

Entraînement à la colle type CCINP (article audio)

Forget “developing” poor countries, it’s time to “de-develop” rich countries

Introduction (amorce non facultative + présentation de la source et de la date + présentation de la thèse de l’auteur ou de l’enjeu de l’article + présentation du plan du résumé) : Humankind is now confronted with one of the most daunting tasks it has ever faced : tackling climate change and ending poverty at the same time. To do so, many strategies have been put forward and tested. However, this article from The Guardian published in September 2015 questions their efficiency and instead suggests resorting to an unconventional method i.e. degrowth in rich countries instead of more growth in poorer ones. The journalist first sets out the traditional methods, then explains why they don’t work and what they should be replaced with and finally expounds on arguments to prove their point¹.

I. The traditional methods

- The article was published the same week as a UN gathering in New York, aimed at finding solutions to end poverty by 2030.
- For the journalist, what is presented as a milestone is actually the same old tune: growth. Some economists promote growth, while others — considered more progressive — argue that wealth should be more evenly distributed by taking from the richest to give to the poorest.
- According to the journalist, neither approach is adequate.

II. Why they don’t work and what they should be replaced with

- The journalist explains that growth has been the main strategy for 70 years, and that it has proven inefficient.
- Since 1980, growth has been exponential, and yet poverty has continued to increase. Over the past 35 years, the number of people living on less than \$5 a day has risen by over 1.1 billion — 17 times the population of the UK. According to the journalist, this shows that the trickle-down effect is not working (trickle-down effect = the idea that making the rich richer would eventually benefit the poorest).
- In addition, the journalist points out that each year we consume 50% more than what the planet can sustainably provide.
- Overconsumption in rich countries is presented as one of the main reasons for this global crisis.

III. Arguments in favour of de-development

- Instead, the journalist suggests going backwards rather than forwards, and learning from countries that are considered poor in terms of income and consumption, but where people live happily and enjoy long life expectancy.
- The journalist raises the question: how much do people really need to live long and happy lives?
- To answer this, they compare life expectancy and GDP per capita in several countries. For example, in the US, people live an average of 79 years and the GDP per capita is \$53,000. However, some countries have the same life expectancy with a much lower GDP — such as Cuba, where the GDP per capita is \$6,000. The same goes for countries like Peru, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, or Tunisia.
- Another indicator is happiness and well-being: some low- and middle-income countries score highly.
- Costa Rica epitomizes this: it is one of the happiest countries in the world, where people live long lives, and yet income per person is only 25% of that in the US.

Conclusion qui sert de transition vers votre problématique (la transition est obligatoire et vous permet de vérifier la cohérence entre le texte et votre problématique) : To conclude, the journalist is convinced that life expectancy and happiness are not directly linked to the wealth of a country and that, as a consequence, rich countries should learn from poorer countries and de-develop in order to tackle the problems of poverty and climate change. However this statement raises the following question : To what extent is de-development a necessary and feasible strategy, as suggested by the journalist?

¹ Le plan du résumé est généralement globalement celui de l’article. Vous pouvez faire quelques petites modifications. Si vous ne trouvez pas de structure interne à l’article, vous pouvez suivre la vôtre.

I. De-development as a necessary response to global challenges

- There is growing evidence that continuous economic growth, especially in developed countries, contributes significantly to environmental destruction and global inequality. The wealthiest nations are responsible for the majority of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Meanwhile, many lower-income countries contribute far less to climate change yet suffer the most from its effects. The wealthiest 10% of the global population are responsible for nearly 50% of all carbon emissions, while the poorest 50% produce only around 10%.
- From a social perspective, growth alone has not resolved poverty—and in many cases has made it worse. The period of greatest economic expansion since the 1980s has coincided with a rise in wealth concentration, as seen in countries like the United States, where GDP has grown steadily while inequality and poverty have persisted or even increased.

II. The challenges and limitations of feasibility

Ethical :

- What about poor countries? Is it really appropriate to ask them to remain as poor as they are now?

Economic :

- What about jobs in the sectors which would be affected? Role of growth in funding public services and supporting social welfare ?
- Would this lead us to a redefinition of work and its place in our society where full employment seems to be the ultimate goal?

Political :

- What candidate would run the risk of basing their programme/manifesto on such a revolutionary and contentious idea ?
- What would it take to change people's behaviour? Laws? Incentives and penalties?

Changing mindsets :

- Would people be ready to ditch their old habits ? It seems already difficult to convince some people to adopt responsible behaviours to protect the planet even if it doesn't demand much from them (ex : sorting waste, reducing car use...) so is such a radical change even slightly likely to happen?
- In particular, this could give rise to generational conflict, with older people being more incline/liable to live on less than new generations who have always lived in over-consumption and new technology.

III. A realistic and balanced alternative: selective degrowth and global justice

- A more targeted strategy: selective degrowth (= focuses on reducing or eliminating sectors of the economy that are ecologically destructive or socially unnecessary, while reinforcing those that promote well-being, sustainability, and equity)
- *Example :* the aviation industry (just 1% of people cause 50% of commercial aviation emissions. A selective degrowth strategy might involve reducing subsidies for air travel, banning short-haul domestic flights when train alternatives exist (as France has recently begun to do), or investing in night trains and low-emission alternatives.)
- *Example 2 :* the fast fashion industry. Governments could introduce taxes on textile waste, regulate production volumes, or incentivize slow fashion through public procurement and education campaigns that encourage reuse, repair, and second-hand shopping.
- Selective degrowth also involves shifting work culture.
- Lastly, wealthy nations have a role to play in global climate justice. Rich countries can help poorer nations leapfrog polluting development stages by investing in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and resilient infrastructure.

Conclusion du commentaire : Although de-development seems to be the perfect solution to protect our planet, its feasibility remains questionable. In this broader vision, selective degrowth is not about “going backwards” but moving forward differently: abandoning harmful habits while nurturing systems that support both people and the planet.