicate, broadcast, and interact as an incremental evolution, we can see the Internet, and the norms and practices that it enables, as instrumental to a wide range of behavioural shifts. Because of information technology, the individual is now empowered in a manner that challenges the institutionalized structures of global affairs.

In a study of the online “blogstorm” response to the anti-John Kerry “swift boat” documentary *Stolen Honor*, legal scholar Marvin Ammori argues that the primary variable in the ability for political action that has shifted is the barrier to entry. Marginal production and distribution costs are now so low that online participants are able to overcome the technological and logistical costs and the organizational barriers to coordinated political action (Ammori, 2005, 43-46). This ability for ad hoc collaboration enables a network of individual participants driven by non-monetary motivations (Ammori, 2005, 50) and leverages their excess labor capacity (Ammori, 2005, 55).

To this factor, Michael Fromkin adds the inherent value of anonymity to explain the growing power of the individual in an online

network. It is a technologically determined anonymity, he argues, that allows individual users to engage in political speech without fear of retribution and, as such, gives them power (Froomkin, 1997).

### *Self-governed*

If the Internet technologically empowers individuals to act on their own, how does it regulate collective behaviour? Ammori argues that collective action in what he calls a “blogstorm” is self-regulated. He argues that technology is enabling a new form of “collective ad hoc private regulation,” whereby private actors deliberately constrain and influence other private actors (Ammori, 2005, 3). Ammori calls this self-regulation “shadow government,” a term perhaps drawn from law and economics theorist Robert Ellickson, who describes actions “within the shadow of the law” (Ellickson, 1991). Lawrence Lessig also argues that the legal control of behaviours is just one of many forms of constraints, including norms, markets, and system architecture. So the fact that a network is largely lawless does not mean that it is unregulated; it simply means that it is regulated by alternative (private) means (Lessig, 1998).

In 2002, Yochai Benkler adapted this idea of self-regulation to the Internet age. Benkler builds on the theory of Robert Coase, the father of the discipline of law and economics, which classified the regulation of interactions as either market-based (via contracts) or hierarchy-based (via institutions), to posit that the Internet permits a third model of production: ad hoc volunteerism (Benkler, 2002).

In this governance system, credibility and authority are gained through action. In a lovely turn of phrase, Sundén says that on the Internet one “types oneself into being” (Sundén, 2003, 3). Similarly, in *Communications Power*, Castells argues that the new actors gain their power from communication, not from representation (Castells, 2000). Both imply that authority in online networks such as Anonymous is judged only by the reality the participants create.

*Polysocial*

Sally Applin and Michael Fischer argue that we have reached the end of the singular perceived self and that we now exist, online and offline, as multiple identities in multiple simultaneous realities (Applin and Fisher, 2011). This “polysocial” reality not only encompasses the seamless blending of real and virtual worlds, but also reflects the multiple and simultaneous realities in which we choose to live. These realities are at once personal and anonymous, and we are increasingly seeing a tension between the two. We now can exist in multiple places at once and are in this sense becoming ubiquitous.

It may be, as Catherine Fieschi has written, that this reality involves a completely different way of thinking, a neurological rewiring (Fieschi, 2011). Neuronal plasticity posits that humans are malleable and that their nervous system can adapt. Jonah Lehrer, for example, argues that interaction with diverse actors improves our mental acuity for problem solving (Lehrer, 2012). In this sense, we could well be nearing the end of the “modern self,” that is, the self-contained, self-reflective, and isolated individual.

Which identities people assume and which they choose to be a part of is the purview of behavioural economics. One idea particularly relevant to networked online activity is homophilous sorting: the process by which individuals come to identify and preferentially interact with those similar to themselves. Timur Kuran describes what he calls preference falsification within self-selected groups, which predicts that a community might be attached to a status quo belief even if none of its members individually support it. In these social networks, individual actors refrain from expressing their discontent or preference for change in order to avoid punishment (Kuran, 1995). Behavioural economists also show that when an information consumer is uncertain about the quality of a source of information, he or she infers that the source is of higher quality when it conforms to their previously held biases (Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2006).

### *Rapidly evolving*

In a digital network, information is abundant and evolves at an increasingly fast pace. News of world events has become a commodity, and the evolution of ideas, ideologies, beliefs and politics is nearing real time. Software programs, group behaviour, and individual action are all adapting to a world of big data and a new pace of evolution.

The scale of data now being produced is incomprehensible to the human mind. For example, we produce a Library of Congress worth of data every five minutes. Much of this data is meta-tagged and social; two billion pieces of content are tagged with a location on a monthly basis on the Facebook platform. This flow of data is leading to a new law of production, where the more we consume, produce, and use data, the cheaper it becomes—data is not subject to resource constraints.

This scale and pace of information production is leading to changes in how individuals behave. Ammori argues that in online networks, relationships are less likely to be grounded in history. The implication is that group loyalty does not ensure path dependency. In the Sinclair case (outlined above), the blogstorm lasted “only one and a half weeks, and it even appeared to lose vigour after only its third day” (Ammori, 2005, 26). It created no permanent institution (Ammori, 2005, 28) and, when another broadcaster committed precisely the same action, it received no attention (Ammori, 2005, 29).

Marketing theorist Seth Godin’s book *Unleashing the Ideas Virus* argues that online, certain ideas can take on a life of their own, acting like viruses and self-marketing. Similarly, J.M. Balkin suggests that messages act like “memes”—viral ideas that use people to replicate themselves (Balkin, 1998). This biological evolution is also iterative. In the Sinclair case, each time the stock of the company that produced the video went down a few cents, bloggers would circulate the information and the stock would fall further (Ammori, 2005, 21).

Internet theorist Evgeny Morozov argues that online networks, and the pace of change they enable, lead to a motivation to engage in superficial forms of politics (2011), where individuals are incentivized to behave loudly and assertively.

*Decentralized, non-hierarchical, and collaborative*

Action in a networked environment is not only data-heavy and rapidly evolving, but is both decentralized and non-hierarchical. More importantly, collective action is possible without centralization and a hierarchical structure. Clay Shirky argues that collective activities that formerly required coordination and hierarchy can now be carried out through looser forms of coordination (Shirky, 2010), such as social network connections, common short-term alignment in a movement, or unified objectives in a particular event. Drawing on game theory, Ammori argues that decentralized action allows participants to overcome perceived or real collective action problems such as the Prisoner's Dilemma and Chicken (Ammori, 2005, 39).

In *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution*, Howard Rheingold makes the case that the power of the network is largely quantitatively derived (i.e., derived from its population). Rheingold compares this with a state, where population does not automatically deliver power. According to Rheingold, networked power follows Reed's Law: a network's power increases by the square of the number of its members, so new members increase a large network's power more than they would the power of a small network (Rheingold, 2002).

Writing about networked governance, Mark Considine argues that a network is a social world based upon partnerships, collaborations, and interdependencies, as opposed to command-and-control hierarchies, market exchange, and traditional bureaucratic instruments (Considine, 2005). Manuel Castells adds that networks enable a new collective capitalism, the "signature form of organization in the information age" (Castells, 2000, 57). Bruno Latour introduces

actor network theory, which sees collaboration as lateral encounters and a key feature of the network (Latour, 1997).

Networked action and the decentralized nodes of Anonymous are not geographically predicated. Clay Shirky, for example, demonstrates that the Internet unites groups so disparate that they could not have been formed without it (Shirky, 2008). Hargittai argues that online segregation is based not on geography but on other factors like nationality, age, and level of education (Hargittai, 2007).

### *Resilient*

Computer scientists have long studied the resilience of networks. A recent article in *Nature*, however, argues that not all redundant networks are equal. The authors show that one attribute of scale-free networks, such as the Internet, is that most of the network's nodes have one or two links; few nodes have more. This guarantees that the system is entirely connected and is therefore particularly robust. More specifically, the ability of nodes to communicate with one another in networks such as the Internet is unaffected by high node failure rates, giving these networks a high tolerance for error and ensuring that they continue to grow even when a small error occurs. This tolerance for error comes at a high price, however: if key nodes are attacked, the entire network becomes vulnerable (Albert et al., 2000).

The Internet's resilience follows not only from its high tolerance for error but also from its packet-switching characteristic. Cyber law scholar Michael Fromkin (1996) describes packet-switching as the method by which data can be broken up into standardized packets, which are then routed to their destinations via an indeterminate number of intermediaries. Having so many possible routes for communication means that information can still be transmitted when one break occurs. This is one reason why the US Department of Defense developed the Internet.



### *Social*

In the field of international relations, social behaviour is intimately associated with constructivism. “Actors do not have a ‘portfolio’ of interests that they carry around independent of social context,” writes Wendt. “Instead, they define interests in the process of defining situations” (Wendt, 1992, 398). In the online environment, many of the same dynamics are at work. Danah Boyd argues that MySpace and Facebook allow US youth to socialize with friends even when they are unable to gather in unmediated situations, thus serving the function of “networked publics” that support sociability (Boyd, 2008). Haythornthwaite argues that because individuals can articulate and make visible their social networks, individuals with “latent ties” can make connections that would not usually be made (Haythornthwaite, 2005). Clay Shirky goes a step further, arguing that peer-to-peer is “erasing the distinction between consumer and provider” (Shirky, 2008, 35) and creating new forms of socio-economic relationships.

### **Principles of Foreign Policy in a Networked World**

Governments and their foreign policy agendas are faced with a dilemma: the very attributes that determine success in a networked world (outlined above) are the ones that their institutions were built to dissuade.

In a world where states had a monopoly on power, it was sufficient for the state to use state institutions to protect and empower individuals. But this is no longer the case. In the online space, where individuals are empowered by networks, the only choice for the state is to determine ways of mitigating the potential harms of networked behaviour, and using the state’s political, economic, and regulatory powers to incentivize behaviour that is broadly in its citizens’ interests.

Solving this dilemma is a project far beyond the bounds of this paper, but four principles underlie how the individual can remain at the centre of Canadian foreign policy in a networked world: to

embrace disruption, to protect the network, to support empowering technologies, and to build online literacy.

### *Embrace disruption*

Legacy hierarchical organizations are at a crossroad. Information technology and networked organizations both challenge and disrupt their very existence. These organizations were quite simply designed and built for a different world. In the case of organizations that are private corporations, such as newspapers or auto manufacturers, then creative destruction may very well be a net positive. Creative destruction is more difficult, however, in the public sector. Foreign ministries, militaries, and intelligence agencies are not going to simply disappear and be replaced by start-ups. The new information environment, however, may require them to adopt some characteristics of start-ups. The challenge for government is how to rebuild, reform, reimagine, and disrupt its own institutions in order to remain relevant and to function in a digital era.

One idea, suggested by Catherine Fieschi (2012), is instead of simply moving our old institutions online, to do the opposite and look to successful online forms of communication, action, and organization to see if we can scale them up or use them as models for new institutions.

While this sort of wholesale reengineering is currently nowhere to be seen, there are small signs of evolution. The US State Department has led the way in using social media to actively engage global actors. It runs a wide range of experimental programs in the technology space, which are possible only because of a cultural shift toward high risk acceptance. It has begun the process of legitimizing a new form of organization.

Examples of very small steps in this direction in Canada exist as well. Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada has begun talking about new ways of organizing through its Open Policy initiative. The challenge is that being truly open is very difficult for an

organization in which ambassadors—let alone desk officers—are not allowed to speak publicly.

Other branches of foreign policy are going in a direction that could lead us to a very different place. As pointed out by Ron Deibert (2011), the director of the Canada Centre for Global Security Studies and the Citizen Lab, the United States now considers cyberspace a “domain” equal in importance to land, sea, air, and space. Diebert cautions that we may be headed to a place where states seek to control more and more information, rather than to enable its free movement—a world of more state control and surveillance, a nanny state run amok. Reverse engineering the online world would take us in the opposite direction, one where the state’s presence online is enabling, rather than punitive.

Writing in *Foreign Affairs*, Benkler argues that the United States has begun to see Anonymous as a national security threat. The problem with this approach is that it imposes a state-based structure on what is an “idea, a zeitgeist, coupled with a set of social and technical practices” (Benkler, 2012). Policy-makers would be wise to instead see Anonymous as a model for power in an alternative system and as a constructive mode for new frameworks of engagement and organization. The model that Anonymous represents is disruption.

In international affairs, the term “rogue” is typically used to describe states that operate outside of the rules of the game. These states do not follow the norms of the international system. Similarly, Anonymous does not use the accepted international architecture to oppose the state. Its power is rooted in the community with which its members are connected, and in many cases it operates in a fashion that challenges the authority of both democratic and autocratic state institutions. But while a rogue actor seeks to destroy the status quo, actors who are described as “disruptive” also pursue political and social justice. Yochai Benkler argues that unlike Al Qaeda, another powerful distributive rogue network, Anonymous “causes disruption, not destruction” (Benkler, 2012). It is through network-enabled

disruption that Anonymous seeks to disrupt the economic and political systems developed over the past century. As cybercrime author Richard Power observes, it is “attacking the whole power structure” (Sengupta, 2012).

Josh Corman argues that Anonymous demonstrates that “those who can best wield this new magic are not nations. They’re not politicians. The youngest citizens of the Net don’t even recognize allegiance to a country or to a political party. Their allegiance is to a hive. In some ways this is very exciting. In other ways this is terrifying” (Gross, 2012). State institutions simply must embrace disruption if they are to be relevant in a networked world.

### *Protect the network*

If a government cares about protecting and empowering individuals, then protecting the freedom with which they engage online should be a focal point of its foreign policy. This year, the international community will renegotiate the UN treaty concerning the governance of the Internet. On one side of the negotiations, the United States and its allies want to keep the Internet run by a small group of non-profit organizations based in the United States. On the other side are states, including Russia, China, Brazil, India, and Iran, that want a new global body to oversee the Internet.

States in both groups, however, have used a wide range of the same intrusive monitoring technologies against their own citizens. Indeed, both groups of states oppose having the actor at the negotiating table—by “actor” we mean those individuals and groups that exist on and make up the online network. We are left with a state-based institution negotiating how individuals will use a network run by individuals.

What would a state’s policy toward the Internet look like if it were to embrace the voices, values, and attributes of those that live in the networked world? What if a foreign policy were to seek to protect the very foundation of the system that powers the 21st century?

As essayist Michael Gross describes the Internet negotiations, states “want to superimpose existing, pre-digital power structures and their associated notions of privacy, intellectual property, security, and sovereignty onto the Internet.” Online-born actors, groups, and institutions would instead “abandon those rickety old structures and let the will of the crowd create a new global culture, maybe even new kinds of virtual ‘countries’” (Gross, 2012).

This is already occurring. Even as UN negotiations seek to regulate the Internet’s Domain Name System (DNS), new parallel systems are being developed. The latest is called the Open and Decentralized DNS (ODDNS) and is based on a peer-to-peer network that openly shares both the domain names and related IP addresses of its users. Its creator, Jimmy Rudolf, says he built the system to “show governments that it is not possible to prevent people from talking” (Torrentfreak, 2012).

A hacker that Gross interviewed puts it well: “The more government tries to regulate, the more people will try to build an Internet that is uncensorable and unfilterable and unblockable.” They will circumvent state control. And, again, therein lies the paradox that legacy state institutions face. The online information network has certain characteristics that run directly counter to the structure of state institutions. Its borderlessness, its propensity for information to be free-flowing rather than protected by copyright, its ability to preserve both greater anonymity and near-complete transparency—all are antithetical to traditional state control.

Even worse, as Benkler eloquently states, fighting against this tide will put governments “at odds with some of the most energetic and wired segments of society.” This has real policy consequences: “Any society that commits itself to eliminating what makes Anonymous possible and powerful risks losing the openness and uncertainty that have made the Internet home to so much innovation, expression, and creativity” (Benkler, 2012).

*Support empowering technologies*

At the centre of the Internet's freedom agenda lies a paradox: the tools that enable autocratic governments to monitor and control their citizens are produced by Western technology companies. Much like the arms trade, this often creates the awkward scenario in which Western countries are supporting opposition movements that are fighting against technology bought from Western countries.

The Citizen Lab at the University of Toronto has uncovered a wide range of examples of complicity between Western companies and authoritarian regimes. Most recently, it showed that devices manufactured by Blue Coat Systems, a California-based hardware company, were being used in Syria to both censor the Internet and root out particular activities linked to pro-democracy activists (Deibert, 2011).

This same type of commercial filtering and monitoring technology is used by Western governments, including the Government of Canada and our Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, to monitor and restrict the online behaviour of its employees. This opens the real potential that Western governments are supporting private companies that develop technologies that assist the oppressive regimes opposed by our governments.

Indeed, if one were to attend a trade show for such technologies, as a *Washington Post* journalist recently did, one would find more than 35 US federal agencies buying the very same technologies as the autocrats (Horwitz, Asokan, and Tate, 2012). The US State Department, which has spent \$70 million promoting Internet freedom abroad, is part of a government that has no regulation on the trade of the technology that prevents such freedom. A bill has been before the US Congress to restrict the sale of this technology to "Internet-restricting countries" since 2006, but the implementation of this bill may be challenging, as the list of countries in question now includes most nation-states.

Technologies that can be used for both positive and negative impact pose a challenge. For example, even as the US government funds Commotion Wireless, a sophisticated hacking project that seeks to enable activists by undermining Internet censorship in countries such as Syria and Iran, the FBI recently warned that these same anonymizing and encryption tools might be “indicators of terrorist activities” (Burkeman, 2012).

The question for policy-makers is therefore whether this hypocrisy can be reversed or whether it is simply a fact of life in a radically open operating environment. Whatever the reply, a relatively simple place to start would be to support the development of technologies that empower individuals rather than enabling the production and trade of tools used for surveillance and oppression.

For example, a Swedish research team recently developed a new tool that allows Tor communication (Tor is a tool that anonymizes Internet use) to be cloaked within services like Skype in order to circumvent recent changes to the Chinese “firewall” that had compromised those who used Shype. This is clearly an act of foreign policy and one that governments should support. One can even imagine a virtual embassy incentivizing such projects.

### *Build online literacy*

In the new information technology world, literacy has taken on a whole new meaning. It is no longer enough to train our citizens to read, write, and do basic math. They need to become digitally aware citizens, cognizant of both the content they are consuming and the technology that underlies it. This means that they need much better critical thinking skills to judge credibility, accuracy, and authority.

Citizens must also understand the physical and software infrastructure on which the digital information world is built. This means knowing how algorithms deliver the news, how open-sourced editing works, and how the demographics and biases of computer programmers affect the world in which citizens engage. Ultimately, this

will require widespread basic computer programming to be taught like any other language.

### **Empowering the Individual**

The international system has always been a network of states and individuals. At varying times over the past century, we have seen different alignments of state and individual power and problems. In the interwar period, while the state system was strong, we largely saw individuals negotiating solutions to state-based problems without the support of their countrypeople, resulting in fragile agreements. In the postwar period, there occurred a successful matching of powerful and legitimate state actors, multinational organizations, and transnational corporations addressing what were state-based problems.

In the contemporary era, states are still seeking to exert power and influence through 20th-century institutions even as the problems and the principal actor have shifted to the individual. Moreover, the very system in which international affairs is conducted has shifted from a state system to a networked world.

The core question therefore becomes, What is the role of the state in a world where individuals are increasingly empowered to negotiate solutions to individual problems? For Canada, this question represents a unique opportunity. For the first time since the individual took centre stage in our foreign policy, we have at our disposal mechanisms to empower him or her.

This empowerment will mean moving away from state-based institutions such as international organizations, large state-based development assistance, and multinational military occupations, into the nebulous, ill-defined, quickly evolving networked world. Perhaps even more challenging, it will mean rethinking the state institutions through which we have conducted foreign policy for over a century.



It is worth noting that a network freedom agenda is tailor-made for a Conservative government. The agenda combines many of the principles Conservatives espouse, including individualism and the promotion of democracy, and it moves away from the multinational organizations Conservatives have long questioned. Perhaps most importantly, the agenda could form the grounding of a modern human rights agenda, which the Canadian public has long seen as a core attribute of Canada's foreign policy.

Exploring Canada's role in a networked world is a complex and problematic task and one for which the disciplinary silos of academia are profoundly ill-suited to address. For this reason, it fits perfectly within the mandate and capacity of the Trudeau Foundation. The Foundation could support research that addresses the central challenges and problems of networked international affairs. Following are examples of relevant research areas:

**Behaviour:** The Foundation could support research into how individuals and groups behave in a networked environment. This would include everything from assessing motivations, to evaluating the structural determinants of positive and negative actions and outcomes. What is driving change in a networked system? Do networks create social relationships that are neither hierarchical nor market driven? In what ways can the state act to complement the actions of individuals? What mechanisms allow contemporary actors to leverage networks that disrupt traditional institutions?

**Structure:** A second set of research questions could explore the structure of networks themselves. This would seek to gain a better understanding of the design of the architecture that underlies the network. How do we separate network theory from network analysis tools? How do we assess the relational influence and power of actors in a network? What analytic categories can help us distinguish different types of networks in the international system? What meaningful communication patterns exist between actors in a network?

**Ethics:** Do online networks have different moral norms? How are the ethics of international affairs affected by virtual environments and behaviour? Do our laws and norms on violence apply equally to cyberspace? What is the role of collective morality in an international system dominated by the individual? Does increased power to the individual necessarily mean greater global justice, or is this prospect countered by new forms of injustice? Is a disordered world less just than a world with collective organization?

**Knowledge production:** Academic researchers, the media, policy-makers, and the public now engage with one another in new spaces—spaces that cannot be properly captured or understood through traditional research methods. How does the actual production of research need to evolve to leverage the network ecosystem? Can we evaluate how digital tools can help in the accumulation and distillation of knowledge in social sciences that rely on a traditional research paradigm? Can we employ digital tools to creatively expand the academic conversation, allowing collaboration between parties that, without the appropriate technology, have been unable to cooperate in the creation of knowledge? Do digital tools deliver a different type of knowledge than “analogue” tools?

**International relations:** How does the addition of digital information networks change some of the core questions and assumptions of international relations? In an international system in which the individual is the main unit, what is power and how is it exercised? What are the implications for levels of analysis in international relations? Are assumptions of anarchy more founded? What are the prospects for international cooperation? Does the rise of the individual dampen the impact of economics on international politics?

**Technology:** As much as possible, research needs to keep up with the incredibly rapid pace of technological change. The study of the impact of information technology on international affairs is particularly connected to this evolution. While the military is currently

developing swarm drones, for example, the academic community is still only beginning to understand the impact of the Internet on international systems. The radically differing pace of research advances versus technological development presents a real challenge to scholars. Part of the solution must be for some academics in all disciplines to be keenly attuned to boundary-pushing technology.

For the past 50 years, Canada has attained international status beyond its natural endowment in part through its successful use of state-based international organizations to promote individual rights and freedoms. In the evolving international architecture, such organizations are no longer the best vehicles for achieving such goals. For Canada to maintain its international reputation as a country that promotes the individual, it must devise a strategy that sees itself as a complement—rather than an obstacle—to the central networked actors of today's world. This means better understanding, engaging with, and embracing the actors, tools, and challenges of the networked world.

### **Bibliography**

- Albert, Réka, Hawoong Jeong and Albert-László Barabási (2000), "Error and attack tolerance of complex networks," *Nature*, vol. 406 (June), 378-382.
- Ammori, Martin (2005), "Shadow government: Private regulation, free speech, and lessons from the Sinclair blogstorm," *Michigan Telecommunications and Technology Law Review*, vol. 12, 1.
- Applin, Sally and Michael Fischer (2011), *A Cultural Perspective on Mixed, Dual and Blended Reality*, IUI Workshop on Location Awareness for Mixed and Dual Reality, LAMDa'11. Palo Alto, California, 13 February. Available at <http://www.dfki.de/LAMDa/accepted/ACulturalPerspective.pdf>
- Axworthy, Lloyd (2000), "Axworthy Launches International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty," Address to the UN General Assembly, September 7.
- Axworthy, Lloyd (1999a), "Address to the 54th Session of the UN General Assembly," *United Nations*, September 23.

- Axworthy, Lloyd (1999b), "Address to the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs," March 31.
- Axworthy, Lloyd (1998), "Diplomatic Conference Begins Four Days of General Statements," *United Nations*, June 15.
- Balkin, Jack (1998), *Cultural Software: A Theory of Ideology*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Benkler, Yochai (2012), "Hacks of Valor: Why Anonymous Is Not a Threat to National Security," *Foreign Affairs* (April). Available at <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137382/yochai-benkler/hacks-of-valor>
- Benkler, Yochai (2002), "Penguin, or, Linux and the Nature of the Firm," *Yale Law Journal*, vol. 112.
- Boyd, Danah (2008), "Why youth (heart) social network sites: The role of networked publics in teenage social life," in D. Buckingham (ed.), *Youth, Identity and Digital Media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Burkeman, Oliver (2012), "Inside Washington's high risk mission to beat web censors," *The Guardian*, April 15. Available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2012/apr/15/commotion-wireless-new-america-foundation>
- Castells, Manuel (2000), "Information Technology and Global Capitalism," in Will Hutton and Anthony Giddens (eds.), *On the Edge: Living with Global Capitalism*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Considine, Mark (2005), "Partnerships and Collaborative Advantage: Some Reflections on New Forms of Network Governance," *The Centre for Public Policy* (December).
- Copeland, Daryl (2001), "The New Axworthy Years: Canadian Foreign Policy in the Era of Diminished Capacity," *Canada Among Nations*.
- Davis, Jeff (2012), "John Baird points finger at gay rights abuses in African, Caribbean countries," *The National Post*, January 23. Available at <http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/01/23/john-baird-points-finger-at-gay-rights-abuses-in-african-caribbean-countries/>
- Deibert, Ron (2011), "Behind Blue Coat: Investigations of Commercial Filtering in Syria and Burma," *The Citizen Lab*. Available at <http://citizenlab.org/2011/11/behind-blue-coat/>
- Documents on Canadian External Relations* (1949), vol. 15, chapter IV, "Ambassador in United States to Secretary of State for External Affairs," 492.
- Ellickson, Robert (1991), *Order Without Law: How Neighbors Settle Disputes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Fieschi, Catherine (2012), Personal Communication, February 22.
- Froomkin, Michael (1997), "Internet as a Source of Regulatory Arbitrage," in Brian Kahin and Charles Nesson (eds.), *Borders in Cyberspace*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Gentzkow, Matthew and Jesse Shapiro (2006), "Media Bias and Reputation," *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 114, 2.
- Godin, Seth (2001), *Unleashing the Ideavirus*. New York: Hyperion.
- Gross, Michael Joseph (2012), "World War 3.0," *Vanity Fair* (May). Available at: <http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/2012/05/internet-regulation-war-sopa-pipa-defcon-hacking>
- Hargittai, Eszter (2007), "Whose Space? Differences among users and non-users of social network sites," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, vol. 13, 1.
- Harper, Stephen (2011a), "Statement by the Prime Minister of Canada at an emergency meeting on Libya," March 19. Available at <http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?category=3&featureId=6&pageId=49&id=4052>
- Harper, Stephen (2011b), "Statement by the Prime Minister of Canada on recent developments in Libya," February 21. Available at <http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=4052>
- Haythornthwaite, Caroline (2005), "Social networks and Internet connectivity effects," *Information, Communication and Society*, vol. 8, no. 2, 125-147.
- Horwitz, Sari, Shyamantha Asokan, and Julie Tate (2012), "Trade in surveillance technology raises worries," *The Washington Post*, December 1. Available at [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trade-in-surveillance-technology-raises-worries/2011/11/22/gIQAFFZOGO\\_print.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trade-in-surveillance-technology-raises-worries/2011/11/22/gIQAFFZOGO_print.html)
- Kuran, Timar (1995), *Private Truths, Public Lies: The Social Consequences of Preference Falsification*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Latour, Bruno (1997), "Train of thought: Piaget, Formalism and the Fifth Dimension," *Common Knowledge*, vol. 6, 170-191.
- Lehrer, Jonah (2012), "Groupthink," *The New Yorker*, January 30.
- Lessig, Larry (1998), "The New Chicago School," *Journal of Legal Studies*, vol. 27.
- Morozov, Evgeny (2011), *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom*. Philadelphia: Public Affairs.

- Pearson, Lester (1970), "On Human Survival," *Saturday Review*, June 13.
- Rheingold, Howard (2002), *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution*. New York: Basic Books.
- Sengupta, Somni (2012), "The Soul of the New Hacktivist," *The New York Times*, March 17.
- Shirky, Clay (2010), "The Shock of Inclusion," *The Edge World Question*.
- Shirky, Clay (2008), *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Sundén, J. (2003), *Material Virtualities*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Torrentfreak (2012), *ODDNS: Decentralized and Open DNS to Defeat Censorship* (April 7). Available at <http://torrentfreak.com/oddns-decentralized-and-open-dns-to-defeat-censorship-120407/>
- Wendt, Alexander (1992), "Anarchy Is What States Make of It," *International Organization*, vol. 46, no. 2.

# MAY CHAZAN

*2006 Trudeau Scholar, University of Toronto*

In collaboration with LAURA MADOKORO

*2009 Trudeau Scholar, Columbia University*

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Dr. May Chazan is a Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) postdoctoral fellow affiliated with the Department of Geography at the University of Toronto and a research associate with the Health Economics and HIV/AIDS Research Division at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. A 2006 Trudeau Foundation scholar, Dr. Chazan received her PhD in geography with a specialization in political economy from Carleton University in 2011. Her research is concerned with the contributions of older women in mobilizing for social change and in building transnational solidarity networks. In her PhD, she undertook a detailed examination of older women's roles in responding to the HIV/AIDS crisis in southern Africa, including the ways in which Canadian women have engaged in these struggles. She co-edited the recent volume *Home and Native Land: Unsettling Multiculturalism in Canada* (published by Between the Lines Press in 2011) and was the recipient of the 2012 Canadian Association of Graduate Studies/University Microfilms International Distinguished Dissertation Award, 2011 Royal Society of Canada Alice Wilson Award, the 2011 SSHRC Postdoctoral Prize, and the 2011 Carleton University Medal.

Dr. Laura Madokoro is currently pursuing research on the history of migration and medical exclusions as a SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow at Columbia University in New York. She completed her PhD in history at the University of British Columbia in 2012. Her research on migration policy, and refugee movements in particular, is animated by social justice concerns about the unequal power structures that governed trans-border movements throughout the 20th century. Dr. Madokoro is a 2009 Trudeau scholar.



## **ABSTRACT**

This paper is a reflection on the theme of “Human Rights and Dignity”—its language, framing, assumptions, and contours—and suggests priority areas for the Foundation to support within the context of this theme. The paper is divided into two parts. The first is a conceptual discussion of the theme of “Human Rights and Dignity” and calls for a recasting of this thematic area to adopt a critical feminist social justice framework. This part argues, primarily, for taking (back) on board “social justice” and revising the title of this theme to “Social Justice, Rights, and Dignity.” The second part proposes a research agenda within the context of this theme, calling for a focus on work that seeks to better understand and transform *processes* of discrimination, oppression, exploitation, and injustice, as part of a mandate to support struggles for a fairer and more just society.

# **Social Justice, Rights, and Dignity: A Call for a Critical Feminist Framework**

## **Introduction**

We took on the task of writing this discussion paper with some self-consciousness, as scholars who have never explicitly theorized either “human rights” or “dignity” in our own work, but as women whose research and personal commitments speak to everyday struggles for social justice.<sup>1</sup> Our mandate, as set by the Trudeau Foundation, was to provide a personal reflection on the theme of “Human Rights and Dignity”—its language, framing, assumptions, and contours—and to suggest priority research areas within the context of this theme.

Our own work and social locations undoubtedly influence how we have gone about writing this paper and the perspectives we bring to this dialogue. I (May Chazan) am a feminist geographer and mother of two; I have spent much of the last decade working with

1. Dr. Chazan would like to thank Dr. Madokoro for collaborating with her on and co-writing this paper, and for her invaluable enthusiasm and intellectual input. Both authors would also like to thank Stephanie Kittmer for her research assistance and to extend their gratitude to those members of the Trudeau Foundation community who offered their insights to the authors along the way. They are particularly grateful for the input of all those in attendance at the 2012 Summer Institute in Montebello, Quebec.

communities in South Africa and Canada to understand how older women are mobilizing around the profound and combined stresses of HIV/AIDS, violence, and poverty in southern Africa.

I (Laura Madokoro) am a socially engaged historian; I have spent the past few years exploring the historical development of structures and politics that govern the reception of refugees in potential countries of asylum.

In various ways, this conversation reflects our personal experiences and perspectives.

This paper marks the second time that the Foundation has engaged in self-reflection on this particular theme, and thus should be read in this context—it is both a stand-alone essay and part of an ongoing discussion. In 2007, our task was given to 2004 Trudeau fellow Roderick A. MacDonald, a professor at McGill University who teaches and writes in the area of civil law and access to justice. In many instances, we present MacDonald's arguments from five years ago in an attempt to pick up where he left off. Situating our intervention alongside his, we not only offer various extensions and rebuttals to MacDonald's (2007) paper, but also raise questions around how events of the past five years might converge with entrenched processes of injustice to shape what we now view as priorities for work on rights and dignity.

In Canada and elsewhere, scholars and public thinkers from a variety of disciplines have significantly contributed to how we understand human rights and to formulating rights-oriented policies aimed at improving people's lives. Some of the earliest and most influential thinkers in this area approached human rights from predominantly legal perspectives, for example, by focusing attention on the ways in which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms have, since their introduction in 1948 and 1982, respectively, opened new avenues for people to claim their political and civil rights (Gutmann, 2001; Lamey, 2011). Departing from this work, other scholars have sought

to broaden the scope of “human rights” to include not only civil and political rights, but also social, economic, and cultural rights, thereby beginning to link such conditions as extreme poverty and violence to rights abuses (Sepúlveda Carmona, 2011). Feminist scholars have added to this the need to understand the gender dimensions of rights abuses and rights claims, including the ways in which laws and policies continue to discriminate against women and women of colour (Agosín, 2002). Meanwhile, environmentalists have sought to add environmental rights—rights to land, to resources, and to the global commons—to the list of human rights concerns. Most recently, many critical social science and humanities scholars have questioned human rights as a discursive strategy, critiquing human rights as a particular cultural construct with limited salience in the Global South; examining the dissonances between human rights treaties and people’s everyday lives; and probing the ways in which human rights discourses are drawn upon to mobilize different people and communities (Pangalangan, 2003).

While we acknowledge the important contributions of these and many other streams of scholarship, we have not undertaken an exhaustive review of the vast, multi-faceted, and contested literatures on human rights and dignity; this was neither requested by the Foundation nor possible within the time frame allotted. We have, however, appraised a number of sources, which we periodically reference throughout the paper. Thinking through the conceptual dimensions, we have considered certain key scholarly texts on justice, rights, and dignity, and consulted various scholars and practitioners working in these areas (these were largely selected from the Trudeau Foundation community of scholars, mentors, and fellows). In formulating suggestions of directions for future research, we have also examined the priorities and recent publications of many social justice and human rights organizations working in Canada, including Amnesty International, the Council for Canadians, the Polaris Institute, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternative, Voices-Voix,

and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. In addition, we have scanned major national media outlets—the *Globe and Mail*, the CBC, and the *National Post*—some alternative media sites, such as The Mark and Rabble.ca and the writings and speeches of well-known Canadian social commentators, in order to further contextualize and situate our emerging arguments. Our discussion and analysis draw on this research as well as on our close reading of MacDonald's (2007) paper.

The Foundation's four themes reflect different but overlapping dimensions of a set of concerns central to the Foundation's mandate. We believe that, collectively, these themes speak to the Foundation's desire to support ideas, careers, and people committed to working for fairer and more sustainable ways of living, interacting, and organizing our world. While a detailed discussion of how the four themes are linked could prove fruitful for the Foundation's future visioning, such a discussion is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, we will assume that the Foundation will continue to organize its mandate around some version of these themes; we will thus focus on bringing a critical and contextualized reading to the theme currently known as "Human Rights and Dignity."

This paper is divided into two parts. In the first, we guide a short conceptual discussion around the theme of "Human Rights and Dignity," raising questions about what is captured and what might be obscured by this particular language and framing. We then call for recasting this thematic area to adopt a critical feminist social justice framework that would include, but reach beyond, the purview of human rights and dignity as conceptual apparatus. We argue primarily for taking (back) on board "social justice" and titling this theme "Social Justice, Rights, and Dignity." The concept of social justice was once part of the framing of this thematic area; its (re)inclusion would denote a framework that is, arguably, less narrow, more critical, and more socially located (MacDonald, 2007). This recasting would, furthermore, have the potential to bring

much-needed attention to the complex drivers of oppression and the kinds of exploitative relationships that uphold existing inequalities and inequities.

Following from this, in the second part of the paper, we outline priority research areas within the context of this theme. In addition to providing a critical reflection on specific areas and dimensions of social justice, rights, and dignity work, we argue for the Foundation to adopt a more *methodological* approach. This would mean thinking about work in this area not as an enumeration of social *problems* in Canada or elsewhere, but instead as a collective effort to better understand and transform *processes* of discrimination, oppression, exploitation, and injustice, and as a mandate to support struggles for a fairer and more just society. We offer this paper as an invitation to be part of this conversation and debate.

### **1. A Recasting?—Social Justice, Rights, and Dignity**

The way that the Foundation casts its themes is integral to the issues, topics, and approaches it then chooses to support. The Foundation's four themes function as categories through which it fulfills its mandate; these categories, like all categories, favour some ideas and approaches while obscuring or silencing others. Moreover, the themes have been imagined by particular actors in particular political contexts. Thus, the Foundations' themes are not neutral, and, as MacDonald (2007) asserts, they must remain open to changing as the Foundation matures and the community shifts. The theme now called "Human Rights and Dignity" was not always framed as such. Prior to 2007, it was titled "Human Rights and Social Justice." What led to this change? What was the reasoning? What has been gained or lost by this shift in language? Where might we go next?

#### *From Justice to Dignity*

MacDonald's (2007) intervention acted as a catalyst for the shift in language that took place in the Foundation's thematic approach five

years ago. His overarching argument was that “human rights” is a narrow framework and that the Trudeau Foundation would benefit from broadening its scope significantly in this area. Unlike scholars and activists who have pushed for broadening what was historically encapsulated in human rights work through the inclusion of social, economic, and cultural rights (Roth, 2004; Robinson, 2004), MacDonald (2007) argued for the adoption of an entirely new language: a change in wording from “Human Rights and Social Justice” to “Imagining Social Justice and Human Dignity.” MacDonald’s approach therefore moved beyond rethinking the human rights framework to rethinking the relationship between human rights and the social context in which these rights are pursued and/or experienced. In order to contextualize the change that followed his paper, and in considering future directions for the Trudeau Foundation, it is useful to examine MacDonald’s three-part argument in more detail.

First, MacDonald suggested that “human rights” as a discourse is overly narrow and that the theme as it then read—“Human Rights and Social Justice”—placed far too much emphasis on human rights, effectively obscuring many of the most important challenges to Canadian society (e.g., poverty, health, and education). Thus, in reframing the theme, he felt it appropriate to bring to the forefront “social justice” and to leave off “human rights.” His reasoning drew from well-known critiques of human rights as a discourse that is narrow, abstract, legalistic, universalizing, power-laden, and infused with liberal, Western bias (Mutua, 2008). In his words:

The structure of rights discourse...requires an identifiable interlocutor against whom one can make a claim (e.g. a claim that a recognized right is not being adequately respected, protected or promoted, or a claim that a putative right ought to be recognized)...When viewed through the lens of human rights, the problem of social justice appears simply as a matter of removing barriers to people’s pursuits of their own self-interest. Human rights discourses run the risk of uncritically affirming that individuals in possession of legal rights already have the powers that these rights convey. (MacDonald, 2007, 8)

In recasting the theme to emphasize social justice, MacDonald was attempting to expand what was under discussion, working to “invite inquiry into relationships between diverse processes of social ordering that can be deployed to facilitate the pursuit of human aspiration” (MacDonald, 2007, 9). MacDonald’s approach underscored the dynamism and fluid nature of social justice struggles.

Second, in a further effort to broaden the theme, MacDonald suggested replacing “human rights” with “human dignity.” His reasoning was that there are many instances in which dignity is in jeopardy due to various kinds of deprivation and discrimination, but these do not necessarily fall within the purview of rights claims. While situations and processes that threaten human dignity are not always encapsulated in human rights work, he felt they were equally worthy of study and support. Thus, he called for adopting “a conception of human dignity that is grounded in relationships, not rights, and that gives as much weight to human quest for realizing common purposes as to the hierarchical organization of rights claims.” He also asserted that “the language of human dignity allows for a richer conception of human beings as having complex desires and needs, rather than simply expanding the inventory of rights to include ‘social and economic’ rights” (MacDonald, 2007, 10).

Finally, MacDonald’s recasting included the insertion of the participle “imagining.” This insertion was intended to suggest that neither “social justice” nor “human dignity” is a fixed category. MacDonald framed both as research questions, or hypotheses for inquiry, not as fully defined concepts.

MacDonald’s paper undoubtedly had a strong impact on the Foundation. However, it is noteworthy that none of his three key points were fully adopted: instead, “social justice” was replaced by “human dignity,” leaving “human rights” as the dominant concept within this thematic area. It is also noteworthy, particularly as we re-engage with this argument, that there was some openness on the part of the Foundation to change. In other words, as Pierre-Gerlier



Forest, the president of the Trudeau Foundation, noted in 2012, MacDonald's intervention precipitated both a change in the theme's wording and, by extension, changes to some of the Foundation's activities.

*In Favour of "Social Justice"*

When we began to reflect upon this thematic area, this history—the suggestions made by MacDonald five years ago and the change that ensued—piqued our interest. This led us to seek input from others within the Trudeau Foundation community: What did they think about this change? Did the wording of this thematic area matter to them? What further changes might they like to see?

What emerged was that all of those with whom we spoke felt strongly that the Foundation should reconsider the concept of "social justice." Many read the shift from "social justice" to "human dignity" not as an effort to broaden the scope of the thematic area, but as an attempt to depoliticize the Foundation's language. While many believed "dignity" to be a worthwhile concept, the shift from "social justice" to "dignity" was viewed by most as an attempt to sound less political, less partisan, less radical, and less critical in an increasingly conservative and polarized Canada. Many scholars also noted that what was lost was a framework (i.e., social justice) that incorporates social location and relationality in its framing, favouring concern for individuals' struggles and claims over issues of collective struggle, inequity, and exploitation.

Yet, when asked specifically about McDonald's (2007) recasting—"Imagining Social Justice and Human Dignity"—many still felt strongly about safeguarding "human rights" as a central concept. One of biggest proponents of "rights" language was Alex Neve, a human rights lawyer, international activist, and the secretary general of Amnesty International Canada. Neve (2012) stressed the importance of keeping "rights" as a key concept within the Foundation's four themes, in particular because of how this language brings focus

and purpose to so many struggles for justice. He spoke from his own experience of witnessing people and groups becoming empowered by rights language and by the possibilities inherent in possessing “claimable,” “enforceable,” “tangible” rights. While he felt strongly that “social justice” should be the focal point of this theme, he pleaded to avoid replacing “rights” with language that is more diffuse and less concrete. He also noted that, while he understands the critiques of human rights discourse, these critiques tend to converge around legalistic and narrow approaches to human rights. Thus, as a proponent of an expanded human rights framework that incorporates social, economic, and cultural rights rather than a complete shift in discourse, he faulted lack of imagination, not rights discourse itself, for overly narrow approaches. He wished to see more imaginative approaches to rights work and, in particular, approaches that explicitly engage in gender analysis and that examine how human rights discourses function to mobilize struggles for justice outside of legal settings (Neve, 2012; see also Gutmann, 2001, Danieli et al., 1999).

What became evident in our conversations, then, was that members of the Trudeau Foundation community appeared to care deeply about the language used in framing the four themes. Most believed that this language directly influences who the Foundation supports and what work it pursues. It also became clear to us that there was some dissatisfaction with the current title, “Human Rights and Dignity,” and with the change that ensued five years ago. We were privy to both overlapping and divergent perspectives on each of the three concepts under question—social justice, human rights, and dignity—and, given the importance of these debates, we decided that our central intervention in this paper would be to suggest a way forward. Our intervention reflects our belief that social justice, dignity, and rights are transformative and intricately interwoven concepts that have profound daily impacts on individual lives and collective struggles.

### *Personal Interjections*

Before we elaborate our approach, we would like to pause briefly to interject some of our own thinking in the areas of social justice, rights, and dignity, based on our research and social engagements. This, in conjunction with the perspectives presented above, informs the critical (re)framing we suggest in this paper.

In my work, I (Laura) treat human rights as a discursive strategy that draws attention to injustices and inequities. I therefore take a broad-based approach to human rights and think not only about civil and political rights, but also about social, cultural, and economic ones. In treating human rights as a discourse that is referenced or produced in the pursuit of justice and equality, I nevertheless recognize that words alone cannot be a measure of human rights. Meaningful human rights must be experienced, not just discussed. I therefore seek to draw attention to the gulf between rhetoric and lived realities. This similarly informs my approach to the contested concept of dignity. While an individual may obtain asylum in a country of refuge, it seems to me that this comes at a tremendous cost if, in practice, refugees are vilified and treated as subhuman (Arendt, 1967). Where is the dignity in obtaining refuge if one's self-worth is undermined in the process? For me, social justice therefore means creating the context in which the realities of an individual's life experience are ones imbued with respect and dignity.

I (May) do not often write about any of these three concepts *per se*, but they figure in practical ways in my research. For example, my work on older women's mobilizations around HIV/AIDS has revealed the contextual and evocative nature of social justice. I have documented the perspectives of older women working "in solidarity" with African grandmothers. These women perceive their movement as a matter of social justice: their campaign, which now includes some 10,000 Canadian grandmothers, has been motivated primarily by a sense of the *injustice* of African grandmothers losing

their children to AIDS. The African counterparts of these Canadian grandmothers, however, describe a history of migrant labour in which grandmothers have long raised children with limited resources in remote rural areas while the parents of these children worked away from home. For grandmothers in Africa, raising grandchildren is not new or unexpected, and thus they do not perceive their situation—or even the broader impacts of AIDS—as unjust. They view their associations and linkages as responses to the daily stresses of illness, poverty, and violence, as a means of accessing support, and as a matter of survival. For the Canadian grandmothers, therefore, “social justice” is an evocative, emotional, and mobilizing discourse—in many of the same ways Neve (2012) described the discourse of “human rights.” Yet “social justice” (just like “human rights” or “dignity”) is clearly not a universal concept—one’s sense of what is just or unjust is based in complex social, economic, and historical circumstances (Abu-Lughod, 2008; Mahmood, 2004).

Thus, we both take critical approaches toward these concepts. We move beyond abstract theorizing to understand what such concepts as social justice, human rights, and dignity mean in the lived realities of different individuals and groups. Following the works of Englund (2006) and others, we probe how social justice, human rights, and dignity—as discourses—are perceived, understood, and deployed by different actors in different contexts, and to what ends, rather than approaching any of these concepts as inherent to humans or as pre-given. Finally, our work forces us to recognize, in grounded ways, the relationships and overlaps between these three dynamic and contested concepts.

### *A Way Forward? Social Justice, Rights, and Dignity*

Given the perspectives of many in the Trudeau Foundation community as well as our own personal locations, we urge the Foundation to (re)cast its theme from “Human Rights and Dignity” to “Social Justice, Rights, and Dignity.” This reframing has the potential to

illuminate the complex drivers of oppression and the kinds of exploitative relationships that uphold status quo inequalities and inequities. It would also more explicitly articulate the Foundation's commitment to supporting innovative, relational, imaginative, dynamic, and critical approaches to social justice scholarship. Three aspects of this reframing are introduced below and are worth exploring beyond this paper.

### Focusing on Relationships

First, we deliberately choose to frame three distinct concepts in an effort to structure a space in which the relationships between "social justice," "dignity," and "rights" could be explored. In doing so, we heed numerous interventions about the concepts' changing and contested nature. Rather than seek a firm definition of each term, we stress the constructed and situated nature of the concepts, the manner in which they link to one another, and their connections to other themes at the Foundation. For instance, how do culturally specific conceptions of social justice inform rights-based solutions to disputes over shared resources? How do we reconcile group rights and individual rights for the collective good? Is this possible? Feasible? Desirable? Similarly, how do concepts of human dignity as defined in various legal regimes play out in practice? Do they help or hinder the pursuit of social justice?<sup>2</sup> We believe that combining these

2. Our thanks to Lisa Kerr, 2012 Trudeau scholar, for drawing our attention to the important legal debate taking place over section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which includes a requirement that a claimant in an equality case must show an injury to human dignity in order to establish his or her claim. In *R. v. Kapp* (2008) SCC 41, at para. 21-24, the Supreme Court of Canada noted that human dignity is an abstract and subjective notion that has "proven to be an *additional* burden on equality claimants, rather than the philosophical enhancement it was intended to be." (para. 22, italics in original) The court cautioned judges against further application in such a manner. Echoing our point about the subjectivity of terms such as "rights," "dignity," and "social justice," Kerr suggests "that the concept of

three interconnected but distinct concepts in a single theme will facilitate research into the relationships that inform each of these concepts, without limiting conceptions of each, nor assuming that they are mutually constitutive. Each concept becomes a question rather than a fixed category, so that the very concepts of social justice, rights, and dignity become the subject of further investigation.

We also seek to leave space for research that contests the very existence or quality of the bonds between the three concepts. Questioning the relationships between social justice, rights, and dignity allows for an exploration of the underpinning processes that structure privilege and oppression, and opens up critical avenues of investigation around how the pursuit of social justice, for instance, might in some cases come at the expense of rights and dignity. How, for example, might the provision of social welfare services create dependencies and perpetuate stereotypes about the recipients (Marshall, 2006)? In such instances, does the primary consideration become how to provide services that foreground the dignity of the individual? What are the policy implications of such formulations? What underlying processes need to be addressed?

We believe that focusing on the underpinning processes and the fluid relationships between concepts of justice, rights, and dignity will broaden the research horizon and encourage creativity. Thinking about relationships in different spatial frameworks, from the household to the local, national, and transnational, can shed further light on the contests, contradictions, and tensions inherent in the pursuits of social justice, rights, and dignity. Positioning these three concepts together, without attendant expectations about how, and if, they connect, would facilitate a more dynamic way of thinking about the

human dignity” has appeared to work best, or to have clear impact, on particular topics in history, such as the abolition of torture and slavery or the struggle against capital punishment and that “the concept of human dignity has worked less well in cases with an economic or commercial aspect.”

significance of each one. This renewed thematic focus points toward new directions for future research and toward approaches that pivot on relationships rather than fixed categories of analysis.

### Losing the “Human” in “Human Rights”

Second, we deliberately choose to remove the “human” from “human rights.” While we concur with Neve’s calls to retain a focus on “rights,” given that word’s rhetorical power, our concern is that the current discourse on “human rights” might silence scholarship on and mobilization around certain kinds of rights. Part of our discomfort is the manner in which the current focus on “human rights” is overwhelmingly framed by the rights agenda of the immediate postwar period, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Human rights, in this postwar conception, are deeply contingent on liberal political values (Ignatieff, 2007). The Declaration emphasizes the individual and political and civic rights; it leaves little scope for the protection and promotion of group rights for minority populations—indigenous people in particular—or for social and economic rights (Donnelly, 2003).<sup>3</sup>

Another concern is that the term “human rights” limits the focus of rights-based research to the human subject, whereas conceptions of “rights” can be interpreted far more expansively. As critical scholars have observed, certain issues are treated as “human rights” issues while others, such as domestic violence or the fallout

3. In practice, the existence of special legal regimes can complicate the exercise of human rights. In the Canadian context, the challenges of reconciling various approaches to rights are perhaps most obvious in the case of First Nations peoples. While the Charter of Rights and Freedoms was a major step on equality issues for indigenous people in Canada (Schwartz, 2012), only in 2009 did Canada’s First Nations people begin to obtain recourse to the 1977 Canadian Human Rights Act (the Indian Act having been exempt from its initial provisions). Full repeal occurred in June 2011, so now federal government actions and funding under the Indian Act can be reviewed by this human rights legislation, as can the actions of First Nations governments.

of climate change, tend to be conceptualized as “women’s rights” or “environmental rights” (respectively) and treated in these more limited frameworks (Shelton, 1991). While some scholars have suggested addressing this situation by re-conceptualizing human rights to include environmental degradation and violence against women (Bunch, 1990), we believe that there is much to be gained from framing the concept of rights more generally and giving researchers the opportunity to define and conceptualize the rights with which they are concerned. Teasing out the nature of the relationship, if any, between environmental rights (human rights as they relate to the environment), dignity, and social justice will necessarily lead to very different explorations than research framed around conceptions of rights as strictly political and economic in nature. We thus call for the adoption of concepts and terminology that encourage these kinds of wider, more innovative, and more creative explorations.

In making this recommendation, we would like to raise two additional points. First, we acknowledge that “human rights” is an important mobilizing concept and has been used as a rallying cry in some women’s movements (e.g., movements in the Middle East and elsewhere have rallied around the notion that “women’s rights are human rights,” despite contention over the idea that “human rights” as a concept was initially imposed by actors, organizations, and scholars in the Global North). We are not suggesting that “human rights” language should be omitted from activism or scholarship. Rather, for the purposes of the Foundation’s thematic framing, we are suggesting that adopting a language of “rights” could open up new spaces to include both more traditional “human rights” conceptions and multiple other meanings, diverse cultural contexts, and different approaches to justice, rights, and dignity research. Second, we also acknowledge that “rights” as a concept does not resonate with all people and communities. We raise the question of whether a different concept entirely—perhaps “responsibility”—might bring different, but more inclusive, meaning to this thematic area.



We recognize that a theme framed as “Social Justice, Responsibility, and Dignity” would engender different outlooks and processes. We therefore believe that further exploration of “responsibility” as a concept that links the Foundation’s four themes is merited, although an exercise of this magnitude is beyond the scope of this paper.

### Adopting a Critical Social Justice Framework

Third, and most centrally, we call for the Foundation to reintroduce the concept of “social justice” into this thematic area, and, by positioning this concept first, to emphasize “social justice” as the broadest, most inclusive, and most socially located of the three concepts, with “rights” and “dignity” as two particular ways of approaching related issues. In addition, we call not only for the re-inclusion of “social justice” as a core concept, but also for the adoption of a critical social justice framework. Such a commitment moves beyond focusing on any fixed set of social problems, to instead focusing on supporting work that strives for a critical approach toward issues of justice, rights, and dignity. What do we mean by a critical social justice framework?

Critical social justice scholars, many of whom draw extensively on feminist theory and scholarship, distinguish their approach as a departure from that of scholars who view social justice from a liberal social ontology that both “presuppose[s] and obscure[s] dominant social arrangements, processes, and norms” (Young, 1990, 18; see also Stanley, 2009). They recognize issues of distribution and redistribution as symptoms of injustice (i.e., they view material disparities as one outcome of injustice), but they move beyond analyses that focus on issues of distribution to instead look at *processes that underpin injustices* (e.g., discrimination, racialization, sexism, homophobia, and so on). Thus, they are primarily concerned with how power operates in societies to privilege some people and groups and, often by extension, to harm others. They seek to reveal the nature of exploitative relationships that uphold injustices and secure privilege.

Recognizing again the contributions of scholars from other streams of interrelated scholarship, we believe this shift to understanding what drives oppression and how people and groups are struggling for justice—rather than seeking to enumerate issues and situations in which human rights or dignity are compromised—could bring focus to the Foundation’s work in this area, broadening the scope of its research significantly and building on its members’ commitment to delving into some of society’s hardest questions.

Critical scholars also commit to continuously questioning claims to universal truths, “common sense” assumptions, and categories that normalize certain identities and essentialize “Others” (Carroll, 2004). Critical scholars tend to be reflexive about how all knowledge is generated within complex social, institutional, and political contexts (Haraway, 1988); they recognize that power operates through the production, validation, and authorization of specific kinds of knowledge, with some ways of knowing carrying a higher status in society than others (Foucault, 1980). From the perspective of the Trudeau Foundation, this means supporting justice-oriented work that does not shy away from being provocative, asking difficult questions, destabilizing commonly held assumptions, and engaging with unconventional methodologies. It also means recognizing the power the Foundation and the Foundation’s community have over the production and circulation of certain ways of thinking and indeed public discourse. Thus, as MacDonald (2007) suggested, the Foundation must strive to support high-quality, provocative research, including research that might not appeal to other funding bodies.

### *Summary*

The language used to describe the four thematic areas of the Foundation is important: it guides how the Foundation’s mandate is fulfilled and what research is supported. This language is also dynamic: it has undergone change before and it can be changed again. The previous review of this theme, five years ago, resulted in

replacing “social justice” with “human dignity.” It manifested itself in tangible form at the seventh annual Public Policy Conference in Winnipeg, whose theme was “Equal in Dignity: Human Rights and the Passage of Generations.” The conference was inspired by the idea that “affirming human dignity is an immense, daunting and never-ending pursuit” and that each generation learns “for itself how to defend and protect human rights and human dignity, forging its own tools and devising its own language—through laws, policies or direct action.” Despite the rich discussions at the conference, and despite the excellent research supported by the Foundation under the thematic rubric of “Human Rights and Dignity,” the emphasis on “human dignity” with simultaneous omission of “social justice” raises concerns for many in the Trudeau Foundation community, and indeed for us. After considering the reasons for the change and some of the reactions it precipitated, we therefore urge recasting the theme to “Social Justice, Rights, and Dignity.” This language recognizes the value in each of these concepts while emphasizing “social justice”; it opens a space for a more critical, relational, dynamic, and socially located framework. Specifically, in recasting this theme, we call on the Foundation to take on board the important work of critical and feminist social justice scholars who seek to understand processes that underpin injustices.

## **2. Building a Critical Research Agenda**

In the remainder of this paper, our aim is to outline and contextualize what we view as priority research areas (and, more specifically, approaches) under the theme of “Social Justice, Rights, and Dignity.” Five years ago, MacDonald (2007) identified six priority issues: poverty, violence, health, education, employment, and intergenerational inequities. In considering whether these issues continue to pose key challenges for future research, and in investigating new and emerging areas for support, we will preface our proposed research agenda with a brief discussion of Canadian and world events over the

past five years. In so doing, we argue that there is increasing urgency for scholars to better understand social justice issues, focusing both on sites where justice is compromised and on the myriad ways citizens and non-citizens are mobilizing in the pursuit of a fairer or more just world. We ask our readers to consider the historical basis of contemporary social justice issues and the ways in which changing conceptualizations of rights, justice, civil society, government, and so on affect the tenor and substance of public policy debates, and the daily lives of people in Canada and around the world. We also raise important questions about how long-standing forms of oppression, recent trends and events, and various forms of civil sphere mobilization converge to influence people's lives and struggles. We follow up this discussion with our research agenda: both the crosscutting considerations and the specific research areas that we consider priorities for those wishing to critically engage in, or offer support to, justice, rights, and dignity scholarship.

### *Context*

How historians will view the past few years in terms of social justice issues remains to be seen. What is clear, however, is that salient debates and events in the recent past must be considered within the context of historic shifts in the global economic system, ongoing discussions about the nature of democracies, long-standing debates over the appropriate roles of government, and the changing contours of civil society and the public sphere. Writing with the activism of the Arab Spring (uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria) and the Occupy Movement still fresh in our minds, and with an awareness of the daily struggles of people around the globe to earn living wages, send their children to school, grow and purchase food, and care for their loved ones, we find it difficult to offer a simple characterization of contemporary social justice issues. We believe that the related, but divergent, extremes of the 2008–2012 global economic crisis and the 2011–2012 activism of the Occupy Movement and Arab

Spring suggest that rights are still contested and that social justice remains elusive for many. Simultaneously, these developments point to a robust global civil society that challenges the very political and economic processes that structure relations among citizens, non-citizens, states, and corporations. It is in this context that we offer our proposed research agenda.

In Canada, the global events mentioned above, along with growing conservatism and polarization in politics, policy, and public discourse, have had potentially profound impacts on issues of social justice, rights, and dignity. Following the election of two minority Conservative governments in 2006 and 2008, the election in the spring of 2011 produced a majority of seats—with 39.62 percent of the popular vote—for the Conservative Party. For the first time in history, the New Democratic Party obtained Official Opposition status with 30.63 percent of the vote, while support for the Liberal Party fell to an all-time low. Thus, in the most simplistic analysis, the 2006 to 2012 period in Canadian politics can be seen as an ascension of the political right (i.e., the Conservative Party), growing support for the left (i.e., the NDP), and a near-collapse of the centre. In reality, of course, these election results, like all election results, are the outcome of much more complex short- and long-term trends, events reaching far beyond Canadian borders, specific political personalities, and so on. What is important from our perspective is that, in this political moment, developing a social justice and rights research agenda is particularly contentious and complex—it must be carefully framed and contextualized.

Some Canadians, for instance, perceive this period as a time in which superfluous government spending is being curbed in order to protect the well-being of the Canadian economy and of Canadians (Clemens et al., 2011). They also see this as a time in which Canadians (and their government) continue to value rights issues, as evidenced, for example, by the Canadian government's 2006 apology to surviving Chinese Canadians who were subject to a punitive 1885-1923

head tax, and by the 2010 apology to former students of Indian residential schools. For others, however, the increasing conservatism of the last five years in Canada and elsewhere raises deep concerns—concerns over growing social and economic disparities and over the possibility that the social justice and human rights gains of the last 30 years have been, and are being, undermined (Stanford, 2012). While these concerns are based in discursive and policy trends that clearly precede the 2006 Canadian election, many social justice and human rights advocates have issued warnings that cumulative policies and laws harm vulnerable groups (e.g., new immigrants, asylum seekers, at-risk youth), favour economic interests over environmental ones (e.g., the development of the northern pipeline and the tar sands, the withdrawal from the Kyoto Accord), and undermine the capacity for effective advocacy in Canada (e.g., by cutting funds to the Canadian Human Rights Commission, Rights and Democracy, Katimavik, Kairos, and so on) (Gergin, 2011).

Long-standing debates over what government should fund and how government money should be spent reverberate ever more loudly. For those on the centre-left, these debates echo in their growing concern for the relinquishing of public funding for certain civil society groups and for increasing resources being allocated to civil liberty-limiting security efforts. Gerald Caplan and others point to the ways in which municipal, provincial, and federal authorities have regularly suppressed public demonstrations, such as the Occupy Movement and the protests at the G-20 summit meeting in Toronto in 2010, noting that in the case of the G-20 protests, the security price tag was estimated at \$1 billion (CBC, 2010). On the right of the political spectrum, such intellectuals as Brian Lee Crowley, Ezra Levant, and Adam Aptowitzwer make a compelling case for smaller government, self-funded charities and public interest groups, tougher security measures, and economic conservatism—all in the name of protecting Canadians. This resonates with, and indeed is deemed self-evident by, large segments of the Canadian public.

Our proposed research agenda must grapple with, and will inevitably reflect, this polarization. As we consider some of the most pressing questions of the last five years, we ask whether we are witnessing an incremental undermining of social justice and a narrowing of avenues for effective opposition in Canada and elsewhere. Like Caplan (2012) and others, we believe there is a growing urgency for social justice work at this time, while we likewise have concerns about what might be an erosion of civil liberties and a shrinking space of opposition (Caplan, 2012). But we feel that our concerns must remain open to critical questioning and scholarly research. How are government policies differentially affecting communities across Canada? Who is most vulnerable to the adverse effects of changing laws, policies, and services, and why? Is civil society limited in its capacity to effect change? Would a cohesive civil sphere response in some ways subvert or limit an effective reform agenda? Have recent protests taken place through increasingly limited media channels? Is the activism of organizations such as Avaaz limited to a group of informed and engaged activists? In what ways are people organizing in their daily lives and around what key issues? These questions merit further attention.

Furthermore, we ask scholars to critically question not only the impacts of recent policy and government practice, but also their temporality and context. To what extent are recent developments the responsibility of the newly elected government? To what extent are these products of long-standing and far-reaching trends within and beyond the national context? What are the broader discursive and intellectual trends that inform dominant ways of thinking about social justice, human rights, civil society, government responsibility, and so on? What are the history and genealogy of these trends, and how are they playing out in contemporary public policy and in people's everyday lives? We ask scholars to continue to ask hard questions about the nature of structural inequities and the propagation of racialized and gendered discourses that consistently present

certain groups as problems or impediments to the overall health and welfare of society. Thus, we offer our proposed research agenda not only in light of the events (and divisive politics) of the past five years, but also with questions about the longer-term trends in thinking that have propelled these events, and with deep acknowledgement of the processes of injustice and exploitation that remain present in Canada and globally.

The pursuit of social justice is clearly complex and increasingly challenging, and it behooves us to think critically about how to study and address issues of injustice in ways that are engaging, effective, and inclusive. Given the events of the last five years in Canada and globally, and given the continued existence of racisms, sexism, imperialism, and other forms of discrimination, we urge the Trudeau Foundation to think about scholarship in this area as a dynamic between (at least) two types of endeavours: first, work that seeks to understand the processes that underlie injustice, indignity, and inequity; and second, work that illuminates the multiple ways citizens and non-citizens struggle for just and dignified conditions in their everyday lives. Where the latter is concerned, we embrace Jeffrey Alexander's concept of a civil sphere—a fusion of conventional understandings of civil society and the public sphere. Alexander (2006, 3) describes this as “a world of values and institutions that generates the capacity for social criticism and democratic integration at the same time,” underscoring shared responsibilities for the pursuit of social justice and the promotion and protection of rights and dignity.

### *Focusing on Approach: From Problems to Processes*

In his 2007 position paper, MacDonald recommended that in thinking about priority research under this thematic area, the Foundation focus on problems or issues that threaten justice and dignity (e.g., poverty or violence) rather than on essentialized identity groups of people who require attention (e.g., indigenous communities,



women, and so on). We agree, to some extent, with his approach, in that we would not advocate for essentialist groupings. However, we would like to suggest yet another way of thinking about directions for future research: an approach that embraces a critical feminist social justice framework and explicitly seeks to understand processes that drive injustices—thus, a shift *from problems to processes*.

By this, and following from our recasting of this thematic area as articulated in part I, we suggest that the Trudeau Foundation explicitly seek to support research into the underlying processes that drive rights abuses and social injustices. This approach means asking, and seeking to address, some or all of the following key questions:

- Where in Canadian society and globally do we see discrimination, oppression, impoverishment, vulnerability, marginalization, and exploitation, and why do these exist?
- Who benefits from upholding inequitable relations? Who is harmed by various processes, discourses, categories, policies, and laws, and who is privileged?
- How are social “problems” (like poverty and violence) gendered, racialized, classed, and so on?
- Where and how are people and groups resisting growing inequities and injustices, and where do we see mobilizations to improve people’s everyday lives?

In considering this shift from problems to processes, we have benefitted tremendously from engaging with the works of certain feminist scholars (e.g., Kobayashi, 2001; Pratt, 2000). Indeed, feminist scholarship has contributed extensively both to theorizing what is meant by a critical approach to social justice research and to developing critical methodologies more broadly. We strongly urge the Foundation to actively engage with feminist scholarship as it considers setting its research priorities over the next five years, and particularly as it considers the approaches and methodologies it wishes to support.

This would entail some or all of the following:

- Supporting research concerned with justice, rights, and dignity that undertakes deliberate gender and *intersectional analyses*, thereby explicitly recognizing that the ways in which people identify and are identified shape their experiences of privilege and/or exploitation. The example Neve (2012) gave in his call for more gender-sensitive human rights research was that, to date, research on rights abuses associated with the “War on Terror” has been “almost gender blind.” He encouraged the Foundation to seek out research that asks the questions that have so far been overlooked, such as these: What is the experience of women and families left behind when men are detained? How do intersections of race and gender affect how those left behind are treated in Canadian society?
- Supporting research that brings “Other” voices to the table, or research in which scholars commit to incorporating the perspectives often not sanctioned by the academy (i.e., *community-sanctioned research*). This means supporting research processes that are deemed sensitive and useful to different community groups (e.g., Tuhiwai Smith, 2005).
- Supporting *reflexive research* in which scholars examine their own positions of privilege and the complexity of their research relationships, and in which they remain aware of how power operates within all research endeavours to shape the knowledge produced (e.g., Rose, 1997).
- Supporting research that is *engaged*, resisting the idea that researchers should remain detached from, or minimize disturbance in, the lives of research participants. This means working with scholars who understand the complexities involved and yet are willing to blur the lines between their roles as researchers, advocates, and public interlocutors (e.g., McEwan and Goodman, 2010; Kobayashi, 2001).

To recap, five years ago MacDonald (2007) called for research into poverty, violence, health, education, employment, and inter-generational inequities. Given our discussion of recent events and on-going injustices, we concur that, five years later, these continue

to be issues of high priority. But we also wish to complicate his proposal. Indeed, in seeking a more critical, dynamic, theoretically informed, and forward-looking approach, we wish to focus our discussion on underpinning drivers and intersectional experiences of injustice, as well as on relationality, agency, and possible sites of social change. This shift away from a focus on problems to a focus on processes generates a more dynamic way of thinking.

Shaped by this critical shift, the remainder of this paper delves into our proposed research agenda. Given our focus on processes, what we are proposing is much more about approach or methodology than it is about enumerating a set of fixed issues or categories. We will discuss our proposed agenda in two parts, first outlining four crosscutting themes for consideration in all research in this area, and then discussing three sets of processes that we believe require immediate research attention and support.

### *Crosscutting Considerations for Research on Social Justice, Rights, and Dignity*

Based on a sampling of current academic literature and a survey of policy positions put forward by leading think tanks and non-governmental organizations in Canada, we have identified four crosscutting themes that we urge scholars concerned with all areas of social justice, rights, and dignity research to consider: (1) destabilizing “structures,” (2) inclusions and exclusions, (3) spatialities, and (4) temporalities. In explaining how we understand each of these crosscutting considerations, we are building on the theoretical considerations raised in the first part of this paper.

#### Destabilizing “Structures”

The operation of global capitalism, the mechanics of a functioning democracy, racialized and gendered discourses—these and many other routinized, dominant, and entrenched practices and discourses perpetuate and uphold inequalities and detract from individuals’

capacity to live full, dignified lives. Political, economic, cultural, and social processes and relationships function in various ways to shape our lives and structure our opportunities. We are referring to what are often called “structures”—yet, we prefer to think of these as routinized practices, dominant discourses, and particular policies and laws that uphold injustices, recognizing that while these may be entrenched, they are not fixed for rigid. We call for research that seeks to understand how these routinized practices and dominant discourses operate and, importantly, to complicate or challenge such inequitable “common sense” or “status quo” processes and conditions. We urge work that recognizes these so-called structures but also imagines possibilities for change. Building on interventions by 2003 Trudeau scholar Anna Stanley (2009), we also call for scholarship that gives serious thought to the purpose of these routinized practices in terms of whom they benefit and what they maintain.

### Inclusions and Exclusions

Processes of inclusion and exclusion (specifically who is included, who is excluded, and why) are at the core of research into issues of social justice, rights, and dignity. In considering these processes, we urge researchers to remain critical to the categories they employ and how these might uphold hierarchical relationships and exclusions. Drawing again from feminist theory, we advocate for research that avoids essentialist approaches to social groupings. We call for intersectional analyses that recognize highly differentiated experiences and the complexity of multiple and dynamic social locations. For example, we urge scholars to ask not only whether women in Canada tend to be excluded from top government posts, but also, recognizing the huge diversity among “Canadian women,” whether and how women’s skin colour, class, age, marital status, sexuality, and so on cause such experiences of exclusion, and why. We propose that work in this area be concerned with the different ways people and bodies are identified (and discriminated against), as well as the

ways in which people and groups draw on multiple social locations in their struggles for justice.

In addition, we call for a focus on research that probes how relationships inform processes of inclusion and exclusion, which inform conceptions of social justice, rights, and dignity in turn. Paulette Regan, senior researcher for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, proposes that processes of inclusion are not the responsibility of a single individual or defined group but rather the responsibility of society as a whole (Regan, 2010). As part of this, we suggest, that the Trudeau Foundation specifically seek to support scholars who are critical and reflexive about their own roles, power, and privilege, about the situatedness of the knowledge they produce, and about who they include in their research and how they go about this inclusion.

### Spatialities

Issues of spatiality—in terms, for instance, of the state’s scope for intervention and the fluidity of social justice protests—are of wide concern for scholars in this area. There is indeed a need for critical awareness of how social justice issues play out in multiple spheres (and at multiple scales) and across porous borders. We urge scholars working in areas relating to justice, rights, and dignity to call into question categories or “scales” that are seemingly fixed—to recognize the important spaces between and outside, for instance, “the state” versus “civil society,” and to grapple with the ways in which actors often move fluidly between different “levels” of government. We urge work that investigates the manner in which initiatives in one arena relate to, support, and/or contradict those in others. This includes, for example, engaging with how activities in Canada (such as the development of the tar sands) affect people in other parts of the world and how Canadian involvement abroad (such as mine development in Africa) relates to broader social justice issues for people in the Global South and the Global North. It also includes

looking at how struggles and mobilizations for justice often cross permeable social and geopolitical boundaries and borders, and the creative ways in which such actors forge these translocal and transnational connections.

### Temporalities

When news of the terrible living conditions in Attawapiskat emerged in late autumn 2011, one of the concerns expressed by civil society actors was that the lack of adequate housing and basic life supports on the reserve should not be assessed as an emergency situation, but rather as one of persisting inequities. The same question can be raised of Canada's decision to withdraw from the Kyoto Accord, with which Canada had never complied, at the Durban conference in 2011. We therefore call for scholars to undertake critical analyses of the temporal nature of social justice issues. This means seeking to understand underlying processes of vulnerability, inequity, and oppression. It also means probing the ways in which particular events, situations, contexts, or policies function to improve these processes (as in, perhaps, cases where redress or reconciliation is taken) or to deepen them (as in, perhaps, sites where the uneven effects of global financial crises are most badly experienced).

Concern for the temporal nature of social justice issues also means adopting forward-looking approaches, considering, for instance, the ways in which processes at play and actions taken now might impede the capacity of future generations to live with dignity. While issues of intergenerational justice are paramount and have been clearly articulated in work relating to climate change, we feel that such a forward-looking approach can and should be applied to research in all areas. How will our current economic choices, policies, and ways of consuming affect different people, groups, and communities struggling for justice, rights, and dignity? What are the future implications of whether we choose to make medicines accessible to people in the Global South, particularly in areas with

massive HIV/AIDS epidemics? What are the future implications of our migration and immigration practices and policies? Scholars have a responsibility to at least raise these questions.

*Priority Research Areas: Understanding Processes of Power and Resistance*

With these crosscutting considerations in mind, we turn, finally, to a brief discussion of our proposed priority research areas. In the early stages of our research for this paper, we identified three overarching issues relating to social justice, rights, and dignity that we felt required immediate attention: (1) poverty (and its associations with skin colour, gender, age, and citizenship, among other factors), (2) inequality (especially, but not exclusively, as it relates to health, education, and the law), and (3) civil sphere responses. Based on our previous discussion, however, we have opted to frame our proposed research agenda in terms of processes rather than problems. Thus, we have organized our main concerns around a series of processes that underpin why some people live with an abundance of privilege, health, and opportunity while others experience disproportionate levels of exploitation, deprivation, and impoverishment. We therefore focus on processes of (1) impoverishment and discrimination, (2) unequal and inequitable access, and (3) mobilization. At the core, we are advocating for a better understanding of power—asking how power operates to privilege some and harm others, and how this power is resisted in multiple, complex, and creative ways. Our discussion is by no means exhaustive, and nor do we intend it to be prescriptive; rather, we identify certain key concerns and questions, which serve to illustrate our broader focus on processes and which we believe merit further exploration and elaboration beyond this paper.

Processes of Impoverishment and Discrimination

Poverty, livelihood insecurity, marginalization, and deprivation impede many people around the world and in Canada from living

full and dignified lives. Yet in considering, from a critical perspective, how poverty is a social justice issue, we must raise questions about underlying drivers: Who is most socially and economically vulnerable? Where in society do we see stark instances of deprivation, and why? Thus, we urge scholars to focus renewed attention on processes of impoverishment and, by seeking to understand underpinning causes, processes of discrimination. Key questions here might include the following:

- Where in Canada and globally do we see processes of impoverishment, marginalization, and/or discrimination taking place? What is driving these?
- Who is most harmed, or made most vulnerable, by particular practices, policies, or discourses? Who benefits or is left unharmed?

In other words, we believe that future research should attend to how and why certain groups become impoverished and how their vulnerabilities may be reinforced as a result of stigmatization, the unequal distribution of resources, sexism, racism, and multiple other forms of discrimination. Within the context of these key questions, areas of particular concern emerge for us. While we do not believe that future research should be confined to these areas, we suggest them as a means of illustrating the approach we are advocating and how it connects with a tangible research agenda.

- **Ageism and intergenerational inequities.** In 2009, child poverty in Canada was at 9.5 percent. The same year, poverty among the elderly was at 5.9 percent, with the highest concentration of poverty among single, elderly women. In thinking about issues of justice, rights, and dignity in Canada and globally, we believe that it is important to consider the needs of particular generations and how their relations to each other inform their capacities to live full lives. Why does child poverty persist? Why are the elderly, particularly elderly women, vulnerable to impoverishment and marginalization? What underlying factors and discriminations are at play?



- **Racialization and gendering.** It is critical that we ask the difficult questions about why certain groups, such as Canada's indigenous peoples or recently arrived migrant communities, often face endemic poverty, poor education rates, and the lack of proper health care, and that we move beyond homogenizing and static identifiers of these groups to understand who within them is most vulnerable and why. Heeding work on poverty reduction in Canada (Block and Galabuzi, 2011; Hay, 2009) and the campaigns of organizations such as the Colour of Poverty Network, we believe it important to support research that seeks to understand the processes that perpetuate linkages between impoverishment and racialization. We also believe this work should be subjected to intersectional analyses that ask in what ways that poverty might also be linked to gender, geography, ability, sexuality, age, and so on.
- **Citizens and non-citizens.** Given the growing numbers of illegal migrants in Canada and elsewhere, and the reformulation of temporary worker programs that recruit people for short-term residence but not for citizenship, we believe that future research must consider the implications of how citizens and non-citizens are documented in our transnational world. Following such campaigns as No One Is Illegal, we believe scholars should also explore the question of which bodies are allowed in which spaces and why. How do our policies, laws, and borders make some bodies illegal (and thus less able to claim certain rights and dignities), even as they require such bodies to uphold the privilege of those deemed legal? How do discourses and legal categories of citizenship function to discriminate against some people and deny their rights? Here, too, a careful examination of what is upheld by these practices and in what ways they are driven by underlying processes of racism, sexism, and so on, is critical.

### Processes of Unequal and Inequitable Access

While poverty and processes of impoverishment impede many from living lives of dignity, material and symbolic disparities within and between societies often reflect underlying processes of exclusion, oppression, and exploitation. A critical social justice framework,

as discussed earlier, recognizes social and economic inequalities as a symptom of underlying injustices, but focuses attention on unravelling these underlying experiences and situations of oppression (Stanley, 2009). In this context, and building on repeated interventions by the Council for Canadians and others, we propose that researchers turn a critical lens on the processes that shape who has access to services, institutions, resources, and opportunities, who does not, and why. In other words, we call for future research aimed at understanding processes of unequal and inequitable access, while deliberately recognizing “inequality” as shorthand for experiences and situations of unfairness and oppression. Key questions here might include:

- Who has access to services, institutions, natural and symbolic resources, and opportunities? Who does not?
- Why?

In considering these questions, we ask scholars to investigate the complex processes that inform unequal access, in Canada and globally, to a number of different services, resources, institutions, and opportunities, including but not limited to the following: education, health care, justice, information, employment, livelihood security, environmental and symbolic resources, housing, and clean drinking water. We also ask scholars to consider the ways in which state and non-state (i.e., corporate, community, alternative institutions) practices inform access to material and symbolic power. Again, we will elaborate on only some of these areas, raising certain key questions and potential areas for research:

- **Education.** Amnesty International and UNESCO have both underscored education as a fundamental right, necessary for the exercise of all other rights. Access to education therefore remains a primary and fundamental challenge to the pursuit of social justice and the protection of rights and dignity. However, given the growing disparities within Canada and globally, the issue is not just about a right to education, but rather relates to fundamental

questions about what people are gaining access to, how, why, and to what effect. What socio-economic processes structure access to education in Canada? How does the lack of affordable and accessible daycare or early childhood education in Canada shape access to education in later years? How do we address the language and integration needs of children from immigrant families without fostering difference and discrimination? Who is harmed most by funding cuts to public education? Where are there barriers to accessing special education services and support for people with disabilities within our public schools, and what causes those barriers? How do intersections of gender, race, class, language, and so on affect children's success in school and access to higher education?

- **Health.** Disparities in health indicators within and between countries are symptoms of underlying inequities and differential access not only to health care, but also to healthy living and working conditions. In 2000, life expectancy at birth was estimated for males from First Nations in Canada at 68.9 years, compared with 77 years for males from the general Canadian population; in South Africa that year, life expectancy for males was estimated at 53.5 years. What causes these differences? What factors underpin unequal access to health and health care? Why do some people and groups systematically live in better conditions, with safer housing, cleaner water, less taxing work, more disposable income, and better nutrition, and what does this mean for their health? What drives differential access to primary health care, family doctors, specialists, and specialized diagnostic tests? In what ways are health inequalities related to race, gender, and class?
- **Justice.** While justice is often considered in terms of criminal justice systems, we encourage questions about how we can conceptualize justice to better understand the implications of access to different kinds of justice. How does the presence of Sharia law in Canada, for example, affect our conceptions of justice and how people access justice? What processes perpetuate the denial or realization of justice in Canada? In a world where borders are increasingly porous, should we reconceptualize justice in a more transnational manner? What responsibility do people in the Global North bear for ongoing inequities in the Global South?

How does a more holistic approach to justice, one that includes human and environmental concerns, transform how we think of justice and measure its existence?

### Processes of Mobilization

Finally, picking up from our earlier contextual discussion, we call for critical attention not only to processes underpinning injustices in Canada and globally, but also to how and why people are mobilizing in their struggles for justice, rights, and dignity. These mobilizations probably take on many different forms—from an informal neighbourhood group working to support a neighbour struggling with cancer without adequate institutional or family support, to a church initiative to support an orphanage in Lesotho, to highly organized environmental and social movements. Key questions here might include these:

- Where and how are people collectively mobilizing in pursuit of justice, rights, and dignity? Over what key issues? To what effect?
- How do people organize in their daily lives to improve their living conditions and challenge norms?

Research in this area would include looking at the functioning, dynamics, networks, and impacts of non-governmental organizations (large and small), community-based associations, voluntary organizations, faith-based organizations, campaigns, movements, and all of the other associational forms that fall within Alexander's (2006) notion of the "civil sphere" as described earlier. While acknowledging the important roles that states play in perpetuating or altering inequities and establishing the legal contexts in which rights and dignity are experienced, we maintain that states alone cannot be held responsible for the promotion and protection of social justice. Future research must therefore focus on the civil sphere and the agency, creativity, and ingenuity of those who populate it. Such research should aim to better understand the roles of civil society actors at the household level through to the global level,

and to consider the ways in which the civil sphere currently operates and how it could be strengthened. We urge that research be done in the following areas:

- **Friction.** Scholars in this area could probe critically into what Tsing (2005) calls the “friction” that exists within all mobilizations, to recognize that mobilizations and movements are never homogeneous and to ask what perspectives are at play in any given association. This means examining both the overarching strategies of different associations, networks, and movements, as well as their contrasting and (potentially) conflictual internal dynamics—recognizing both as necessary for driving mobilizations, and critically examining the impacts of friction and diversity within mobilizations.
- **Possibility.** We suggest that scholars look into the ways in which mobilizations might open up possibilities for change by resisting or challenging certain norms, and the ways in which organizing can generate changes in people’s everyday lives. We believe that much could be learned from these efforts about how social change can occur and what kind of change is desired, and we recommend doing research that examines different models of mobilization, cooperation, resistance, and association.
- **Porous borders.** Recognizing the intricate formal and informal links that exist across communities and geopolitical borders, we suggest that scholars interested in how people and groups are mobilizing for justice and dignity begin to unravel some of these complexities. This means gaining a better understanding of how people connect across distance and difference, and of how discourses, knowledge, information, resources, and people cross various social and geographical borders.

### *Summary*

In the second part of this paper, we undertook an examination of the ways in which events of the last five years have converged with deeply entrenched processes of injustice to generate even greater urgency for critical research. Then, following from the framework outlined in part 1, we proposed a two-part research agenda that

emphasizes processes that drive injustices. This agenda suggests crosscutting considerations for all research in this area and proposes research questions pertaining to processes of impoverishment and discrimination, unequal and inequitable access, and mobilization. The questions and topics we propose within this research agenda are by no means exhaustive. Rather, they are examples that illustrate how focusing on underpinning processes promotes innovative, critical, and dynamic thinking about research on social justice, rights, and dignity.

### *Conclusions*

We offer this paper specifically as an invitation to consider the framing of the Trudeau Foundation's "Human Rights and Dignity" theme and the research the Foundation will support within the context of this theme in the years to come. In undertaking this task, we have, in a broader sense, also grappled with certain positions, concepts, and questions, which are highly pertinent to any scholar concerned with social justice, rights, and dignity. While our analysis has been deliberately provocative, we remain conscious of the limitations of our approach. We acknowledge the breadth and depth of literature on human rights, social justice, and dignity accumulated from across scholarly disciplines, and we recognize that we have drawn on a sample of academic texts predominantly from critical and feminist scholarship on social justice. We have also drawn on conversations with other members of the Trudeau Foundation community and on the written materials of key civil society groups and actors.

Our principal message is that we need to think critically about what underlies issues of impoverishment and inequality, what drives people to organize and resist, and why relations of oppression and exploitation are perpetually upheld. We thus call for the Foundation to return the concept of "social justice" to its current theme of "Human Rights and Dignity" and to broaden this conceptual framework to read "Social Justice, Rights, and Dignity." We

believe that this framing, with an elaboration of the three concepts and the relationships between them, would foster important opportunities for research and dialogue relating to inequalities, inequities, and injustices in Canada and abroad.

In envisioning a research agenda on this theme, we also move beyond an enumeration of social *problems* that require attention in Canada or elsewhere, to instead frame a broader effort to understand underlying *processes* of discrimination, oppression, exploitation, and social change, with a view to working for a fairer and more just society. Thus, we call on the Foundation to adopt a critical feminist social justice framework, supporting work that is concerned, ultimately, with how power operates in societies to privilege some people and groups and, often by extension, to harm others, and how this power is always met with resistance. This shift to seeking to understand what drives oppression and how people and groups are struggling for justice—rather than seeking to enumerate issues and situations in which human rights or dignity are compromised—would bring a forward-looking focus to the Foundation’s work in this area, broadening the scope of its research significantly and recommitting it to delving into societies’ hard questions.

### **Bibliography**

- Abu-Lughod, L. (2008), *Writing Women’s Worlds: Bedouin Stories, 15th Anniversary Edition*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Agosin, M. (Ed.) (2002), *Women, Gender and Human Rights: A Global Perspective*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University.
- Alexander, J. (2006), *The Civil Sphere*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Arendt, H. (1967), *Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Block, S., and G.-E. Galabuzi (2011), *Canada’s Colour Coded Labour Market: The Gap for Racialized Workers*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

- Bunch, C. (1990), "Women's Rights as Human Rights: Toward a Re-Vision of Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 12, no. 4, 486-498.
- Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) (2010), "News," June 27. Available at <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/story/2010/05/26/g8-g20-security-summit-toews.html>
- Caplan, G. (2011), "More voices you won't hear in the election campaign," *Globe and Mail*, 22 April.
- Carroll, W.K. (2004), "Introduction: Unpacking and contextualizing critical research strategies," in Carroll, W.K. (ed.), *Critical Strategies for Social Research*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1-15.
- Clemens, J. et al. (2011), *Learning from the Past: How Canadian Fiscal Policies of the 1990s Can Be Applied Today*. Vancouver: Fraser Institute.
- Danieli, Y. et al. (eds.) (1999), *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Fifty Years and Beyond*. Amityville, NY: Baywood Publishing Company.
- Donnelly, J. (2003), *Universal Human Rights: In Theory and Practice*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Englund, H. (2006), *Prisoners of Freedom: Human Rights and the African Poor*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Forest, P.-G. (2012), Personal communication. March.
- Foucault, M. (1980), "Two Lectures," in C. Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977 by Michel Foucault*. New York: Pantheon Books, 78-108.
- Gergin, M. (2011), *Silencing Dissent: The Conservative Record*. Toronto: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.
- Gutmann, A. (ed.) (2001), *Human Rights as Political Idolatry*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Haraway, D. (1988), "Situated knowledges," *Feminist Studies*, vol. 14, 575-599.
- Hay, D. (2009), *Poverty Reduction: Policies and Programs*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.
- Ignatieff, M. (2007), *The Rights Revolution*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press.
- Lamey, A. (2011), *Frontier Justice: The Global Refugee Crisis and What to Do About It*. Toronto: Doubleday Canada.
- Kobayashi, A. (2001), "Negotiating the personal and the political in critical qualitative research," in M. Limb and C. Dwyer (eds.), *Qualitative Methodologies for Geographers*. London: Arnold, 55-70.



- MacDonald, R.A. (2007), *Human Rights and Social Justice*. Montreal: Prepared for the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation.
- Mahmood, S. (2004), *Politics of Piety. The Islamist Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Marshall, D. (2006), *Social Origins of the Welfare State Quebec Families, Compulsory Education, and Family Allowances, 1940-1955*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press.
- McEwan, C., and M.K. Goodman (2010), "Place geography and the ethics of care: introductory remarks on the geographies of ethics, responsibility and care," *Ethics, Policy and Environment*, vol. 13, no. 2, 103-112.
- Mutua, M. (2008), *Human Rights: A Political and Cultural Critique*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Neve, A. (2012), Personal communication. March.
- Pangalangan, R.C. (2003), "Sweatshops and International Labour Standards," in Alison Byrsk (ed.), *Globalization and Human Rights*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Pratt, G. (2000), "Research performances," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 18, no. 5, 639-651.
- Regan, P. (2010), *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Robinson, Mary (2004), "Advancing Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights: The Way Forward," *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 4, 866-872.
- Rose, G. (1997), "Situating knowledges: Positionality, reflexivity and other tactics," *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 21, no. 3, 305-320.
- Roth, K. (2004), "Defending economic, social and cultural rights: Practical issues faced by an international human rights organizations," *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 26, 63-73.
- Schwartz, D. (2012), "Six big changes the Charter of Rights has brought." Available at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2012/04/17/f-charter-30-changes.html>
- Sepúlveda Carmona, Magdalena (2011), *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Ms. Maria Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona on the Penalization of People Living in Poverty*. United Nations.
- Shelton, D. (1991), "Human Rights, Environmental Rights, and the Right to Environment," *Stanford Journal of International Law*, vol. 28, 103-138.

- Stanford, Jim. (2012), *Canada's Incomplete, Mediocre Recovery*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.
- Stanley, A. (2009), "Just space or spatial justice? Difference, discourse, and environmental justice," *Local Environment*, vol. 14, no. 10, 999-1014.
- Tsing, A. (2005), *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Tuhiwai Smith, L. (2005), *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. New York: Zed Books.
- Young, I.M. (1990), *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

---

GUEST EDITOR  
Bettina B. Cenerelli

THE PIERRE ELLIOTT TRUDEAU FOUNDATION  
thanks the following individuals for their help and contributions to the  
second number of the fourth volume of *The Trudeau Foundation Papers*.

TRANSLATION  
Richard Bastien (Kymlicka / Chazan) • Eric Bergeron (Owen)  
Véronique Dassas (Rees / Preface) • Susan Kelly (Introduction)

CONCEPT AND DESIGN  
Véronique Giguère

PROOFREADING  
Laurence Jourde • Sarah Weber

---

Printed on entirely recycled paper  
in January 2013 at Caius du livre Inc.