

qu'une analyse plus complète de leur identité et de la crise d'identité vécue par ces travailleurs.

L'ouvrage offre finalement des pistes de solution pour faire de la crise d'identité professionnelle une «occasion de changement». Il propose une reconstruction de l'identité professionnelle, basée sur l'appropriation des valeurs aussi bien professionnelles qu'éthiques. Enfin, les auteurs présentent clairement, et de façon accessible, les enjeux multiples que revêt la crise d'identité professionnelle au Québec. Ils mettent habilement en lumière la pluralité de sens du terme «profession» et ses conséquences sur l'engagement, sur les valeurs professionnelles et sur les valeurs éthiques.

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The Bottom Billion

Paul Collier

New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 224

doi:10.1017/S0008423908080694

Paul Collier's *The Bottom Billion*, winner of the 2008 Lionel Gelber prize, answers the question stated on the cover: Why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it. Collier points to fifty states with about one billion people, claiming that the real problem lies within them. The sources of the decline in living standards are addressed under four headings: the trap of conflict; natural resources—usually part of the problem, less frequently part of the solution; the problem of being landlocked by “bad neighbours”; and last but not least, bad governance. All of these put together result in a situation that even in the '90s, when we observed the positive trend in global economy, the average income in these countries dropped by 5 per cent. This is in average terms; the problem becomes even more pronounced when we realize that quite often in those countries the growth benefits only a handful of the people. In fact, these 50 countries are not only falling behind but also falling apart. Obviously, part of the problem lies outside these 50 states—for example in unfair terms of trade favouring the rich countries—and, to some extent, solutions must be sought there, too.

The author, a former director of the World Bank responsible for research and currently a professor of economics and director of the Centre for the Study of African Economics at Oxford University, is highly competent and a world-class expert. None the less, it is worth noticing that he does not reveal even the shadow of clerical approach or an ivory tower, academic perspective. When reading the book, one feels the engagement of the author and his determination to persuade his audience, rather than to lecture or preach.

Collier writes with passion, so the book is more readable for its potential audience. The language and simple argumentation make it accessible to a wide range of readers, not exclusively academics or specialists professionally interested in world poverty issues. It is a major advantage of this book that it is written by a well known, respected author, delivered in non-scientific, almost journalistic vocabulary and published by a recognized house. Thus this work may have a considerable impact on public awareness and be much more effective than dozens of others, perhaps equally well researched and argued but of an exclusive, scientific nature.

Collier is capable of putting complicated problems in plain language. “Even the appearance of modern government in these states is sometimes a façade, as if the leaders are reading from a script. They sit at the international negotiations tables, such as the World Trade Organizations, but they have nothing to negotiate. The seats stay occupied even in the face of meltdown of their societies: the government of Somalia continued to be officially ‘represented’ in the international arena for years after Somalia ceased to have a functioning government in the country itself” (4).

Certainly not everything is perfect in this publication. Some parts could be shorter; especially some of the historical examples seem too long. On the other hand, in some other parts, when the author tries to synthesize, he gets trapped into simplifications that are not acceptable even in nonscientific writing. For example, referring to bad governance and economic policies, Collier claims that the ceiling for feasible growth stimulated by getting the policies and governance right is 10 per cent. Economic literature doesn't warrant such a figure. Certainly, general observation could lead one to conclude that the vast majority of rapidly growing economies rarely exceeds the 10 per cent limit of GDP growth; however, no one would dare conclude that this 10 per cent growth depends entirely on good or bad governance. Such a statement ignores influential drivers of a state's economy, like global trends, for instance. Moreover, economies in transition—let us say, in Central Europe—provide us with empirical knowledge that high economic growth is quite often generated despite of (or even in opposition to) the poor economic performance of the government.

Undoubtedly the book is a synthesis and, by necessity, is full of generalizations, sometimes even simplifications. Nevertheless it can play an important role as a thought-provoking and stimulating reflection on the global problems that touch almost 20 per cent of our planet's population. Collier's is a striking voice that should move the "rich north's soul," hopefully not only to thought but to action.

The Bottom Billion should be read by anyone worried about or aware of global challenges. Those missing the boat become increasingly marginalized, which makes it more and more difficult for them to escape their traps and more and more unlikely to catch up. Living in a globalized world we cannot, however, pretend that this depressing situation is remote from us. For ethical reasons as well for learning about emerging threats (for example, migration pressure), we should take Paul Collier's recommendations seriously and carefully go through the agenda for action.

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L'invention de l'Amérique. Recherche au sujet de la structure du Nouveau monde et du sens de son devenir

Edmundo O'Gorman, traduit de l'espagnol par Francine Bertrand González

Les Presses de l'Université Laval, Éditions de l'IQRC, 2007, 186 pages

doi:10.1017/S0008423908080700

L'histoire de la découverte de l'Amérique a été écrite plus d'une fois, étudiée sous toutes ses coutures, fantasmée aussi, mise en scène et portée à l'écran. On sait aujourd'hui de cette histoire que Christophe Colomb n'a pu jouir du titre de découvreur de l'Amérique que la postérité lui a pourtant attribué. En effet, le vieil amiral est mort avec la certitude d'avoir découvert, pour le bénéfice et la gloire de la Couronne espagnole et du Dieu chrétien, le chemin occidental vers les côtes de l'Asie, que l'on appelait alors en Europe les Indes. L'hypothèse, fondée sur les connaissances de l'époque, a été tenue pour plausible tant par les scientifiques que par les pouvoirs de l'époque. Or, il faut bien poser la question, peut-on découvrir quelque chose sans le savoir? Une découverte peut-elle être inconsciente? Christophe Colomb, ne sachant pas ce qu'il faisait, a-t-il pu, réellement, découvrir l'Amérique? Cette question est l'amorce de la réflexion historique présentée dans *L'invention de l'Amérique* par l'historien mexicain Edmundo O'Gorman (1906–1995). Ce texte désormais classique est offert pour la première fois au public francophone par les Presses de l'Université Laval, dans la jeune collection Americana dirigée par Jean-François Côté.

Dans ce court ouvrage, O'Gorman déconstruit d'emblée le mythe de la découverte de l'Amérique à l'aide d'une démonstration qui fait l'objet du premier chapitre, le plus percutant. Trois énoncés forment cette démonstration. (1) On ne peut pas décou-