INTRODUCTION

Chedly Belkhodja is professor of political science at the Université de Moncton. His research focuses on policies and practices of regionalization of immigration and on the discourse and representations of cultural change in places of less immigration. From 2003 to 2006, he served as a Domain Leader at the Atlantic Metropolis Centre and has been one of the Centre's directors since 2006.

This issue of *Canadian Diversity* offers a series of articles focusing on issues related to international students and immigration policies in Canada and other countries.

Over the past decade, national policies have shifted towards an increasingly obvious reconciliation between international students, the internationalization of education and immigration. For years, the experience of studying abroad was more of a personal academic project with no real intention on the part of students to remain in the host country; a sort of tourist mobility for young people to build their identity and to then benefit their country of origin. There was a distance in the policies between the student's status and the immigration process, forcing him/her to return to his home country to apply for a visa. The situation has considerably changed thanks to adjustments to policies, the role of universities as agents of recruitment and the competition between countries to attract highly skilled immigrants. International students have become a precious commodity for the economies of advanced industrialized countries.

In countries with a tradition of immigration like Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain, policies for selecting highly skilled immigrants are now favouring the category of international students (Hawthorne, 2010; IOM, 2008). But even if stricter measures are put into place for the selection of immigrants, these countries are also competing with each other to attract skilled workers and graduate students. Immigration policies can be very selective, but they are often accompanied by policies and directives aimed at facilitating the immigration process for those who have the qualifications countries are looking for. It is within this context that international students become ideal candidates for economic immigration. Indeed, insofar as the OECD countries are seeking skilled professionals, international students with degrees from their universities represent an almost ideal solution to the labour shortages experienced by these countries. Thus, several governments have implemented measures to ease the transition of international students into the labour market and to encourage them to settle in the host country on a long term basis. Several studies show the benefits of targeting students.

First, as immigrants, potential students are seen as a solution to falling birth rates and an aging population, particularly in non-metropolitan areas facing an exodus of the working population to urban centers (Suter and Jandl, 2008). Second, students who graduate in the host country have the ability to integrate into the labour market more easily. The criterion of a national diploma, in conjunction with the importance of acquiring work experience while studying, make international students better adapted to the professional and linguistic culture of their milieu. This argument is particularly relevant in a time where skilled immigrants are faced with considerable barriers from parts of the business world reluctant to hire a workforce that has been trained abroad. The open favouring of the student category also has a direct link to the complex issue of the recognition of qualifications and achievements of skilled immigrants. For some observers, for the reasons discussed above, the student category would be less threatened by the deskilling of highly skilled immigrants, a phenomenon observed mainly in Canada and Australia. Third, students are presented as actors that can increase the economic competitiveness and creativity of their host community. They can become agents of development for an economy seeking greater participation in a more competitive global market, particularly in economic sectors such as new technologies, call centers, and services (Perron, 2004). Indeed, some research shows the new relationship universities seek to establish between new knowledge and regional economic development (Walton-Roberts, 2008). Fourth, the presence of these students is often presented as a dynamic element that can allow small homogeneous areas to move towards intercultural understanding and internationalization. On the one hand, such an argument is produced at the post-secondary institution level which, by the very presence of students, becomes the place where this new diversity may benefit a local student population that is less aware of differences. On the other hand, the university becomes a sort of ideal laboratory and springboard for the integration and acculturation of a foreign population in the host community. Universities move beyond their territory (the campus) to truly invite themselves into the economic and cultural spaces of diverse cities. Finally, added to the interest in providing an international education is the undeniable economic incentive of attracting international

students, who pay much higher tuition fees than local students in several countries (Altbach and Knight 2007). The profitability of the growing internationalization of universities entices them to try their luck in this lucrative market that provides access to a source of external funding and increases the capacity of the workforce.

The studies included in this issue of Canadian Diversity address this topic on the basis of both empirical and qualitative research. The first section presents the Canadian experience. The overall picture which emerges is that the recruitment and retention of international students depend on several factors going beyond the role of governments and universities. In the context of economic migration, it is not enough to attract the desired clientele; there is also the need to develop mechanisms for greater collaboration between the various actors involved in immigration issues, including provinces, Canadian municipalities, the educational institutions and economic stakeholders.

Melissa Fama reports on Canada's priority of becoming a prime destination for students from abroad. Through its recruitment policies and special initiatives, Canada has several advantages but faces stronger international competition from several countries, including Australia and Great Britain. Naomi Alboim's article underscores the changes in Canadian policy over the last decade designed to facilitate the integration of international students, including important changes to provincial policies. Alboim notes, however, that in this context of devolution of powers within the federation and the involvement of new players, we must improve our ability to measure the effects of these new policies and initiatives. Sophia Lowe notes that in recent years, Canada has innovated in its recruitment strategies for international students but has had difficulty retaining them once their studies are completed. By developing a migration model for the transition between temporary to permanent, Canada is, in part, responding to the challenge. According to Lowe, the real issue remains that of the transition from school to employment, a process that requires constant collaboration between key stakeholders in immigration.

Several articles strive to define the issue of the integration of international students in the context of university studies and the openness of the host community. Abu Kamara and Liesl L. Gambold present the results of a student survey conducted at Dalhousie University in Halifax. The students surveyed reported experiencing adjustment difficulties and a lack of academic support services from the institution. They also highlight issues of discrimination by the host community. Sinziana Chira underlines the importance of the international students dossier in the Atlantic provinces, both in terms of the growth in the number of students and the economic benefits to these regions. An interesting observation is that of the differing significance of internationalization, from the point of view of universities and immigration actors. Her study focuses on the two main campuses situated in the city of Halifax. William Dunn and Claude Olivier take into account the relationship between international students and local students, assessing the degree of cultural openness and inclusion in Canadian universities. Their research makes clear the importance of informal networks for intercultural exchange and the importance of shared responsibility from all parties for successful integration. Matthew Wade and Chedly Belkhodja observe the same type of situation within the context of the regionalization of immigration in a francophone environment. It is not easy to compete with large universities in the cities, but the small community makes its mark around certain "advantages": a safe environment for students who leave their families and their country, the distance from major cities and thus distance from potential distractions, a lower cost of living, an easier way to develop social relationships. Their research highlights that the university no longer limits itself to the recruitment and integration of students in the university milieu, but also takes on the issue of graduate students' retention in sectors where there is a lack of skilled labour. Finally, Sonja Knutson presents a good example of collaboration between Memorial University and the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, particularly in relation to a shared interest in developing common goals with respect to the ability to retain international students in that province.

In Canada, the economic integration of immigrants remains a major concern, particularly with respect to non-recognition of foreign credentials. For some, the solution is to prioritize the category of international students. Maude Boulet and Brahim Boudarbat note, however, that graduate students living in Canada also experience difficulties in obtaining employment in their field of study, are underpaid and experience dissatisfaction with their employment after the completion of their studies. Their survey of immigrants who graduated from a Canadian public establishment shows that age is crucial to the success of immigrants in the labour market, and that the kind of job offered to immigrants, is not dependent only on the fact that they have graduated from a Canadian post-secondary institution.

The second section of this volume looks at international students in Australia, Singapore and Western Europe. In terms of student enrolment and retention policies favouring foreign graduates, Australia has become

an international benchmark. Lesleyanne Hawthorne traces this evolution, beginning with the Conservative government of John Howard. On the one hand, she notes that international students have benefited from an advantageous migration system allowing them to pursue their studies and integrate themselves economically. On the other hand, she highlights the adjustments to the student selection system towards a more rigorous, transparent and selective mechanism, the "two-step migration" model, which favours a clientele that can make a rapid transition to the status of residency. Although Australia has somewhat slowed down, the fact remains that international graduate students benefit from the initiatives seeking to keep them in the country. The article by Kate Golebiowska touches upon student migration from the dynamics of regional universities and policy initiatives on the regionalization of immigration. Selina Lim discusses the background of an emerging neighbouring country, Singapore. The economic hub of Southeast Asia, Singapore is positioning itself as a new destination for students from neighbouring countries and hopes to integrate them to the labour market. Since 2002, the establishment of a global strategy by the state has allowed for the targeting of foreign students and the internationalization of education in Singapore.

In recent years, although public debate continues to focus on questions of identity and security, the situation in Europe is moving rapidly towards the consideration of economic immigration. Hans de Wit presents an insightful overview of this new continental dynamic of student mobility and the climate of competition in terms of attracting international students. According to the author, a gap remains between the immigration policies of European countries, Canada and Australia, but the European continent is adjusting to the reality of economic migration. It is within this framework that the Netherlands wants to become a preferred destination for students from abroad. Neil Kemp continues with the case of Great Britain. With its tradition of internationalizing graduate studies, the large number of students and the diversity of countries and programmes offered, the UK has long stood out in the area of student mobility. More recently, the Labour government developed policies seeking to bring students a bit closer to qualified migrants. Neil Kemp notes however, with some concerns, the more restrictive policies adopted by the Cameron government, which seek to reduce the intake of students. With this logic, Kemp argues that student mobility will simply move elsewhere. This is somewhat the reality in Germany where Niels Klabunde and Basak Bilecen-Süoglu present recent initiatives aiming to make the country the European leader in terms of international student numbers as well as policies oriented towards issues of retention and access to employment.

Three articles highlight the case of Switzerland. Claudio Bolzman presents the main features of the Swiss policy for international students, noting especially the paradoxical situation of encouraging students from certain neighbouring countries, such as Germany and Austria, but not those from the south. The author stresses, however, new initiatives which promise to make Switzerland more welcoming to graduate students. Allessandra Gerber and Aline Gohard Radenkovic offer another perspective that captures a few integration trajectories of international students in the medium-sized city of Freiburg. Adopting a qualitative approach, the authors emphasize two specific aspects: the way for young migrants to reconstruct a space through various processes, and the ability to themselves become the link between new students and the host society. The research of Ibrahima Guissé illustrates another paradox found in Switzerland. By following the journey of African students, Guissé notes that given the rigidity of the Swiss model in terms of access to citizenship and the job market, graduates choose to continue their professional career in Canada, a country considered to be more welcoming.

Finally, the case of Portugal shows a different migration dynamic of foreign students in Europe. Maria Lucinda Fonseca and Maria-Joao Horta stress that this country of emigration has become, since the early 1990s, an immigrant society welcoming migrants from former colonies and new immigration from countries of Eastern Europe. Portuguese universities mainly welcome students from Brazil, Angola and Cape Verde.

In another European example, Christof Van Mol examines the consequences of European students' mobility within the ERASMUS program. His work focuses on the question of whether the initial mobility afforded by the program produces subsequent migration trends elsewhere in Europe.

Finally, the contributions of Stéphanie Garneau and Sylvie Mazzella address issues of internationalization of student mobility and the liberalization of higher education in Europe, Canada and North Africa. According to Stéphanie Garneau, the emergence of discourses of internationalization and mobility of students fit well in the new climate of competition among host countries. Her research examines the varied and unequal mobilities between privileged areas such as French students in Quebec and limited mobility spaces for disabled students in the Maghreb. Sylvie Mazzella's contribution focuses on the case of Tunisia. Here, public higher education has lost ground against new offers of private education and a more competitive curriculum in tune with the global reality. Many graduates of public universities have difficulty entering the job market. This also explains the revolt of

the Tunisian youth on December 17, 2010, which led to the downfall of Zine Abidine Ben Ali's regime. Within this framework of liberal globalization, Tunisia has besome a hub on the African continent offering specialized training to young people who can afford to pay, meanwhile managing to attract international students from southern countries.

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