

**Multiculturalism, Market-Driven Immigration, and the Immigrant  
“Others”: Media Representations of Immigration and Refugee Policies  
in Canada**

**by**

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## **ABSTRACT**

# **MULTICULTURALISM, MARKET-DRIVEN IMMIGRATION, AND THE IMMIGRANT "OTHERS": MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE POLICIES IN CANADA**

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The term “multiculturalism” has been deployed in public and political discourses with its meanings and ideological assumptions often not being explicitly stated or critically discussed. Furthermore, multiculturalism is intricately intertwined with immigration and ethnocultural diversity issues in Canada. The current Conservative federal government has implemented extensive overhaul to immigration policies since 2008. Based on a social constructionist framework, the aims of this dissertation are: 1) to present a critical discussion on Canadian multiculturalism, its meanings, and its connection to immigration and diversity issues historically and in recent years, and 2) to examine empirically how recent immigration and refugee policy changes have been represented in the media, with an analytical emphasis on the portrayal of immigrants and refugees.

The first aim is accomplished in the introduction. I first briefly review the historical context of immigration regulations and the institutionalisation of official multiculturalism. I then present multiculturalism as being situated in liberal democratic ideology, and as lived ideology or “a society’s way of life” and “common sense” (Billig

et al., 1998). Finally, I conceptualise multiculturalism as a “contested space” (George, 2011) where political, academic, and public discourses intersect, and discuss some of the prevalent arguments and claims made about its societal impact.

For the second aim, I employ a discursive analytical approach to examine media representations of the major immigration policy changes introduced in 2012 after the Conservative Party won its first majority government. I demonstrate how the ample coverage of immigration and refugee frauds constructs an immigration and refugee system in crisis, which enables policy changes for more restrictive immigration and refugee admission to be positioned as pragmatic, rational, and commonsensical interventions. Moreover, I argue that the prevailing immigration discourse is based on neoliberal ideology and market logic, which selects the “right” immigrants in economic terms and gives a primary role to the market in this selection. The national inclusion and belonging of immigrants is, thus, reduced to their economic contributions, while immigrants are simultaneously cast as the non-contributing internal “others.” Shifting representations of Canadian identity are variously mobilised to support or contest the emphasis on market-driven immigration.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## Overview of Thesis

Multiculturalism has been described as a term in modern social and political discourses with “an uncanny knack for meaning different things to different people in different contexts” (Fleras & Elliott, 2002, p. 15). It has been used to refer to demographic accounts of ethnocultural diversity, a political framework initiated by the state to accommodate and manage diversity, or the practical applications of such a framework across a broad range of social institutions. It is also “a public discourse adopted by governments or institutions to signal recognition and valorization of diversity. . . . without necessarily being tied to laws or institutional support” (Bloemraad & Wright, 2014, p. S299). Moreover, it is a term that has been deployed in public and political discourses with its meanings and ideological assumptions often not being explicitly stated or critically examined. In 1971, Canada became the first country in the world to institutionalise multiculturalism as an official policy for society in terms of accommodation and management of ethnocultural diversity. According to Winter (2011), policies and laws are “part and parcel of a normative project for society building, *un projet de société*. As such, multiculturalism policy is integrated into a larger legal and discursive framework about what it means to be Canadian, and what Canadians want their society to be” (p. 16).

For George (2011), multiculturalism is “a contested space where legal and policy frameworks intersect with immigration policies, settlement services, and hegemonic discourses of nation-building” (p. 462). Intrigued with the notion of multiculturalism as “a contested space,” I approached my thesis research with the purpose of examining the

intricate and contentious intertwining of multiculturalism, immigration and ethnocultural diversity issues in the Canadian context. My research interests were further driven by news about the extensive overhaul to immigration and refugee policies that the current Conservative federal government had been implementing since 2008. The Conservative Party came to power as a minority federal government in 2006 and won its first majority government in 2011. My chief concerns were to find out what political measures had been introduced as part of the overhaul and reasons for doing so, and to understand the ways in which immigrants were talked about and portrayed in the current sociopolitical context.

The aims of my thesis are: 1) to present a critical discussion of Canadian multiculturalism, its diverse meanings and ideological assumptions, and its connection to immigration and ethnocultural diversity issues historically and in recent years; and 2) to provide an empirical analysis of how immigration and refugee policy changes have been constructed, and how immigrants and refugees have been portrayed, in the mainstream Canadian press. I limited my empirical study to media coverage in 2012, the year after the Conservative government won its majority government and during which numerous major immigration and refugee policy changes were introduced. I chose to examine media representations rather than the policies themselves for two reasons. First, it was through the media that I knew about the changes being made to immigration regulations. In this respect, the media could provide an important and readily accessible site for people's encounter with and understanding of immigration policies and related issues. Secondly, it has been argued that the media provide an important site for the production, reproduction and contestation of ideas and perspectives on sociopolitical issues (Fowler,

1991; Bauder, 2008). To the extent that immigration policies had been reported and deliberated in the media during the sampling year, an analysis of the media could reveal more diverse and competing perspectives than an examination of the policies themselves could.

In terms of theoretical orientation, I identify my thesis as being broadly guided by a social constructionist epistemology. Social constructionism posits events, objects and categories that are usually taken-for-granted in daily life to be socially constructed and situated in particular historical, sociocultural and geographical contexts (Gergen, 1985, 2001). It regards language as social practice, and emphasises the ways in which language is both constitutive of reality and performative since people use language to perform and achieve certain actions and effects. Engaging with my research through a social constructionist lens allows me to present and critically discuss multiculturalism in terms of a “contested space” that is open to multiple, and often contradictory, perspectives and interpretations. As such, I conceptualise the “contested space” of multiculturalism as being produced and sustained mainly by language, that is, by the ways people speak about and frame what multiculturalism is and what its problems, issues, and societal impact are. Taking a social constructionist lens also allows me to examine empirically the rhetoric on immigration and immigration policies in the daily press. More details about the theoretical and methodological implications of social constructionism are provided in the second chapter, in which I present and discuss the representations of recent changes in immigration and refugee policies in the Canadian press.

The first aim of the thesis is accomplished in this introductory chapter in which I provide a critical discussion of Canadian multiculturalism. I begin with an overview of

the historical connection between official multiculturalism and immigration in the next section of the chapter. I then present multiculturalism ideology as situated in the broader framework of liberal democracy and as lived ideology or “a society’s way of life” and “common sense” (Billig et al., 1998). Finally, I conceptualise multiculturalism as “a contested space” where the politics intersect with academic and public discourses of diversity as a result of immigration, and review and discuss some of the prevalent, and often contradictory, arguments and claims that have been made regarding the societal impact of multiculturalism. This chapter also serves to provide a historicised account of the sociopolitical context for the empirical study, in which I examine how immigration and refugee policy changes introduced in 2012 by the federal government have been represented in mainstream daily press and how immigrants are portrayed in this sociopolitical context.

I present the empirical study in the second chapter. In my analysis, I illustrate how the policy changes have been constructed as pragmatic, rational and commonsensical interventions to either respond to a (constructed) crisis of rampant frauds or transform the immigration system into being more flexible and just-in-time to the economic needs of Canada. Furthermore, I argue that the prevailing immigrant discourse in the media is based on neoliberal ideology and market logic. In this discourse, the private business sector is given a primary role in the selection for the “right” immigrants who are independent and self-sufficient. The national inclusion and belonging of immigrants is thus reduced to mainly economic terms, while the selection of the “right” immigrants is premised on casting immigrants living in Canada as the internal “others” who lack economic participation and impose an economic burden on society. Overall, social

categorisation of immigrants into “right” (and, thus, “good”) and “bad,” and refugee claimants into “genuine” and “bogus,” is deployed to restrict the admission of those considered a burden on public resources (i.e., refugees, family-class immigrants). I also examine alternative perspectives present in the media which often criticises the policy changes as damaging to Canada’s reputation and being short-sighted, favouring immediate labour market needs over long-term nation building. In the third chapter, I conclude with a discussion of some of the implications of the policy changes and the prevailing market-driven immigrant discourse.

### **Immigration and Institutionalisation of Official Multiculturalism**

In 1971, the proclamation of multiculturalism as an official blueprint for Canadian society by Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau to the House of Commons marked Canada as the first country to adopt multiculturalism at a policy level. Official multiculturalism was affirmed legislatively in the *1988 Multiculturalism Act* and constitutionally in Section 27 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedom* in the *1982 Constitution Act*. In this section of the introductory chapter, I provide a brief historical review of the evolution of immigration regulations and the institutionalisation of official multiculturalism for Canadian society. I begin by outlining how immigration in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century had been structured along explicit racial and ethnic discriminatory lines until the implementation of the point system in 1967 to meet economic demands for cheap labour and exclude immigrant groups considered to be undesirable from permanent settlement. The point system was introduced to shift the selection of immigrants based on race and ethnicity to individual abilities. I then briefly review some of the historical tension between different sociocultural groups that had led

to the establishment of an official multiculturalism within a bilingual framework. The purpose of this section is to provide a review of the historical background for later sections which discuss the ideology and national identity of a multicultural country, and the notion of multiculturalism as a “contested space” replete with diverse perspectives, claims and arguments.

**Immigration in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.** As a settler country, Canadian immigration has long been aligned with national interests to meet long-term demographic expansion and economic development, as well as short-term labour market needs (Green & Green, 2004; Walsh, 2008). Prior to the introduction of the *1967 Immigration Act*, immigration was based on a system with an explicit racial and ethnic discriminatory component that actively recruited Anglo-Saxon Protestant immigrants from traditionally preferred source countries, including Britain and several Northwestern European countries, and the United States (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002; Anwar, 2014; Green & Green, 2004). Immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe were also recruited to raise the number of farmers in the western provinces, particularly during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These immigrants were admitted under more stringent regulations than the preferred groups. The admission of immigrants from countries outside of Europe was permitted to fulfill specific low-skilled labour needs. However, elaborate racial practices were established to severely restrict immigration and prevent permanent settlement of the “despised groups,” Blacks and Asians, who “were frequently constructed as morally depraved” (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002, p. 38).

Some of the racial practices included immigration regulation that was used to position Blacks as being morally inferior and biologically unsuitable for Canadian

society, the head tax against Chinese immigrants and the continuous journey regulation against Indian immigrants. Section 38 of the *1910 Immigration Act* granted the government the power to deny entry of immigrants of "any race deemed unsuited to the climate or requirements of Canada, or of immigrants of any specified class, occupation or character" (as cited in Calliste, 1993/1994, p. 133). It was used strategically to position Blacks as being morally inferior and biologically unsuitable for the climate of the country, incapable of adapting to and succeeding in Canadian society, and liable to become "public charges" that would drain public resources (Calliste, 1993/1994). When Black farmers started to flee Oklahoma due to racism to settle in Alberta and Saskatchewan in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, various strategies were deployed to prevent their immigration. These included vigorous medical examinations at the border and the station of a government agent and later a Black medical doctor in Oklahoma to dissuade Black Oklahomans from immigrating for reasons of harsh climate and emerging hostility and prejudice in Western Canada as a result of their arrival, as well as by suggesting that they were victims of a scheme engineered by a major railway company to get their land for less (Shepard, 1983).

Other discriminatory measures included the head tax and the continuous journey regulation that were implemented against Chinese and Indian immigration, respectively. The head tax was imposed on Chinese railway workers and other Chinese immigrants after the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which was increased from \$50 in 1885 to \$100 in 1900 and finally \$500 in 1903. The prohibitive cost of \$500 was estimated to be equivalent to two years of wage for Chinese immigrant labourers at the time and had been argued to be a deliberate attempt to prevent the establishment of

Chinese-Canadian families by making it almost impossible for women and children to join their husbands and fathers (James, 2004). The head tax was replaced in 1924 with the Chinese Immigration Act, known as the Chinese Exclusion Act nowadays, which imposed an almost total ban on Chinese immigration except for diplomats, investors and students, and remained in practice until 1947. The continuous journey regulation was implemented in 1908 to restrict immigration from India by prohibiting the landing of immigrants who did not arrive on an uninterrupted journey from the countries of which they were natives or citizens. While the regulation did not specify exclusion based on race, ethnicity or nationality, its establishment effectively curtailed immigration from India which had no direct passage route to Canada (Sharma, 1982). A landing fee of \$200 was also required of Indian immigrants. Similar to the head tax, the regulation and landing fee made it almost impossible for Indian immigrants to be with their family and establish a family life in Canada.

The Liberal Prime Minister Mackenzie King's speech to the House of Commons in 1947 asserted immigration's long-term benefits of promoting population growth and economic development for the country, but simultaneously indicated,

People of Canada do not wish, as a result of mass immigration, to make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population. Large-scale immigration from the Orient would change the fundamental composition of the Canadian population. Any considerable Oriental immigration would, moreover, be certain to give rise to social and economic problems of a character that might lead to serious difficulties in the field of international relations (quoted in Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002, p. 40; Green & Green, 2004, p. 112).

The excerpt is notable for normalising selective immigration based on racial and ethnic origins as a political decision that acted on behalf of “people of Canada” in order to maintain “the fundamental composition of the Canadian population” as a predominantly white European settler country. It highlights the construction of “Oriental immigration” at the time as being socially and economically problematic for Canadian society to justify restricting the admission and sponsorship rights of non-white immigrants. Overall, immigration regulations during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century were structured paradoxically to meet economic demands for cheap labour and a political objective to maintain the national identity of a white settler country by excluding non-whites from permanent settlement and preventing their establishment of a family life.

#### **The Point System and Historical Tension behind Official Multiculturalism.**

The *1967 Immigration Act* brought into effect the point-based assessment system that shifted the emphasis from race and ethnicity to individual abilities using factors that were deemed to be universal, objective and fair, including education, language proficiency in English or French, age and work experience (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002; Green & Green, 2004). According to Triadafilopoulos (2010), the post-World War II era provided a global normative context that had a profound effect on immigration policies for Canada and the United States. The consequences of the war and other international social movements, including the discrediting of scientific racism, decolonisation and emergence of international human rights, problematised policy making that was structured along racial and ethnic discriminatory lines, even though the subsequent shifts in immigration policies were subjected to different political dynamics in the two countries. In Canada, critics and advocacy groups challenged the federal government’s international

commitment to human rights and liberal-democratic values while continuing racial discrimination in policy. The point system was implemented in 1967 and recognised in the *Immigration Act* in 1976, and three main categories of admission were established: skilled immigrants, family-class immigrants, and refugees and people admitted for humanitarian reasons (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002). The use of the point system to attract and assess skilled immigrants has remained in practice since then. The implementation of the point system changed the pattern of immigration from mostly European countries to those outside of Europe so that, by 1971, 36 percent of total immigration came from the so-called “Third World” and, by 1980, the figure rose to 81 percent (Triadafilopoulos, 2010).<sup>1</sup>

Abu-Laban (1998) described Trudeau’s 1971 proclamation of a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework as having “registered a notable change in the Canadian symbolic order” (p. 192). Politically, it reaffirmed the *1969 Official Languages Act* which declared Canada as a bilingual nation of English and French. However, the decision to establish a policy of multiculturalism to take into account the cultural contributions of “other ethnic groups” departed from the original intention of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (the B & B Commission) for a bicultural framework. The B & B Commission was established by former Liberal Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson to inquire into the relation between the British and French

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<sup>1</sup> According to Statistics Canada’s 2011 National Household Survey, it was estimated that 20.6% of the total population were foreign-born and 19.1% of the total population identified themselves as a member of a visible minority group. Asia, including the Middle East, was the largest source of immigrants with a slightly increasing share from Africa, the Caribbean, Central and South America during the past five years. The Canadian Employment Equity Act defines members of visible minorities as “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.”

groups. According to Fleras and Elliott (2002), official multiculturalism was created to meet conflicting political interests including to counterbalance perceived favouritism toward Quebec among the Western provinces, to foreclose political unrest and self-autonomy claims of Aboriginal peoples, and to placate the demands of various white European ethnic groups, including the Ukrainians and Germans, who feared that a focus on biculturalism and bilingualism would marginalise their sociopolitical standing (see also Haque, 2014). Wood and Gilbert (2005) claimed that Trudeau's primary concern in 1971 was the tense relation between the British and French groups, which was portrayed as a battle between Quebec and the rest of Canada, and the policy was "a politically necessary addition to a national bilingual policy introduced to recognize Francophones and Quebec" (p. 682). For various politicians and writers in Quebec, the introduction of a multiculturalism policy was interpreted as a strategic move to intrude in the province's internal affairs, deny special rights to Quebecois as one of the two founding peoples and relegate their status to "the same formal space in the federation as other ethno-cultural groupings" (Gagnon, 2000, p. 20). Likewise, Taylor (2012) asserted that the "story" surrounding multiculturalism in the 60's and 70's could not take hold within the francophone community in Quebec, who had viewed their culture and language as being under threat of assimilation into the British majority.

Fleras and Elliott (2002) stated, "Official multiculturalism was introduced largely as a political exercise – as a pragmatic political program rather than an exercise in humanitarianism. It was a response to pressing political conundrums rather than a compassionate nod to social justice" (p. 62). Nonetheless, the establishment of official multiculturalism constitutionally enshrines a national image of Canada as a land of

opportunity and equality that “affirm[s] the value and dignity of all Canadian citizens regardless of their racial or ethnic origins, their language, or their religious affiliation” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012).

Thus far, I have provided a brief historical account of how immigration issues and other domestic and international forces had led to the implementation of the point system in 1967 and the establishment of an official multiculturalism in 1971. Even though multiculturalism has been referred to and endorsed as a distinctive aspect of Canadian identity publically and politically (Adam, 2007; Reitz, 2004; Winter, 2007), the ideology underlying Canadian multiculturalism is often not discussed in political or public discourses. This is the topic I will turn to in the next section.

### **The Ideology of Multiculturalism**

Ideology is another term in the social sciences that has been muddied by “its semantic promiscuity” (Gerring, 1997, p. 957). In his “definitional analysis” of the usage of the term by various social theorists, linguists and political philosophers, Gerring (1997) observed that the definitions of and approaches to ideology vary tremendously (e.g., by whether ideology is located in the mind, behaviour or language; being tied to social class as in Marxist tradition; being used to refer to politics, power or the world-at-large as a belief-system or cultural system; being identified as the hallmark of a group in a particular strategic position to sustain or protest relations of power). He argued that, despite the multitude of conceptualisations, different notions of ideology have in common that they refer to “a set of idea-elements that are bound together” (p. 980) with a degree of internal coherence, as well as a degree of stability through time and external contrast with competing sets of ideas. Knight (2006) also proposed coherence, stability and

contrast as the essential core components of the conceptualisation of ideology in political science. For social psychologists and critical linguistics who follow a discourse or critical discourse analytical approach, ideology is often conceptualised as socially shared representations of some aspect of the world that may become unchallenged and normalised as common sense and as social reality (e.g., Billig et al., 1988; Fairclough, 1985)

In this section, I will present and discuss two perspectives on the ideology underlying Canadian multiculturalism. I first situate Canadian multiculturalism as a political framework that is embedded within a broader political ideology of liberal democracy. According to Kymlicka (2007), political theories about multiculturalism as conceptualised by Western political scientists have also tended to be guided and constrained by a liberal democratic framework. Next, based on the concept of “lived ideology” by Billig et al. (1988) which refers to “a society’s way of life” and “common sense,” I discuss how the ideological representation of Canada as an egalitarian multicultural country that values diversity and tolerates cultural differences has been normalised and accepted as common sense. This representation, however, has been criticised as depoliticising social relations as seemingly power-neutral and value-free by critical race and feminist researchers (e.g., Bannerji, 2000; Haque, 2010).

**Multiculturalism and Liberal Democratic Ideology.** I will discuss below the notion of Canadian multiculturalism as a political framework that is situated within a broader political ideology of Western liberal democracy, which upholds individual rights and freedoms and equality before the law. According to Parekh (1992, p. 161), liberal democracy is “democracy [as a form of government] defined and structured within the

limits set by liberalism,” which takes the individual as “the ultimate and irreducible unit of society” and, thus, is ontologically prior to society. Liberalism conceptualises the individual as a bounded self who is distinct from others and nature, is autonomous and self-determining, and makes his or her own moral choices and forms own beliefs. All individuals are free and equal and no one can have authority over them without their consent. For liberalism, the government’s primary task is not to intervene and pursue large-scale social programmes of its own to radically transform the social order or the economy, but to create a system that facilitates its people’s liberties as self-determining agents in the pursuit of their self-chosen goals and protects their basic rights (e.g., freedom of expression, right to life, liberty and security of person, equal recognition and protection before the law). But a liberal polity also needs some mechanism by which the people confer to the government the authority to govern them. Therefore, democracy specifies its governmental structure including “who constitutes the legitimate government and wields the authority inherent in the state (the elected representatives), how they acquire authority (free elections, choice between parties) and how they are to exercise it (in broad harmony with public opinion)” (p. 167). The description here provides only a broad account of the basic features of liberal democracy, which has taken different forms in different nations.

A liberal democratic ideology is implicit in Trudeau’s 1971 statement for a multiculturalism policy within a bilingual framework:

The individual's freedom would be hampered if he were locked for life within a particular cultural compartment by the accident of birth or language. It is vital, therefore, that every Canadian, whatever his ethnic origin, be given a chance to

learn at least one of the two languages in which his country conducts, its official business and its politics.

A policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework commends itself to the government as the most suitable means of assuring the cultural freedom of Canadians. Such a policy should help break down discriminatory attitudes and cultural jealousies. National unity if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense must be founded on confidence in one's own individual identity; out of this can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions (Canada History, 2013).

The emphases on “individual’s freedom” and “confidence in one’s own individual identity” point to the liberal conceptualisation of the individual as the fundamental unit of society whose freedoms and rights must be safeguarded. In this respect, ethnocultural and religious practices of minority groups are acknowledged and supported to the extent that they are deemed to not compromise individual rights and freedoms. Political theorists and political scientists have also tended to conceptualise Canadian multiculturalism based on the premise of liberal democratic ideology (Kymlicka, 2007). For example, Nesbitt-Larking’s (2008) account of a “deep multiculturalism,” grounded on “mutually respectful dialogue” between different ethnocultural and religious communities, espouses core liberal democratic values of individual rights and freedoms while normatively urges Canada as a receiving society “to be prepared to question its own core values, its structured inequities, to acknowledge its own history and if necessary, to turn itself upside down” (p. 352). In Nesbitt-Larking’s arguments, liberal democratic values are set

outside the boundaries of being open to debate and are associated with the notions of being modern, universal and rational.

**Multiculturalism as Lived Ideology.** I have illustrated that Canadian multiculturalism is politically embedded within a broader framework of liberal democratic ideology. Below, I will discuss multiculturalism in the sense of a “lived ideology” (Billig et al., 1988): an ideological/commonsensical representation of Canada as an egalitarian multicultural country that is open to and values diversity and tolerates cultural differences.<sup>2</sup>

The common-sense aspect of ideology has been raised by social psychologists and researchers in critical linguistics who follow a discourse or critical discourse analytical approach (e.g., Billig et al., 1988; Fairclough, 1985; van Dijk, 2006). The theoretical and analytical emphases are on ideology as socially shared representations and ideas that are embedded in and manifested through linguistic means, rather than individual internal attitudes and beliefs. In general, critical discourse analysts view ideologies as theoretically important for understanding social institutions and relations of power and

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<sup>2</sup> While other provinces have formally endorsed some form of multiculturalism following the federal model, Quebec has adopted a model of interculturalism (Dewing, 2009; Fleras & Elliott, 2002). Instead of a cultural mosaic, interculturalism proposes an “arboreal” model “whose roots must be nourished in francophone soil if the entire tree is to survive” (Fleras & Elliott, 2002, p. 78). Interculturalism primarily concerns itself with integrating immigrants into French language and culture whose cultural primacy in the province is not open for public debate. Taylor (2012) argued that the distinction between Quebec interculturalism and federal multiculturalism lies less in concrete policies, but in “the story that we tell about where we are coming from and where we are going” (p.413). Nootens (2014) also suggested that the two models are grounded in the same principles of respect for diversity, commitment to liberal rights and values, and integration into a common public culture and identity. The tension rests with the clash between the majority and minority national groups, with the two models having been founded and developed based on different views, experiences and representations. While multiculturalism began with a concern to recognise white European ethnic groups, interculturalism was developed by a minority national group concerned with the survival and flourishing of its own culture and language, as well as the protection of its autonomy.

control. Fairclough (1985) proposed that social institutions contain diverse “ideological-discursive formations” (IDF) that position subjects and frame social interactions in particular ways. Each IDF forms a sort of “speech community” whose members are simultaneously enabled and constrained by particular “ways of talking” or discursive norms for social interaction. These discursive norms are based upon particular “ways of seeing” or ideological representations of some aspect of the world. According to Fairclough, social institutions are pluralistic to an extent that they provide alternative discursive norms and ideological representations, and it is generally possible to identify one dominant IDF and one or more dominated IDFs in a social institution. In this respect,

Institutional subjects are constructed, in accordance with the norms of an IDF, in subject positions whose ideological underpinnings they may be unaware of. A characteristic of a dominant IDF is the capacity to ‘naturalize’ ideologies, i.e. to win acceptance for them as non-ideological ‘common sense’ (p. 739).

Fairclough posited that the struggle between different “forces” within a social institution revolves around maintaining a dominant IDF in dominance or undermining a dominant IDF in order to replace it with an alternative IDF. The capacity of a social group to maintain an IDF in dominance within a social institution (and even across institutions at a broader societal level) can be expected to be held in conjunction with economic and political power. When an IDF is unchallenged and becomes the hegemonic perspective, or whatever challenges there are do not constitute any threat, its ideological representations become naturalised, opaque, and taken as common-sense.

Similarly, Blommaert and Verschueren (1998) in their study of the discourse of tolerance in Belgium defined ideology as “any constellation of fundamental or

commonsensical, and often normative, ideas and attitudes related to some aspect(s) of social ‘reality’” (p. 25), with ideas and attitudes that are viewed as commonsensical being rarely questioned in a given society or community. In community psychology, Nafstad and colleagues (2009, p. 163) referred to ideology as “the common sense of a society” in their analysis of the shifts in frequencies of key words associated with globalisation and neo-liberal market ideology in Norwegian media from 1984 to 2005. Moreover, the authors indicated that an ideology can become hegemonic when it is to a large extent naturalised and perceived as legitimate by the public. They suggested that a key psychological function of ideology is “not only to produce ideas and to explain reality, but also to legitimize the status quo regarding the natural way of living” (p. 163). Hence, the study of ideology provides an opportunity to understand how people define, experience and accept the status quo of social, material and political life.

Billig et al. (1988) distinguished between intellectual ideology and lived ideology. Intellectual ideology is “a system of political, religious or philosophical thinking and, as such, very much the product of intellectuals or professional thinkers,” whereas lived ideology refers to “a society’s way of life” and “what passes for common sense within a society” (p. 27). Focusing on lived ideology, the authors proposed a dilemmatic approach which assumes the existence of contrary themes: “ideology may produce such conformity, but it can also provide the dilemmatic elements which enable deliberation to occur” (p. 31). Therefore, lived ideology is characterised by internal inconsistency with different and often contradictory viewpoints. This conceptualisation departs from the common conceptualisation by various social and political theorists of ideology as being more or less internally systematised and coherent (e.g., the conceptualisation of liberal

democracy in political science). It also diverges from a Marxist notion of ideology as deceptive, erroneous and reflecting the workings of power of the ruling classes over the thinking of the masses. According to Billig (1991), “modern democracies are places of ‘opinions’; citizens are expected to ‘hold opinions’, ‘have attitudes’, ‘possess views’ on all manner of issues. . . differences of opinion suggest that ordinary life might be filled with the sound of chatter” (pp. 11 – 12). Billig et al. (1988) and Wetherell and Potter (1992) asserted that the ideological dilemmas of common sense provide considerable rhetorical flexibility by enabling the mobilisation and blending of contrary themes and competing arguments to interpret sociopolitical events and make claims and counter-claims. For example, Wetherell and Potter (1992) documented how New Zealanders of European descent mobilised the contrary themes of liberal principles of rights and equality and practical considerations as common-sense reasoning to argue against Māori land claims or Māori language teaching in school.

Based on the notion of lived ideology, I argue that the ideological representation of Canada as a multicultural country that celebrates and values diversity, and tolerates cultural differences, has become a naturalised representation of the country. The seminal work by Benedict Anderson (1983/1991) theorises a nation as “an imagined political community:” “it is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (p. 6). It draws boundaries which are sovereign and limited, and conveys a sense of deep, horizontal comradeship of people with a shared history, culture and identity irrespective of actual inequality and exploitation. The introduction of an official multiculturalism can, thus, be argued as institutionalising and

normalising a way of “imagining” a Canadian community that separates from other national communities, as well as from the “Old Canada” and its racist history, through the invention of a new national narrative and its “foundational myth” (Hall, 1996) of a multicultural country.

As described by Fleras and Elliott (2002), there is a discontinuous formulation of Canada and its national identity into “two solitudes.”

Old Canada is profoundly *not* multicultural – it is even antimulticultural. The Old Canada is rural, homogeneous, European white, inward-looking, and opposed to change. It endorses the values of stability, uniformity, tradition, and acceptance of rules. In contrast, the New Canada is profoundly pro-multicultural in spirit and outlook (p. 32).

The symbolic metaphor of Canada as a cultural mosaic in contrast to the American melting pot has been found to play an important role in media construction of Canadian identity (Winter, 2007). Similarly, Kymlicka (2003) claimed that an important aspect of Canadian identity is to be a young New World free from the old hierarchies and cultural prejudices of the Old-World European states: “it is, Canadians like to think, a classless, meritocratic and democratic society, open to newcomers and to new ideas” (p. 362). This statement speaks to how the image of a multicultural country and its various ideological connotations (e.g., being egalitarian in terms of social relations between groups, open to diversity, tolerant of cultural differences) has become a commonsensical representation of the nation: a representation that has often been accepted and conveyed as a crucial aspect of Canadian identity and a social reality of Canadian society. As remarked by Haque (2010), multiculturalism is “a powerful element of national identity” not just

because of its official status, but “the ease by which Canadians across regional, class, age, racial and ethnic divides will acknowledge this ‘fact’ regardless of their opinions on the merits of such an identity” (p. 81).

The “foundational myth” of a multicultural country with its cultural mosaic fosters the “imagining” of Canadian society as a horizontal space: a notion which has been criticised as depoliticising and rendering the social relations between groups of different cultural backgrounds as seemingly power-neutral and value-free despite the long-standing social dominance of the two founding peoples, albeit one being more dominant, in comparison to other sociocultural groups (e.g., Bannerji, 2000; Day, 2000; Haque, 2010; Winter, 2011). It should be noted that the national representation of being open and tolerant of diversity is not unique to Canada and has been documented in various Western societies such as Belgium (Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998), Britain (Andreouli & Dashtipour, 2014; Bowskill, Lyons, & Coyle, 2007; Lynn & Lea, 2003), and New Zealand (Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Often based on a discourse analytical approach, these studies have examined how the concept of tolerance as a positive attribute of society has been deployed to legitimate existing status quo and justify exclusionary socio-political measures pertaining to minority groups in various contexts (e.g., political speeches, media, interviews).

The naturalised depiction of a multicultural country enjoys great popularity in Canada and public opinion polls tend to show support for multiculturalism (Adams, 2007; Reitz, 2014), as the idea is presented to and understood by the people who are surveyed. Hansen (2014) remarked that public views on multiculturalism have often become a proxy for views on immigration. According to Reitz (2014), findings from

public opinion research suggest that, for many Canadians<sup>3</sup>, support for multiculturalism is an expression of support for the idea of Canada as a country that is welcoming of diversity and committed to immigration, and for multiculturalism as a feature of national identity, with a presumed contrast between the Canadian mosaic and the American melting pot. Furthermore, Reitz contended that this popular version of multiculturalism does not reflect a favourable sentiment toward the recognition of and support for minority cultures, which is one of the central elements outlined in the *Multiculturalism Act*. Rather, the priority is for immigrants to integrate into the mainstream society tinted with a concern that too many immigrants are not adopting Canadian values.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The term, “Canadians,” is not explicitly defined by Reitz (2014) to give an insight into the backgrounds of public opinion poll respondents (e.g., Canadian-born individuals of any ethnic backgrounds, naturalised immigrants). Some critical race and feminist researchers have argued that the category of “Canadians” has been constructed and deployed to refer to white Canadians as “real Canadians” and exclude those of non-white backgrounds (e.g., Arat-Koc, 2005; Bannerji, 2000). In relaying her story as a woman of colour with the legal status of a Canadian citizen, Bannerji (2000, p. 64) made the scathing comment that “the category ‘Canadian’ clearly applied to people who had two things in common: their white skin and their European North American (not Mexican) background.”

<sup>4</sup> In cross-cultural psychological research concerned with immigrant acculturation, the term “integration” is commonly used to refer to the acculturation attitude or strategy of individuals seeking to maintain their heritage culture while being part of the mainstream culture (e.g., Berry, 1980, 1997, 2001; Navas, García, Sánchez, Rojas, Pumares, & Fernández, 2005; Piontkowski, Florack, Hoelker & Obdržálek, 2000; Safdar, Lay, & Struthers, 2003). Often based on Berry’s bi-dimensional framework, a fourfold classification of integration, assimilation, separation and marginalisation is posited along with an assumption of universal psychological processes of acculturation (Berry & Sam, 1997). This research paradigm has been criticised on a number of fronts including the validity of the framework’s constructs and a priori classification assumptions (Rudmin, 2003; see also Schwartz and Zamboanga, 2008, for a study using latent class analysis which extracts six classifications rather than four, and Del Pilar and Udesco, 2004, who argued against the validity of marginalisation as a construct for it implies that a person could live in a society without drawing on either a heritage culture or mainstream culture and, thus, is “cultureless”), as well as its over-emphasis on a decontextualised account of acculturation that does not adequately acknowledge historical variation nor differences in institutional control and negotiation power between various groups in a society (Bowskill et al., 2007; Tseng & Yoshikawa, 2008). Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga and Szapocznik (2010) called for an expanded approach and a rethinking of the universal assumption to take into account how acculturation may differ across migrant groups and receiving societies on various dimensions of cultural values,

## **The “Contested Space” of Multiculturalism: Politics and Discourses of Diversity**

Billig et al. (1988) asserted that lived ideology is filled with “dilemmatic elements” and “contrary themes” that enable deliberation and competing claim-making. Despite the widespread acknowledgement and public acceptance of Canada as a multicultural country, multiculturalism has also generated endless debate involving different, and often contradictory, claims and arguments about its impact on society in political, public and academic arenas. At the centre of this debate are issues of diversity accommodation and management in relation to immigrants and members of visible minority backgrounds. In this section, I provide a review of some of the prevalent claims and arguments that have been made about the societal impact of multiculturalism in academic, political and public arenas. These competing claims and arguments illustrate how multiculturalism could be seen as “a contested space,” where the politics of multiculturalism intersect with academic and public discourses of diversity, social relations and social hierarchies, national security, national identity and the boundaries of belonging. In presenting this review, I attempt to specify and give due credence to the ways different authors have constructed and framed their arguments and claims theoretically or empirically, as well as the ways they have framed and rebutted others’ arguments and claims.

A critique of multiculturalism that comes most strongly from critical race and feminist perspectives concerns its presumed perpetuation of established social hierarchies

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practices and identifications. Furthermore, Bowskill et al. (2007) contended that acculturation accounts are rhetorically constructed to accomplish particular functions. Their analysis of British print media debate on the issue of faith schooling indicated that integration is often used synonymously with a privileging of assimilative outcomes even though assimilation is not directly invoked. Thus, the situated use of acculturation terms, such as integration, can carry diverse meanings depending on the contexts.

and status quo. Abu-Laban (2014a, p. 150) called it “mainly a symbolic policy” with a “long-standing inadequacy” in addressing social and material inequalities stemming from race, class, or gender, amongst other forms. Bannerji (2000) argued that official multiculturalism initiated from above deflects attention from social and economic inequalities by focusing on issues of cultural differences over those of social justice.

As long as “multiculturalism” only skims the surface of society, expressing itself as traditional ethics, such as arranged marriages, and ethnic food, clothes, songs and dances (thus facilitating tourism), it is tolerated by the state and “Canadians” as non-threatening. But if the demands go a little deeper than that (e.g., teaching “other” religions or languages), they produce violent reaction, indicating a deep resentment toward funding “others” arts and cultures (p. 79).

Bannerji based her criticisms of multiculturalism on Althusser’s (1971) notion of ideological state apparatuses (ISA) involving social institutions such as the educational system, the churches, the family system, the trade-union and the mass media. Althusser posited ISA to function predominantly by ideology, rather than by repressive and violent means, to legitimise and ratify the domination of the ruling classes over the working classes. ISA operates through ideological representations and material practices that interpellate individuals into particular subject positions and, thus, into particular ways of thinking about their roles and social relations in a society and corresponding ways of acting. Bannerji (2000) asserted that Canadian multiculturalism is an ISA which categorises and labels non-whites and women, and especially non-white women, with identities that mark them as “others;” these categories are “appellations for interpellation” (p. 66) that construct non-whites as political/social subjects who occupy certain roles and

niches of Canadian society but are excluded from the national self-definition of “Canadians” and “left with the paradox of both belonging and non-belonging simultaneously” (p.65). At the same time, Bannerji asserted that multiculturalism “establishes anglo-Canadian culture as the ethnic core culture while ‘tolerating’ and hierarchically arranging others around it as ‘multiculture’” (p. 78). Hage (2000) argued that the concept of tolerance maintains the hegemony of the dominant group since those who are asked to be tolerant have the power and control over what is tolerated and, thus, are empowered and capable of exercising their power to be intolerant.

The prevalent debate over multiculturalism in political and public domains, however, revolves around the issues of social integration rather than those of inequalities, especially since the 1990s and continuing nowadays. A few influential works were published in the 1990s, which denounced multiculturalism on the grounds of social fragmentation and cultural relativism (e.g., Bibby, 1990; Bissoondath, 1994; Gwyn, 1995). The common arguments that were presented include: 1) multiculturalism leads to social divisiveness wherein ethnic minority members segregate themselves into culturally distinct groups; 2) multiculturalism eradicates the core national culture and its values, and undermines national identity, by encouraging or even obligating ethnic minority members to give pre-eminence to their ethnic cultures and identities; and 3) multiculturalism leads to excessive cultural relativism and condones illiberal practices since it prevents moral consensus and suggests no limits to the accommodation of different cultural practices. Ryan (2010) criticised these arguments as being constructed on the basis of them relying on a primitive ontology which “implies that a culture is ‘preserved’ only if every last piece of it is left unchanged. Any government that wishes to ‘preserve’ culture, then,

*must* want to preserve any and all practices labelled ‘cultural’” (p. 44). He argued that these arguments essentialise ethnic and national cultures as “immutable monoliths” that are static and unchanging, as well as interpret policy through the same lens and ignore the dynamic nature of politics. Hence, his criticisms allude to the notion that the preservation and support of multiple heritage cultures in all their parts is impossible without transplanting all the necessary social institutions and networks from their original societies to the new society.

Karim’s (2002) examination of newspaper coverage from 1980 to 1988, the years leading to the institution of the *1988 Multiculturalism Act*, found dominant representations of multiculturalism as fostering national divisiveness, immigrant segregation and political exploitation by ethnic lobbyists and politicians. He suggested that these negative representations might have served to legitimise criticisms from previously marginal sources and might have been a “harbinger” of the political opposition that gained prominence in the 1990s. Ryan (2010) affirmed that parliamentary debate in 1994 - 1995 contained similar arguments of social fragmentation and cultural relativism from the right-wing Reform Party (succeeded by the Canadian Alliance in 2000 and merged into the current Conservative Party in 2003), which sought to abolish multiculturalism initiatives and restrict immigration. His examination of newspaper coverage in 1995 also found negative representations of multiculturalism with regard to its presumed lack of limits, its divisiveness, the disappearance of an English Canada and “our” sense of history, as well as the specter of political correctness.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> According to Fairclough (2003), “political correctness” and being “politically correct” are labels imposed upon feminists, anti-racists and individuals who attempt to challenge and change the social practices of organisations in terms of language, behaviours and guidelines. It has become

Adding to these arguments about the negative impacts of multiculturalism are global anxieties with national security and political radicalism amongst people of Arab and Muslim backgrounds after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The Liberal federal government passed a controversial anti-terrorism bill in 2001 to expand power for security to respond to potential terrorism threat and increased funding for border control and upgrade, along with making other immigration changes such as tightening security screening and deportation of refugee claimants (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002). Arat-Koc (2005) examined the furious political and media reactions to a speech Sunera Thobani, a professor of gender, race and social justice at the University of British Columbia, made in October 2001 that criticised US foreign policy and its implications for women. She asserted that there was a reconfiguration of national identity and belonging post 9/11 to define Canadian identity as part of Western civilisation in a “clash of civilisations” framework. It reasserted the white settler identity of the country, facilitated identification with US as a partner in foreign policy, and made precarious the national belonging of people of colour, particularly those of Arab and Muslim backgrounds. The precarious national belonging created pressure for ethnic minorities to prove their national loyalty and allegiance explicitly and visibly as “good immigrants,” while the images of “good immigrants” helped to define and reinforce boundaries of national belonging for immigrants. Arat-Koc observed that this reconfiguration of national identity along a “clash of civilisations” framework had never achieved hegemony and was especially

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an effective and durable tactic to target political opponents with these labels, which carry connotations such as arrogant self-righteousness, extreme left politics, and someone who has fetishes over small matter of wording; characteristics that have caused “widespread resentment even among people basically committed to anti-racism, anti-sexism, etc.” (p. 25).

challenged in the wake of anti-Iraq War demonstrations. However, as argued by Haque (2010), the racialised distinction between the civilised, tolerant, and liberal West and pre-modern, barbaric Islam remains a powerful interpretative framework in the media.

George (2011) explored political and public responses to the protests by Tamil-Canadians in Toronto during the Sri Lankan civil war in 2009 for Canadian government to help broker peace and aid in the fight for a separate Tamil state by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (commonly depicted as terrorists in Canadian media). The author stated that there was a dominant discourse which questioned the legitimacy of the protests and the Canadian citizenship of its participants, and a configuration of multiculturalism along the line of social cohesion and national security which constructed a binary framework of “us/them” and the Tamil identity as terrorists. However, the author also speculated about the “transformative possibilities of multiculturalism” which could provide “a discursive space for ethno-cultural actors to negotiate their social needs and bring transnational issues to bear on other Canadian policies” (p. 476), such as linking Canadian policies to international issues of justice and human rights violations.

The “transformative possibilities of multiculturalism” (George, 2011) are plausibly why multiculturalism has resonated positively for many who seek social changes for equality and inclusivity. Bannerji (2000) stated that some writers and critics of multiculturalism who strive “to stretch the conceptual boundaries of multiculturalism” view it as being “an entry point into an oppositional, or at least an alternative way of contesting the dominant culture and making participatory space for the nation’s others” (p. 18). According to James (2013), the official commitment to multiculturalism was invoked as “a tool of civic voice” by immigrant minority groups during the 1980s and

early 1990s to seek equality and buttress their claims for inclusion and respect. However, the economic deficit crisis in the mid 1990s led the federal government to reconsider its approach to multiculturalism and the “1980s-era antiracist edge succumbed to an emphasis on ‘Canadian heritage’ and ‘social cohesion’” (p. 34). James argued that the earlier focus of multiculturalism on “ethnic heritages,” especially during the 1970s, has been transformed into a focus on “Canadian heritage” in the singular. An increasing emphasis by the Canadian government on civic participation and integration has occurred since the late 1990s and 2000s (Fleras & Elliott, 2002; Leung, 2011). Generally speaking, civic integration emphasises active citizenship and civic engagement (sociopolitical participation), and individual commitments and responsibilities of immigrants to acquire language proficiency and knowledge of the new country’s history, norms and institutions, and respect basic liberal democratic values (Goodman, 2010). Arguably, the emphasis on civic participation, social cohesion and Canadian heritage shifts the focus away from a dialogical approach to diversity and cultural differences and state responsibility to accommodate toward individual responsibility of immigrants to adjust to Canadian society and its established values.

It should be noted that the arguments of social fragmentation, cultural relativism, immigrant segregation and national security as the negative societal impact of multiculturalism are not restricted to Canada. A retreat from the notion of multiculturalism based on similar arguments has occurred in the 1990s and 2000s in the political rhetoric of many European states that have once considered the idea of such a

policy, including the Netherlands, Britain and Austria (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010).<sup>6</sup>

However, public support for multiculturalism has continued in Canada despite a temporary decline in the early 1990s (Adams, 2007; Kymlicka, 2004; Reitz, 2014). Under the Liberal federal government in the 1990s, multiculturalism has been increasingly framed as a tool for enhancing business and Canada's global competitiveness, as well as a policy area in which Canada can export ideas to other nations (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002; Winter, 2015). According to Kymlicka (2004), Canada has been successful in marketing itself internationally as a diversity-friendly multicultural country and is considered a model of accommodating diversity. Furthermore, "selling the Canadian model to foreigners can, indirectly, help to sell it to Canadians" (p. 831), which has mitigated the influences of its critics at home.

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<sup>6</sup> Although many European states have retreated from the notion of multiculturalism in political rhetoric, there are policies and initiatives to accommodate diversity in those states. Political rhetoric has increasingly been emphasising the civic integration of immigrants/ethnic minority groups and may carry an assimilationist undertone, albeit downplaying the normative preference for the dominant culture and highlighting the social importance of a common culture and a common identity instead. Hansen (2014, p. 78) argued that a "thin multiculturalism exists everywhere because it is basic to liberal democracy and a respect for human rights...No liberal democracy attacks freedom of religion or association in principle; there are, rather, differences of opinion on what these freedoms mean." Thin multiculturalism implies a right to one's culture and religion insofar that its expressions are consistent with national laws and liberal democratic values. In this sense, the conception of thin multiculturalism can also be applied to Canada. Based on their Multicultural Policy Index scores for 21 countries, Banting and Kymlicka (2013) claimed that there is a strengthening of positive multiculturalism policies to provide recognition and accommodation for minorities between 2000 and 2010 in a number of European countries, with a significant reduction in the Netherlands and some modest reductions from an already low baseline in Denmark and Italy. Bloemraad and Wright (2014) also argued that the retreat from multiculturalism in Europe is not linked to a dramatic decrease in multiculturalism policies, except in the Netherlands, and some countries have expanded on policies of recognition and accommodation. However, the authors stated that there is also a rise in more demanding policies of civic integration in some countries, such as in citizenship and naturalisation. Banting and Kymlicka (2013) commented that it is possible the discursive retreat from multiculturalism might have effects in other areas, such as perpetuating stereotypes of immigrants as alien and threatening, or influence the impact of multiculturalism policies in the long term if the larger social and cultural context becomes increasingly unreceptive to the claims of minorities for their distinct identities and needs.

Proponents of Canadian multiculturalism have attempted to counter the arguments that multiculturalism threatens social cohesion and has a negative impact on society using cross-national comparative studies and other means of evaluation. For example, Kymlicka and Banting (2006) argued that there is no empirical evidence from comparative studies of countries characterised as having weak, moderate or strong multiculturalism policies to support the claims that multiculturalism policies undermine national solidarity and interpersonal trust by encouraging people to focus on ethnic differences and ethnic identities. According to Kymlicka and Banting, there was also no evidence that multiculturalism policies diminish public support for taxation and the redistribution of resources toward the poor as a result of weakening level of social cohesion. Kymlicka (2010) further claimed that multiculturalism provides a source of pride and mutual identification for native-born citizens and immigrants in Canada, and has a positive impact on interpersonal trust and social capital based on a review of findings from several cross-national studies. Biles (2014) pointed to the important role of federal multiculturalism in the past four decades for Canadian society, including funding (although diminished due to cutbacks) for research initiatives on immigration and diversity such as the Canadian Ethnic Studies Program and Metropolis Project, government initiatives to reduce discrimination and systemic barriers, as well as redress for historical wrongs and international marketing of Canada.

In contrast, Reitz (2014) asserted that the impact of multiculturalism policy per se is negligible, and it is public support for and commitment to the idea of multiculturalism in Canada that has played a significant role in policy-making with regard to immigration and integration of immigrants. Reitz argued that public support for multiculturalism

constitutes “a social capital in the development of Canadian immigration” (p. 108), which takes in relatively high levels of immigration, and enables program development that addresses issues affecting immigrants. In their review of existing empirical literature on multiculturalism policies in various Western countries, Bloemraad and Wright (2014) concluded that multiculturalism policies might have some modest effects on facilitating the sociopolitical integration of first-generation immigrants and likely little impact on those in the second-generation, with no conclusive evidence on socioeconomic outcomes. The effects of multiculturalism policies might differ across immigrant groups and across countries. The authors suggested that there might be more positive impact in countries where multiculturalism has been cast as part of national identity and relevant to all residents. However, they indicated that it is difficult to overcome problems of causal inference and separate out the effects of multiculturalism policies from other factors, such as immigration selection, educational system, employment protections and provision of social benefits.

To sum up, Canadian multiculturalism as a “contested space” is replete with complex, and often contradictory, claims and arguments. Multiculturalism has been argued to be inadequate to address structural inequalities (Abu-Laban, 2014) and masked the racialised and gendered social hierarchies while maintaining the status quo (Bannerji, 2000). The increasing focus on national security since the 9/11 terrorist attacks has positioned certain ethnic minority groups, especially those of Arab or Muslim backgrounds, as the deviant “others” and rendered their cultures as pre-modern and barbaric in a binary “clash of civilisations” framework (Arat-Koc, 2005; Haque, 2010). The question of the limit of tolerance has also been raised to a new height. Prevalent in

the debate about multiculturalism is its alleged negative impact on social cohesion, national solidarity and interpersonal trust, with proponents of multiculturalism attempting to counter these arguments using cross-national comparative studies (e.g., Kymlicka & Banting, 2006). However, it has also been argued that multiculturalism could provide a source of pride and mutual identification for native-born citizens and immigrants (Kymlicka, 2010), or have “transformative possibilities” for visible minorities to negotiate their social needs and connect Canadian policy-making to international issues of justice and human rights (George, 2011). As indicated by Fleras and Elliott (2002, p. 91), “official multiculturalism has turned out to be one of the most complex policies ever instituted in this country. Its potential is limitless, yet its pitfalls are bottomless.”

### **National Identity, Social Inclusion/Exclusion, and Diversity Management**

With the idea of multiculturalism as a “contested space” in mind, I now turn to explore in greater depth the intersectionality between multiculturalism as a political framework for diversity management and the conceptualisation of national identity and national belonging. I identify the latter as being predicated on categorising the “self” in relation to the “others” in ways that involve the delimitation of external and internal group boundaries. In terms of internal group boundaries, social categorisation of immigrants and visible minorities as the internal “others” involves a binary “us/them” framework which articulates social exclusion or conditional belonging for some immigrants. Conditional belonging specifies some inclusion in the national space, although not on equal terms with the “self” (Winter, 2007).

**Conceptualising national identity.** According to Hardt-Mautner (1995, p. 179), “national identity emerges very much as a relational concept, the construction of ‘self’

being heavily dependent on the construction of the ‘other.’” Costello (2014, p. 322) also claimed that “identity – and national identity – is as much defined by what you *are not* as what you *are*.” In this respect, national identity is not a fixed and immutable construct. Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl and Liebhart (2009) proposed that national identity as a form of social identity is produced, reproduced, transformed and dismantled discursively through linguistic and other semiotic means. The authors maintained that “there is - in an essentialist sense - no such thing as *one* national identity” (p. 4). Instead, national identity is discursively constructed according to the audience, situational setting, topic and substantive content under discussion. Therefore, it is dynamic, ambivalent and open to reinterpretation. In this regard, the construction of national identity involves defining the “self,” whose national belonging is undisputed, in contrast with the “other.”

For this thesis, social categorisation of who the “other” is can variously invoke the “internal other” who legally belongs to the nation and the “external other” who does not belong to the nation. The approach to social categorisation here is based on that of discursive psychology, which emphasises how categories are discursively constructed in particular social interactions and for what ends, in contrast to the socio-cognitive approach which emphasises and presupposes internal cognitive schemas and processes (Augoustinos, 2001; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). For example, O’Doherty and LeCouteur (2007) examined the ways Australian media have deployed multiple categories to describe refugee claimants, including “asylum seekers,” ‘refugees,” “boat people,” “illegal immigrants” and “detainees,” to evoke certain connotations and achieve particular rhetorical purposes, such as to legitimise mandatory detention, trivialise the requests to stay and justify the action of “sending them home.”

**Constructing national boundaries and the external other.** The social construction of national identity which involves the categorisation of the “external other” draws boundaries between nations. According to Billig (1995), the construction of a particular national identity (a national “we”) necessitates the stereotyping of foreigners and their nations: “there can be no ‘us’ without a ‘them’” (p. 26) to distinguish and contribute to “our” claims of a unique identity. He coined the term “banal nationalism” to describe ordinary, everyday practices, in which the media play a significant role, that serve to produce and reproduce nations and their national identities as natural and commonsensical categories. Therefore, distinct national identities feel as if they have always existed and can be mobilised for extreme social actions (e.g., wars).

A contrast of the cultural mosaic to the American melting pot has been argued to be a frequent discursive strategy found in the mass media in Canada, or English Canada to be precise, and expressed by many Canadians (Kymlicka, 2003; Reitz, 2014; Winter, 2007). Kymlicka (2003) commented that “what defines being Canadian, perhaps above all else, is precisely not being an American” (p. 363). According to Winter’s (2007) analysis of two mainstream newspaper articles from 1992 to 2001, the portrayal of the Canadian “mosaic” with its distinguishable ethnic groups plays an important role to underline national distinctiveness from the American “melting pot” and its assimilated ethnic groups and to demonstrate Canada’s compassionate character: a “kinder and gentler nation” founded on British culture and institutions “in which the harsh side effects of unhampered capitalism and individualism, which are said to shape life in the US, are softened by social programmes, tolerance and mutual respect” (pp. 487 – 488).

However, this favourable portrayal of Canada is mixed with expressions of envy and admiration for America's wealth and power.

**Constructing internal group boundaries.** Aside from projecting the “self” and defining the “external other” in ways that draw boundaries between nations, the construction of national identity also involves the social categorisation of the internal “other” in ways that delimit internal group boundaries. Although the ideological representation of Canadian identity as a multicultural country has been naturalised and popularised domestically and internationally, multiculturalism as a government-directed initiative is introduced to provide a framework for the recognition, accommodation and management of internal diversity (Fleras & Elliott, 2002). This framework has shifted in the past four decades from an initial focus on the tension between the majority British group and the national minority French group (and other white European ethnic groups) to concerns and anxieties about ethnic groups of visible minority status and their ethnic cultures. Winter (2015, p. 638) proclaimed that, “in current government discourses, multiculturalism is no longer viewed as dealing with majority–minority relations, but rather portrayed as an ‘intra-minority affair’ to be managed by the dominant group.”

Kymlicka (1995) distinguished between two categories of minority groups: national minorities are comprised of groups who have historically formed communities and distinct cultures prior to being incorporated into the larger society, often involuntarily, and have the rights to maintain some form of self-governance (i.e., Quebecois and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada); and polyethnic minorities are comprised of groups who have voluntarily immigrated and are expected to become members of the mainstream society. Thus, they need to be integrated into the larger society and its

institutions rather than be granted separate governing status. He proposed a theory of liberal minority rights for the accommodation of different minority groups, which distinguished between group-differentiated rights for national minorities including territorial autonomy, land claims and language rights, and polyethnic rights for ethnic groups based on common rights of citizenship and equal access to the mainstream society rather than collective group rights. Kymlicka (2007) urged that international organisations, such as the United Nations, should develop international norms to address ethnic conflicts that are based on targeted minority rights rather than generic ones since cultural rights flow from historical settlement or territorial concentration.

Kymlicka's theoretical distinction of rights for different minority groups in Canada has been criticised on a number of fronts. Day (2000) criticised the idea that immigrant minorities do not have the same rights as the national minorities, as well as contended that the theory avoids naming who the national majority is and what legal rights this group has.

Instead, there is a constant reference to a passively voiced 'we' that will decide what gifts to give to 'them . . . By remaining implicit, this 'we' forms a silent, Invisible Self group that chooses to give, or not to give, gifts of recognition and self-government to noisy Visible Others (pp. 215 – 216).

While these comments have been made in relation to a specific political theory, the unequal power relations between the majority group and minority groups despite the claim of egalitarianism has also been remarked on by other critics of Canadian multiculturalism (e.g., Bannerji, 2000; Haque, 2010; Winter, 2011). Leung (2011) attested that a challenge in the shaping of a multicultural Canadian society is the

continued dominance in political, economic, social and linguistic arenas of “a power group [that] consists of English descendants and other white Europeans whose trace of ethnicity had long disappeared prior to official multiculturalism” (p. 29). Arguably, the “disappearance” of an ethnicity is brought about through the establishment and naturalisation of the dominant group’s cultural values and practices as commonsensical norms of society. Likewise, Winter (2007, 2014) commented that minority groups are usually constructed as different by their “ethnic particularity” with respect to a referent dominant group, which remains vaguely defined and whose particularity is represented in universal terms and, thus, as incarnating social norms rather than being culturally-specific and value-laden.

**Social inclusion/exclusion of the internal other.** With regard to the accommodation and management of diversity in Canada, Day (2000) remarked that:

The problem of Canadian diversity *has always been public*, it has always involved state-sponsored attempts to define, know, and structure the actions of a field of problematic Others (Savages, Québécois, Half-breeds, Immigrants) who have been distinguished from unproblematic Selves (French, British, British-Canadian, European) (p. 5).

From a social constructionist perspective, social categorisation of the internal “problematic Others” in relation to the “unproblematic Selves” is neither fixed nor permanent. It is contingent on socio-historical contexts and how different groups are situated in the society, as well as on specific instances of social interactions.

As argued by Dhamoon and Abu-Laban (2009), the designation of “foreignness” and, thus, the “others” is “a floating signifier” (p. 166). They proposed that the

construction of “the internal dangerous foreigner” transcends the boundary of citizen/non-citizen by being “both an insider who *legally* belongs to the state and simultaneously deemed an outsider/Other who does not *substantively* belong within the nation” (p. 169). However, not all “internal foreigners” are deemed threatening or dismissed since their presence is needed to facilitate nation building and reproduce the celebrated national identity of an egalitarian, multicultural nation.

In Canada’s case, the welcomed newcomer or model immigrant is necessary to build the myth of *a multicultural nation*, even though racism continues to privilege subjects marked as white, western, European, and male; the French-Canadian signifies *a bilingual nation* even while practices of dominance continue; and the Indigenous subject serves as the marker of a *post-colonial nation* despite ongoing white supremacy and colonialism (pp. 178 – 179).

The notion that “the welcomed newcomer or model immigrant is necessary to build the myth of a *multicultural nation*” indicates that immigrants are constructed in ways that specify conditional belonging for those who are considered to be “welcomed” or “model” at the exclusion of other immigrants. In the context of discussing the social inclusion of different minority groups, Winter (2007) asserted that there is “a net of multilayered situations of inclusion/exclusion” (p. 108) in which some minorities become conditionally included within the national “we” while other minorities are constructed as being “further down the road” with respect to their otherness. Therefore, a minority group might be constructed as being better, more adapted and socioculturally closer to “us” than another minority group.

According to Lynn and Lea (2003, p. 428), “in defining and categorizing those who would be ‘Other’; visible difference, ethnicity, religious belief and language (among other qualities) may all be used.” The construction of the “Other” has historically functioned to justify dehumanisation and exploitation (Riggins, 1997). Winter (2007) claimed that the explicit articulation of social hierarchy and dominance is officially discredited in multicultural societies and the expression of discriminatory opinions has become more complex involving subtle linguistic techniques. The construction of the “other” thus enables a mitigated form of discrimination in which the social relations between participating members and groups of the national “we” are constituted on unequal terms. Similarly, van Dijk (1992) asserted that racism has become a social taboo and people have been increasingly oriented to social norms and values against expressions of prejudice. Therefore, a pervasive feature of contemporary race discourse is the denial of racism and prejudice by managing and inoculating oneself from these possible charges while expressing negative sentiments toward minority groups and their members.

Billig (1991) proposed that the central feature of the study of racism and prejudice should be the argumentative aspects of discourse: “the analysis of ‘common-places’, or those everyday phrases which express values” and how “the speaker not only seeks to deflect criticism, but also lays claim to be a member of the moral community of the unprejudiced” (p. 129). Critical discursive research in social psychology has demonstrated how notions of nation, national identity, language and culture have been mobilised and taken over from the concept of race to legitimise and de-racialise oppressive practices and racist talks (e.g., Augoustinos & Every, 2007; Augoustinos,

Tuffin, & Every, 2005; Lynn & Lea, 2003; Lyons, Madden, Chamberlain, & Carr, 2011; O'Doherty & Augoustinos, 2008). This discursive approach to contemporary racism explicitly avoids making claims about individual attitudes and beliefs (Augoustinos et al., 2005). Rather, it locates racism and prejudice in socially shared ideas and rhetorical resources of a society and examines how relations of power, dominance and exploitation are produced and sustained through language practices.

I have explored in this section the conceptualisation of multiculturalism as a “contested space” in relation to national identity, diversity management and accommodation, and social inclusion and exclusion. I have attempted to show that the construction of national identity involves defining the “self” in relation to the “others” in ways that delimit external and internal group boundaries. While the construction of external group boundaries serves to produce and reproduce distinct national identities, the construction of internal group boundaries categorises immigrants and minority groups as the internal “others” and articulates their social exclusion or conditional inclusion in the national space.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have reviewed the historical context of immigration regulations and the institutionalisation of official multiculturalism for Canadian society. I have also situated Canadian multiculturalism in a broader political ideology of liberal democracy and discussed the ideological representation of Canada as an egalitarian multicultural country in the sense of a “lived ideology” (Billig et al., 1988). Embedded in a liberal democratic framework, Canadian multiculturalism could arguably be conceptualised as invoking a “thin” version of multiculturalism, which implies a right to one’s cultural and

religious expressions in so far that they are consistent with national laws and liberal democratic values (Hansen, 2014). In other words, there is a limit of tolerance to ethnocultural and religious practices inherent in Canadian multiculturalism, at least in political ideology and arguably in legal institutions also, despite the prevalent arguments about its detrimental effects in terms of cultural relativism and illiberal practices. As “lived ideology,” the national identity of a multicultural country that values and accommodates diversity has been widely acknowledged by many Canadians irrespective of their opinions about such an identity (Haque, 2010), as well as having been marketed successfully on the international stage (Kymlicka, 2004).

Finally, I have provided a review of the different, and often competing, arguments and claims that have been made regarding the societal impact of multiculturalism in academic, political and public arenas. In presenting this review, I have conceptualised multiculturalism as a “contested space” (George, 2011) where the politics of multiculturalism intersect with academic and public discourses revolving around issues of ethnocultural diversity as a result of immigration. I have also argued that the construction of national identity involves categorising and defining the “self” in relation to the “others,” both externally to other nations and internally to establish social exclusion or conditional inclusion of immigrants and minorities.

Overall, I have attempted to show that Canadian multiculturalism is not an immutable entity. The term “multiculturalism” has shifting meanings and implications and is open to interpretation according to the contexts, as well as the interlocutors and the theoretical and empirical bases that they have drawn on to make their arguments and claims. By discussing multiculturalism as a “contested space,” I hope to give due

credence to these diverse meanings and implications which intersect political, academic, and public discourses, and to draw attention to sociopolitical issues relating to immigration and ethnocultural diversity that lie at the centre of the “contested space” of multiculturalism.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to provide a critical discussion of Canadian multiculturalism and its connection to immigration and ethnocultural diversity issues. At the same time, it is used to provide a historicised account of the sociopolitical background in Canada for an empirical study in which I examined media rhetoric regarding recent changes in immigration and refugee policies. The chapter also serves to provide an introduction to some of the theoretical approaches and concepts that I have drawn on for my analysis (e.g., the discursive approach to social categorisation and the concept of the internal “other”). I present and discuss the empirical study in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 2: Immigration and Refugee Policies in Canadian Press**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I present and discuss the findings of an empirical study in which I examined the rhetoric in mainstream Canadian press with regard to immigration and refugee policies and related immigration issues. In Canada, immigration has been as dynamic and ambivalently received a phenomenon as multiculturalism has been. The three main streams of immigration (economic, family reunification, humanitarian) and the point system used to assess skilled immigrants under economic immigration have remained in practice since their implementation. However, their applications are shaped and modified by shifting social and political circumstances. Related policies and programs including, but not limited to, citizenship and immigrant settlement have also been subjected to modifications due to changing social and political circumstances. The federal government created a separate class of entrepreneurs and investors under a more lenient point system in 1986 to attract affluent immigrants, and inverted the ratio of skilled to family/humanitarian immigrants in the 1990s in an attempt to respond to political opposition who argued for more restrictive immigration policies and the need to strengthen national identity and social cohesion (Walsh, 2008). The admission of skilled immigrants has remained the primary component of immigration since then, which enables the government to cite greater control and economic benefits. At the same time, immigration has become increasingly viewed as a tool that allegedly fosters the growth of the economy and Canada's global competitiveness, while its rhetoric is couched in the language of control, pragmatism and global competitiveness for labour and economic ties.

The current Conservative federal government has implemented extensive overhaul to immigration, refugee, and citizenship policies and regulations since 2008. In my study, I focused on media coverage of the major immigration and refugee policy changes that were introduced in 2012, the year after the Conservative government won its first majority government. The key issues that I wished to address are: what policy changes have been reported in the media? In what ways have they been represented in the media? How have immigrants been talked about and portrayed in the media in this kind of sociopolitical context?

### **Current Sociopolitical context: Immigration and Multiculturalism under Harper's Conservative Government**

In this section, I provide a brief overview of some of the important changes to immigration and citizenship policies and regulations that have been implemented by the Conservative government, as well as the commentaries and criticisms that have been made about those changes in some newly published academic literature and institutional reports. The Conservative Party under the leadership of Stephen Harper came to power as a minority federal government in 2006 and won its first majority government in 2011. It has been argued that the Conservative Party won office in part by reaching out to visible minorities and embracing multiculturalism (Bloemraad & Wright, 2014). As the current federal government, it has been making changes to the immigration and refugee system since 2008. The extensive overhaul of immigration and refugee policies has often been described as a reform in the media. Amongst the earliest policy changes included the implementation of the new Canadian Experience Class to facilitate the transition to permanent resident status for eligible highly-skilled temporary foreign workers and

international students. In 2012, the year after the Conservative Party won its first majority government, numerous policy changes were introduced and implemented that affected all three streams of immigration. These included the introduction of a separate stream for skilled tradespersons; overhaul of the point system to give greater emphasis on language proficiency, age and work experiences in one of the listed in-demand occupations; and refugee Bill C-31 which grants the immigration minister power to designate countries as safe, democratic and do not normally produce refugees, and creates the “irregular arrivals” category to designate groups of people who arrive in a way that can prevent timely investigation of their admissibility (e.g., boat) or on grounds of suspicion of human smuggling as “designated foreign nationals.” Subsequent modifications and expansions have also been made to immigration such as reducing the maximum age of dependent children from 21 to 18 for all immigration programs and changes to the list of acceptable occupations for the Canada Experience Class in 2014. Overall, economic immigration remains the primary stream of admission.

In terms of citizenship, a new citizenship test was introduced in 2009 along with a new federal study guide entitled *Discover Canada*. Sobel’s (2015) analysis of the six citizenship guides from 1947 to 2009 identified six distinct narratives of what it means to be a Canadian citizen and what is expected from a Canadian citizen: the good character citizen (1947); the responsible citizen (1963); the wholesome citizen (1976); the politically active citizen (1978); the test ready citizen (1995) and the loyal citizen (2009). She argued that there are more continuities than disruptions in the construction of these narratives, which all emphasise adopting Canadian values, citizenship rights/privileges to vote and carry a Canadian passport, and responsibilities to obey the laws and volunteer in

the community. However, there are also significant departures in these narratives. In particular, Sobel argued that the narrative of the loyal citizen is constructed in the 2009 guide by including “what could be considered the lengthiest explanation of Constitutional monarchy” (p. 23) that links Canada to the Commonwealth nations and loyalty to Canada with the Sovereign (Queen or King), and giving a more central role to military history, the armed forces and law-enforcement organisations. It is also the first guide to encourage joining the military or law enforcement as a positive action that citizens should consider. In June 2014, Bill C-24, *Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act*, was passed. The new legislation increases residency requirements from three to four years to be eligible, broadens the age range of people who must pass the citizenship test from 54 to 64 years old, limits citizenship by descent to one generation for those abroad, and introduces other changes to deny or revoke citizenship based on security or criminal grounds. Abu-Laban (2015) claimed that the new legislation has made it harder to get Canadian citizenship and easier to lose it, as well as “rais[ing] issues of loyalty/belonging to new heights” which may invoke longstanding fears of “dangerous foreigners” (p. 4).

The implementation of the new immigration and refugee policies has stirred up extensive debate from academics and professional think tanks. The Maytree Foundation has published a policy report that outlines the changes that have taken place between 2008 and July, 2012 (Alboim & Cohl, 2012). The report comments that, while some of the changes are positive such as the creation of a new stream for skilled tradespersons and facilitated transition to permanent resident status for international students and temporary workers, others are problematic and can have negative impact in the long-term. These include the focus on short-term labour market needs over long-term nation

building, the lack of evidence-based policy-making, and the use of omnibus bill and increased ministerial power to pass new policies in a way that diminishes public and parliamentary consultation opportunities and weakens the democratic process.

Furthermore, the cumulative impact may create a “less welcoming environment” for immigrants and refugees and “the impression that Canada is no longer as welcoming as it once was” (p. 70). Diop’s (2014) analysis of Bill C-31 and its portrayal in government statements asserted that the Roma, who have a history of being discriminated and persecuted in Europe, have come to stand in as the prototypical figure of “bogus” refugees to legitimise and reaffirm the need for state intervention to control border and exclude those who are allegedly cheaters taking advantage of Canada’s generosity. On the other hand, a report by Fraser Institute claims the new policies in recent years to be “moves in the right direction” (p. 31), and suggests a need for “more radical reforms” to eliminate the alleged fiscal burden of \$20 billion imposed on Canadians annually, especially from the family-class immigration of parents and grandparents (Grubel, 2013). The proposed radical reforms include to end the rights of future immigrants to sponsor their parents and grandparents, abandon the point system and admit skilled immigrants only if they have pre-arranged employment contracts.

Abu-Laban (2014a) argued that, while the current Conservative government has not directly attacked or questioned multiculturalism, it has engaged in a “reform by stealth” by reconfiguring policies that are associated with multiculturalism. The move of multiculturalism from the Department of Canadian Heritage into the Department of Citizenship and Immigration carries the “symbolic significance” that it is associated only with immigrants and new Canadians, and decouples it from official bilingualism which

has “greater resources and stature” (p. 157). Furthermore, she asserted that gender equality is appropriated into a “clash of civilizations” framework between the barbaric “other” and the civilised Canadian “us” in the new citizenship guide, which states that “Canada’s openness and generosity do not extend to barbaric cultural practices that tolerate spousal abuse, “honour killing,” female genital mutilation, forced marriage or other gender-based violence” (see Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Discover Canada*, p. 9). Citing the content of the 2009 citizenship guide and the replacement of Aboriginal artist Bill Reid’s sculpture, *Spirit of Haida Gwaii*, with Vimy Ridge Memorial on the back of the \$20 bill released in 2012 as examples, Abu-Laban (2014b) argued that the federal Conservative’s emphasis on military history over social history, patriotic citizenship and enduring ties to British institutions and traditions constructs a singular historical narrative that excludes many Aboriginal peoples, Quebecois and ethnic minorities.

On the other hand, the Conservative government has paradoxically redressed Chinese Canadians for the head tax and funded educational and memorial projects to commemorate the historical experiences of immigrants and ethnic minority groups, although limited to those events affected by wartime measures and immigration restrictions (Abu-Laban, 2014a). According to the author, the government’s “reform by stealth” entrenches social inequalities by “including minorities only on the terms of those in power” (p. 150). James (2013) argued that the redress program has been restricted to “specific, temporally confined, and extraordinary acts” (p. 27), and its overall purpose has turned “historical injustices into the non-partisan and unremarkable objects of consensual commemoration” (p. 38). Specifically, he indicated that the stipulation of only

wartime measures and immigration restrictions seeks to shape public understandings of injustice around “a pre-selected group of singular past government acts abstracted from any deeper consideration of the long-term structural and attitudinal racism that tends to give rise to historical wrongs in the first place” (p. 37). Winter (2015) attested that “there is a tacit reinvigoration of Canada’s Anglo-Saxon center” (p.12) by the current Conservative government in a way that also “paints the picture of de facto ethnocultural heterogeneity, which needs neither government support nor funding” (p. 13).

### **The Present Study**

In the present study, I examined the rhetoric in mainstream daily press with regard to immigration and refugee policies and related immigration issues in the current sociopolitical context. Newspaper articles published in 2012 were chosen to capture a period during which numerous major immigration and refugee policy changes were introduced and implemented by the federal Conservative government after winning its first majority government (See Table 1 for a list of the policy changes that were reported in the media in 2012). According to Fairclough (2003), the representations, values and identities that are constructed in, projected and circulated through the “culture industries,” such as television and other media, influence the ways of other “domains of social practice” (e.g., politics, family life, community life). Fowler (1991) asserted that the language used in newspaper coverage forms ideas and beliefs through the selection of what events to report and their transformation in the process of publication. Therefore, newspaper coverage engages in the “social construction of reality” (p. 2) rather than neutrally reflecting social reality and empirical facts in spite of the professional ethos of objective and unbiased reporting. Furthermore, the language used in the news has

tremendous influence in “facilitating and maintaining” discrimination: “language provides names for categories and so helps to set their boundaries and relationships; and discourse allows these names to be spoken and written frequently, so contributing to the apparent reality and currency of the categories” (p. 94).

Additionally, Bauder (2008) asserted that the media typically present multiple viewpoints and perspectives: “it juxtaposes various viewpoints, often expressing contradictory dualisms of pro and con, for and against, or us and them, and mediating between these viewpoints and dualisms” (p. 135). In this respect, the media provide an important site for the production, reproduction and contestation of diverse perspectives on sociopolitical issues. Bauder’s (2008) examination of newspaper articles from 1996 – 2004 on the economic utility of immigration found an overarching theme that immigration should produce economic benefits for Canada. However, he argued that there are three distinct narratives, each expressing opposing viewpoints about economic immigration. The first contrasts the viewpoint that Canada competes for labour with other countries and skilled immigrants make it more globally competitive with the viewpoint that immigrants constitute labour competition and harm the domestic labour force. The second contrasts the viewpoint that the immigration system should select immigrants with flexible and transferrable skills with the viewpoint that the system should use selective immigration to identify and regulate based on labour demand in particular occupations. The third portrays immigrants as victims of exploitation and devaluation of skills and qualifications inflicted by Canadian regulators or as perpetrators who threaten the economic well-being of Canadian society, especially those are less educated and not admitted under the point system.

While there have been criticisms and commentaries made about the new immigration and refugee policies by the current Conservative federal government, these criticisms and commentaries are based on examining the policies or political speeches (e.g., Diop, 2014). To the best of my knowledge, there has not been any study that looks extensively at the ways in which the policy changes have been reported and represented in the media, and how these representations have been used in the “social construction of reality” (Fowler, 1991) with regard to immigrants and immigration issues. The present study, thus, provides an important analysis of an interface between recent political decision-making and society with regard to immigration issues. In examining the media discourse on the policy changes implemented by the Conservative government, I addressed the following research questions:

1. How are the immigration and refugee policy changes constructed in mainstream print media?
2. How are immigrants and refugees categorised in these media articles? How is the categorisation deployed to mobilise support or opposition to the policy changes?
3. How is the acculturation of immigrants and ethnic minority members constructed?
4. How are Canadian identity and national belonging of immigrants constructed?

I asked these research questions in relation to my chief concerns of finding out what political measures had been introduced as part of the immigration reform and reasons for implementing these new policies, and to understand the ways in which immigrants were talked about and portrayed in such sociopolitical context. The last question was asked with the assumption that multiculturalism as a crucial aspect of Canadian identity would

be referred to and raised as an important issue in the discourse on immigration policy changes.

## **Method**

### **Data Source**

The data corpus was collected through the Canadian Newsstand database provided by the University of Guelph, which offers access to full-text articles of over 190 Canadian leading news publishers. The sample was drawn from two national newspapers, *The Globe and Mail* and *National Post*, and four provincial newspapers, *Toronto Star*, *Montreal Gazette*, *Vancouver Sun*, and *Calgary Herald*. *Montreal Gazette* is the main daily English-language newspaper in Montreal, Quebec. These newspapers were chosen because they are among Canada's most distributed daily newspapers (Newspaper Canada, 2008 - 2013). They are also based in the provinces of Canada which have consistently had the largest shares of immigrant and refugee settlement (Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, and Alberta). According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2013), the percentage distributions of new immigrants who settled as permanent residents were 38.4% for Ontario in 2012 (99,149 out of 257,895 nationwide) and 40.0% (103,494 out of 258,953) in 2013, 21.4% for Quebec in 2012 (55,063) and 20.1% (51,983) in 2013, 14.1% for British Columbia (36,242) in 2012 and 14.0% (36,210) in 2013, and 14.0% for Alberta (36,095) in 2012 and 14.1% (36,636) in 2013. It should be acknowledged that the study was limited to English language newspaper only and could not claim to have regional representativeness of local newspapers across the nation.

The sampling timeframe ranged from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012, to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012. I used the terms *immigration reform* OR *immigration policy* OR *refugee reform* OR *Jason*

*Kenney* (the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration from October 30, 2008 – July 15, 2013) as key search criteria. Only articles which have some substantive information on the policy changes, or immigrants and refugees in Canada, were included in the analysis. Articles which focus on other countries or other topics with a passing mention of immigration (i.e., immigration is mentioned in only one or two sentences in the entire article) were excluded. Letters to the editor were also omitted because they are written in response to news publishers by the general public, albeit including those who have a vested interest in their professional capacity to articulate a particular position (Lynn & Lea, 2003). These letters may thus be argued as constituting a site for the articulation of “everyday ordinary” people separated from that of the news publishers, although Richardson (2001, p. 144) has claimed that letters to the editor “conform to their newspapers’ style policies.” Furthermore, articles which focus solely on temporary foreign workers were omitted. Temporary foreign workers are usually admitted into Canada as “guests” to fulfill low-skilled jobs in agricultural and service sectors (e.g., through the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program). The legal means for low-skilled temporary foreign workers to become permanent residents are limited.

The final dataset consists of 632 articles with 125 from *Toronto Star*, 112 from *The Globe and Mail*, 105 from *National Post*, 104 from *Vancouver Sun*, 95 articles from the *Calgary Herald*, and 91 from *Montreal Gazette*. Of these, 456 articles are full-length news articles and eight are brief news articles. The other 168 articles are opinion articles (i.e., editorials, columns, opinions, commentaries). It should be noted that the *Calgary Herald*, *Vancouver Sun*, *Montreal Gazette* and *National Post* are owned by Postmedia Network. Therefore, the same news story might be published in more than one of these

newspapers in any given day. Some of the articles are identical duplicates with only a change in the headlines (25 articles of the sample). However, there are articles with content differences in terms of word choices or additional information, with the differences being more substantive between some sets of articles than others (128 articles). For identical duplicates, only one version was retained for analysis although all headlines were kept. For duplicate articles with some content differences, the differences were noted for analysis. The *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* are not owned by Postmedia Network.

Additionally, whereas “hard” news articles are presented to readers as balanced and objective reports of “the facts” of an issue or event, opinion articles are not bound by such claims to balance and objectivity, and blend reporting of “facts” with a socio-emotional normative dimension to provide justification for attribution of responsibility and taking one side over the other(s) (Greenberg, 2000). Thus, opinion articles attempt more strongly than news articles to mobilise their intended readers around a particular ideological position by appealing and connecting with readers’ ethics and emotions. Although the distinction between the two types of articles did not affect how they were analysed, I kept track of the type of articles and indicated whether a quote or extract had been taken from a “hard” news or opinion article.

### **Political Ideological Stances of the Newspapers**

The *National Post* is considered a more right-wing newspaper that tends to reflect political and corporate elitist viewpoints (Bauder, 2008; Greenberg, 2000). *The Globe and Mail* tends toward the centre-left of the political spectrum in comparison to the *National Post*. Of the provincial newspapers, the *Calgary Herald* privileges more right-

wing conservative viewpoints (Bauder, 2008). The *Vancouver Sun* is a centre-left newspaper that is directed toward a more socially and economically diverse readership on the west coast (Greenberg, 2000). The *Montreal Gazette* is also a centre-left newspaper in its political stance. The *Toronto Star* is considered to lean the furthest left of the major daily newspapers and have a more social-liberal stance (Greenberg, 2000), and may express more pro-immigration and multicultural perspectives (Bauder, 2008).

### **Theoretical and Methodological Framework**

Discourse analysis encompasses a variety of theoretical and analytical approaches to language, each with different emphases (Wood & Kroger, 2000). In social psychology, discourse analysis is based on a social constructionist epistemology. Broadly speaking, social constructionism posits events, objects and categories which are often taken to be realities and truths to be socially constructed, and language as being actively involved in the construction of what counts as reality and truth rather than being a neutral medium that passively reflects an external reality and absolute truth (Gergen, 1985, 2001). Therefore, the terms in which reality is understood are situated and negotiated in the social interchanges of people living in particular historical, sociocultural and geographical contexts. This epistemological perspective requires that “language is taken to be not simply a tool for description and a medium for communication (the conventional view), but as social practice, as a way of doing things” (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 4). It should be noted that taking a social constructionist epistemological stance toward my thesis does not imply an extreme relativism or nihilism on my part. Instead, I consider social constructions to have material consequences for reasons that they are

often taken to be realities and truths of our society, and thus are supported by specific cultural values, social practices, and legal and social institutions.

Potter (1998) referred to “discursive social psychology” as “the application of ideas from discourse analysis to issues of social psychology” (p. 234). The development of discursive psychology in the 1980s has aimed to move the analytical and explanatory focus from internal cognitive processes to rhetorical resources and practices that people draw on from their sociocultural environment. Discursive psychology is social constructionist in two senses. On the one hand, it theorises that people construct their versions of the world through descriptions, accounts and categories. On the other hand, the descriptions, accounts and categories that people use to construct their versions of the world are themselves constructed through talks, texts and other rhetorical means (Potter, 1996, 1998). Discursive psychology emphasises the epistemological orientation and action orientation of description (Potter, 1996). Epistemological orientation draws analytical attention to the processes of fact construction wherein descriptions are reified as facts and realities or undermined and ironised as incomplete and partisan accounts. Action orientation draws attention to the ways people use language to perform actions explicitly or indirectly to achieve particular effects or functions, such as to make request, to justify, to blame, and to persuade others (see also Edwards & Potter, 1992).

As noted in Weltman and Billig (2001), some discursive social psychologists focus their analytical approach on examining language in its situated usages and the micro-level actions and functions of talks and texts (e.g., Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, Wetherell, & Chitty, 1991). Other discourse and critical discourse analysts are oriented to the broader level of patterns of meaning-making (e.g., Billig et al., 1988; Parker, 1992;

Fairclough, 1985). According to van Dijk (1993) and Riggins (1997), discourse analysis acquires a critical dimension when it examines the relation of language to power, privilege and inequality. The justification of power differences and inequality involves the contrast of “us” with “them,” which are often rhetorically achieved through expressing positive self-representations and negative other presentations in a socially acceptable manner while engaging in the denial of racism and prejudice (van Dijk, 1993). It should be noted that the major approaches to critical discourse analysis that have been developed in the field of critical linguistics do not take as strong an anti-cognitivist stance as discursive social psychology has. For example, Teun van Dijk’s sociocognitive approach posits that “social cognitions mediate between the micro- and macro-levels of society, between discourse and action, between the individual and the group” (van Dijk, 1993, p. 257), although his analytical focus is at the linguistic level of discursive structures of texts and talks. It is not clear if and how the meanings of social cognition used by critical discourse analysts outside the field of psychology depart from psychologists following the tradition of social cognition. The research emphases of social cognitive psychologists on information processing models, cognitive schemas and causal attributions at the individual level have been the primary subjects of criticism by discursive social psychologists (see Edwards & Potter, 1992, and Potter, 1996, 1998, for a critique of social cognition in psychology).

In the present study, I employed both the micro- and macro-level analytical approaches to discourse analysis (Bovenskill et al., 2007; Lyons et al., 2011; Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Weltman & Billig, 2001). The combination of both approaches enables analytical attention to the broader patterns of meanings, how categories and other

constructions are defined and made to appear commonsensical, and their implications for social relations of power and control. At the same time, micro-level attention provides contextualised grounding for the broader level of analysis by examining the ways in which rhetorical accounts and descriptions are structured and organised in local texts for particular local functions and argumentative ends.

I began my analysis with a reading of the sampled articles to become familiar with the depth and breadth of the content. Preliminary coding was done to systematise the data using a bottom-up approach to analysis. This process also prepared me for more fine-grained analysis at later stages using codes that might capture something of importance to the research questions (e.g., “economic needs of Canada,” “economic burdens of immigration,” “immigration frauds,” “refugee frauds,” “language proficiency”). The subsequent processes of coding and analysis involved refining and breaking down these codes into sub-codes, while attention was paid to the connections between codes, possible recurrent themes and ways of representing immigration, immigrants and refugees, and the rhetorical functions served by particular representations. Any section of the data corpus could be associated with more than one code although each code was distinctive from others. The processes of reading, coding and writing of analysis were iterative. I also drew on analytical concepts in discursive psychology to help with data interpretation. For instance, category entitlement is an analytical concept that illustrates how members of certain categories, such as doctor or journalist, are treated as experts in certain domains (Potter, 1996; Wood & Kroger, 2000). It warrants membership in a category as being sufficient to account for a person’s knowledge and expertise, and can be used to enhance

the facticity of his or her description. Category entitlement can be worked up or undermined in social interaction.

## **Analysis and Discussion**

### **Overview**

The analysis is organised into five sections in which I discuss the predominant patterns of media rhetoric about the immigration and refugee policy changes. In the first section, *Rife with frauds: Construction of a broken immigration and refugee system in crisis*, I argue that the ample coverage of immigration and refugee frauds during the sampling year constructs an immigration and refugee system in crisis due to rampant frauds, which lead to rampant abuses of tax-funded social services. Crisis here does not refer to an objective condition. Rather, as described by Hier and Greenberg (2002, p. 491), crisis is seen as “subjectively perceived, and brought into existence through narrative and discourse.” Most importantly, I argue that the construction of a crisis enables the policy changes for more restrictive regulations of immigration and refugee admission to be justified and positioned as being necessary, pragmatic and commonsensical government interventions. This is shown in the second section of the analysis, *Combating frauds: “Get-tough” policy changes as firm but fair*. Oftentimes, the justification involves representing Canada as a generous and compassionate country, but also as a soft and easy target for exploitation, and categorising immigrants into “good” and “bad,” and refugee claimants into “genuine” and “bogus.”

While the first two sections focus on policy changes for more restrictive regulations of immigration and refugee admission, the last three sections of the analysis focus on policy changes that are often portrayed as transforming the immigration system

into being more flexible and responsive to market needs. In the third section, *Building the economy: A “just-in-time” but “selective” market-driven immigration system*, I argue that the prevailing immigration discourse in the media is based on neoliberal ideology. Neoliberalism emphasises individual independence and self-sufficiency, reduced government responsibilities over social welfare issues, a radically free market that seeks to maximise competition and consumerism, and privatisation and commodification of social services such as education and healthcare (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002; Clarke, 2004; Nafstad et al., 2009). In this immigration discourse which emphasises the imperative of tailoring immigration to meet labour market needs, the private business sector is given a primary role in the selection for the “right” immigrants. Moreover, as I indicate in the fourth section, *Reforming economic immigration: Labour market and the internal immigrant others*, the emphasis on selecting the “right” immigrants who are independent and self-sufficient is premised on the social categorisation of immigrants as the internal “others” who do not participate fully in the labour market and drain public resources. The neoliberal belief of individual independence and self-sufficiency is given prominence over social and institutional factors to explain immigrant economic hardship. In this regard, categorising immigrants as the internal “others” reduces their national inclusion and belonging to solely economic terms while casting their presence in Canadian society as an economic burden. The fifth section, *“Biting the bullet:” Family reunification as draining healthcare and public resources*, illustrates how family-class immigration of parents and grandparents is positioned as problematic for public resources in this market-driven immigration discourse. The implication is that the admission of

these immigrants must be restricted to protect the economic well-being of Canadians and their public resources.

### **Rife with Frauds: Construction of an Immigration and Refugee System in Crisis**

In this section, I illustrate and argue that the ample coverage of immigration and refugee frauds in the media constructs an immigration and refugee system in crisis. This construction implicates immigrants and refugee claimants as unscrupulous exploiters of the nation's generosity and compassion, and criminals or accomplices in serious crimes. A range of different types of immigration and refugee frauds was reported in the media throughout the sampling year. Oftentimes, words such as "crackdown," "queue jumpers," "foreign criminals," "broken," "abuse," "exploit," "tighten" or "tighter," "get-tough," "strengthen" or "protect" or "defend" "integrity" were used.

The types of frauds that were reported during the sampling year include marriage frauds, birth tourism, employment frauds and "bogus" refugee claims. Marriage frauds or marriages of convenience have been described in a news article as cases of immigrants "fraudulently marrying Canadians for the purposes of immigration only to leave them and then sponsor a new partner while their Canadian spouse is still financially responsible for them for three years" (Vancouver Sun, 03-Mar-12, *Five-year sponsorship freeze aims to curb sham marriages*). Birth tourism, also referred to as passport babies or maternity tourism, is described as "the practice of travelling to Canada to give birth so that child can have Canadian citizenship" (Calgary Herald, 27-Feb-12, *Canada cracking down on 'passport babies'*). Employment frauds include the allegations that Chinese immigrants, who were admitted through the Arranged Employment Offer program, have misrepresented their credentials and are not holding "genuine jobs" in Canada

(Vancouver Sun, 10-Jan-12, *Immigration fraudsters exploiting new rules*). There has also been news reporting of the use of DNA testing as a measure to “block attempts to sneak Chinese children through Canada's immigration system using phoney documents” like “fake or altered birth certificates” (Montreal Gazette, 14-Jan-12, *DNA tests fight child smuggling; Chinese immigrants face new hurdles bringing in kids*). Concerns over the integrity of and the need for “more stringent standards” for the Provincial Nominee (PN) Programs, which allow provinces to select immigrants according to local labour market needs and nominate them for permanent residence, have also been expressed by the immigration minister Jason Kenney “even as he lauds the strategy a success and economic boon,” according to a Globe and Mail news article (26-Jan-12, *Ottawa tightening nominee program*). A Vancouver Sun news article (10-Feb-12, *B.C. seeks increase in skilled immigrants*) reported mentions of “job offers that were actually fake” and “no minimum benchmark for language proficiency” by the immigration minister in relation to “quality control” and “integrity” problems in the PN program.

Also prevalent in the media during the sampling year was news reporting of refugee frauds committed by “bogus” asylum seekers to gain entry into the nation. Refugee frauds were typically connected to Roma asylum seekers from the European states, most notably from Hungary and the Czech Republic. Sometimes, they were connected to the Tamil asylum seekers from Sri Lanka who arrived by boats in Victoria, British Columbia, in 2009 (the *Ocean Lady*) and 2010 (the *MV Sun Sea*). A National Post news article reported the immigration minister Jason Kenney as having said that “the government has tried but so far failed to stem the tide of Roma coming into Canada and abusing its refugee system,” and “the flood of asylum-seekers is ‘highly organized’ and

not at all spontaneous” (23-Apr-12, *Ottawa fails to stem Roma refugee tide; Evidence of human trafficking worries Kenney*). The alleged abuse by a “flood” of Roma refugee claimants, which is tied to organised human smuggling crime, is markedly associated in the article with the subsequent reporting that the federal government “hopes to push through the refugee reform Bill C-31 before the House [of Commons] breaks for the summer” for a “new and faster asylum system,” in which refugee claimants would have access to “an expedited hearing” but not “access to various appeals.” A list of countries designated to be “safe and capable of protecting their own nationals” was released by the federal government in December, 2012, and “unfounded refugees” from these countries would “have their claims fast-tracked and heard within 30 to 45 days without access to the newly-established appeal mechanism and be booted out of Canada in a year” (Toronto Star, 01-Dec-12, *Door closes for many refugees: Ottawa tightens rules for those coming from 'safe' countries*). Among the designated “safe” countries, which consist mostly of the European states, are Hungary and the Czech Republic.

The "safe countries" regulation as part of Bill C-31 has drawn fire from critics and human rights advocates (as have other aspects of the bill, most notably mandatory detention of refugee claimants designated as “irregular arrivals”). A Toronto Star news article (15-Dec-12, *'Safe' countries for refugees: Some fear for Roma as claimants face an expedited process*) quoted Gina Csanyi-Robah of Toronto’s Roma Community Centre as saying, “The Canadian government believes Hungary is a safe, democratic country for everybody. Everyone who spends 10 minutes on the Internet knows that's not true. The persecution of Roma is so widely documented.” Here, the persecution of Roma is represented as “widely documented” and obvious for “everyone who spends 10 minutes

on the Internet.” In contrast to the claim that Roma refugee claimants abuse the system, this representation positions them as being genuine refugees in need of help. Her comment is further corroborated in the article by the comments reported to be from Gloria Nafziger of Amnesty International Canada that “denying claimants from safe countries access to appeal is unfair” and “it may lead to mistakes going uncorrected and refugees being forcibly returned to persecution.”

The access to appeal is often referred to in the sampled articles as evidence that the existing immigration and refugee system is slow and lacks the ability to deport swiftly those who have been deemed inadmissible. The following extract is taken from a Calgary Herald editorial (22-Sep-12, *Smarter immigration; Jason Kenney is bringing common sense to portfolio*):

The problems in Canada's immigration system have been, by now, well publicized. They include our inability to stop fraud and the inability to even expel admitted terrorists over the years.

[ . . . ]

Endless rounds of appeals through the court system on various grounds, including "medical compassion," and paid for by taxpayers, have thrown more spokes in the wheels of justice, and highlight our country's inability - at the court level anyway - to swiftly deal with people who obviously do not share Canadian values.

The “inability to even expel admitted terrorists” is illustrated in the article by the case of Mahmoud Mohammad Issa Mohammad, reported to be a Palestinian terrorist who “sneaked into Canada under an assumed name, along with his wife and children in 1987. . . . Even a 2001 ruling by the refugee board's appeal division that labelled him a terrorist

and ordered him deported didn't work.” Furthermore, this inability is pegged as a result of “endless rounds of appeals,” which are “paid for by taxpayers” (reported to be “\$3 million as of 2011” for the case). The Calgary Herald editorial is not an isolated incidence in the media that illustrates the failure of the existing immigration and refugee system with criminal cases. There are numerous media articles that have employed the same journalistic strategy. Among the reported cases is the high-profile case of Leon Mugesera who was accused of inciting the Rwandan genocide and deported in January, 2012, “after a convoluted, 17-year legal saga” that purportedly had Jason Kenney “promising to reform and streamline the immigration appeal system for people accused of serious crimes” (Globe and Mail, 25-Jan-12, *Genocide suspect back in Rwanda*). According to a Montreal Gazette news article, Kenney “held [Mugesera] up as the poster child for what’s wrong with this country’s refugee system” (25-Jan-12, *Case shows need for law change*). The report of criminal cases paints the immigration and refugee system, which is charged with an inability to deport criminals and terrorists swiftly and being costly to taxpayers, as a system that is undoubtedly flawed and, thus, highlights the need for more restrictive policy changes in these regards.

In addition to immigration and refugee frauds to gain entry into the nation, the media was not lacking in reports about immigration frauds committed by permanent residents or those with citizen status. A National Post news article (19-May-12, *Citizenship advisors charged with fraud*) reported the charges of three immigration representatives from a consulting firm at Halifax for “counselling misrepresentation” and having “allegedly helped commit residency fraud” as part of “a nationwide crackdown” by the federal government. Another National Post news article (11-Sep-12, *The hunt for*

*false citizens*) narrated the investigation conducted by Jason Cannon, a federal immigration investigator, on the immigration consultant firm, Canada 2000 or C2K, which was charged with having helped permanent residents to create “the fictitious appearance” of living in Canada. There were numerous media articles published in September, 2012, that reported the investigation of 11,000 people for residency fraud and the revoking of citizenship from 3,100 Canadians (or 3,139 in some articles). According to a Toronto Star news article, “cheaters would typically hire unscrupulous immigration representatives – at \$25,000 for a family of five – to establish evidence of residence, such as bill payments and tax returns, while living abroad” (11-Sep-12, *Ottawa aims to strip Canadian citizenship from 3,100 ‘cheats’*). A Globe and Mail news article (11-Sep-12, *Thousands of citizenships being revoked*) quoted the immigration minister Jason Kenney:

“In many jurisdictions around the world, simply having a Canadian passport can double your salary. It can give you access to some of the highest quality health care in the world at no cost,” he said. “It can give your children access to subsidized postsecondary education at our excellent colleges and universities, and, of course, can represent a political insurance policy.”

[. . .]

For the most part, said Mr. Kenney, these are wealthier individuals, many of whom reside in tax havens like the Arab Gulf states.

“This is an economic calculation for many of them,” he said. “If you can make big money in a tax haven while letting your kids go to McGill [University] for a fraction of a non-resident fee, and if you can come to Canada for expensive surgery when you need it, why wouldn't you do it?”

The reported “crackdown” on citizenship fraud not only draws attention to “a system rife with cheaters,” as described in a Calgary Herald editorial (13-Sep-12, *True Canadians; Bogus citizenship applicants must be dealt with decisively*), the extract also highlights how the media (and reportedly the government) have emphasised that it is wealthy immigrants, and not those with economic hardships, who have cheated the system to have access to the nation’s subsidised healthcare and education without paying tax and contributing to its tax-funded social services. The comment that Canada “can represent a political insurance policy” corresponds to a comment made in a Montreal Gazette editorial that Canada “serves as a bolthole in the event of political instability in the country where the fraudster is working” (12-Sep-12, *Crackdown on citizenship fraud is welcome news*).

Overall, immigration frauds of all sorts and kinds could be found published in the media throughout the sampling year. The government has also been criticised in the media for amplifying the extent that certain types of frauds have happened, such as marriages of convenience and refugee frauds. In the case of “marriages of convenience,” the regulatory requirement of a two-year conditional permanent residence, during which time the sponsored spouse has to cohabit with the sponsor, has purportedly “prompted a dozen critics to question the need for the measure given the lack of evidence that immigration marriage fraud is a serious problem in Canada,” and raised concerns that “the new measure would exacerbate problems abused immigrant women already face” (Vancouver Sun, 12-July-12, *Planned crackdown on marriage fraud panned*). The reported questioning by critics contradicts the message of prevalence and seriousness of immigration frauds, which is usually corroborated by comments and insights from

experts or individuals with insider perspectives. A news article reported that “the president of a group called Canadians Against Immigration Fraud said his organization has been pushing for the regulatory change [in spousal sponsorship] for the past five years,” and “he became involved in advocating for tougher rules on spousal sponsorship after the woman his son sponsored left him immediately after she got to Canada” (Globe and Mail, 27-Oct-12, *Immigrant newlyweds face probationary period*). In the case of residency and citizenship frauds, the writer of a National Post guest column (13-Sep-12, *Cut immigration fraud with smart cards*), who self-identified as “a senior immigration and refugee lawyer and former member of the Immigration and Refugee Board,” attested, “I believe there are easily tenfold more cases of fraudulently obtained citizenship and retentions of PR [permanent resident] status than are being investigated in CIC [Citizenship and Immigration Canada].” The writer recommended that “Ottawa should introduce a ‘PR smart card’ which would be mandatory for all PRs and would be swiped every time a PR left or returned to Canada.” The identity of being a legal expert on immigration issues is used to lend credence and facticity to the claim that “there are easily tenfold more cases” of frauds and the recommendation that a restrictive monitoring measure should become mandatory.

The aim of the analysis here is not to make an argument regarding the extent of immigration frauds, nor to make an evaluation as to whether there is a need for new policies and regulations. Rather, the point is to demonstrate how the abundant media reports on frauds and the different types of frauds, which are frequently linked to human smuggling and other serious crimes, create a sense of crisis which necessitates intervention. According to Hier and Greenberg (2002), the construction of a crisis centres

on the notions of “risk,” which harbours an element of uncertainty and disorder, and “risk-avoidance,” which involves the ability of the state to intervene and respond to the perceived crisis. In the media, the policy changes as crisis interventions are positioned and justified as being necessary, pragmatic and commonsensical political measures (as will be shown in the next section).

### **Combating Frauds: “Get-Tough” Policy Changes as Pragmatic and Commonsensical**

The construction of an immigration and refugee system in crisis due to rampant frauds, which lead to rampant abuses of tax-funded social services, enables government interventions in the form of more restrictive policy changes to be legitimised as rational and imperative. These policy changes are, thus, positioned as simply pragmatic and commonsensical policy changes to tighten the regulations and fix a system in crisis.

The justification for more restrictive policy changes employs the discursive strategies of nationalist positive self-presentation and affirmations of fairness, common-sense and pragmatism that are well-documented in discourse and critical discourse literature (e.g., Augoustinos & Every, 2007; van Dijk, 1992). The following extract is taken from a Montreal Gazette editorial on Bill C-31 (21-Feb-12, *Toward a better refugee-determination system*):

Canada has a long-standing and well-deserved reputation as a place of refuge for people fleeing persecution in their homelands. At the same time, however, it has also gained repute as an easy mark for the unscrupulous who fraudulently use our generous refugee determination system as a way to get into Canada without submitting to standard immigration requirements and procedures.

In the extract, Canada is affirmed as having “a long-standing and well-deserved reputation” for helping refugees and, hence, portrayed favourably as a nation that is generous and willing, and has demonstrated its generosity and willingness, to fulfill international humanitarian obligations. The nationalist positive self-presentation functions as a disclaimer to defend potential accusations of being inhumane and “turn[ing] our backs on those who need our assistance,” as a Toronto Star guest column has expressed about Bill C-31 (07-May-12, *Refugee bill returns to the bad old days*). The disclaimer is used to support more restrictive policy changes by asserting that the nation’s long-standing generosity and willingness have made it vulnerable to exploitation and “gained repute as an easy mark for the unscrupulous.” Thus, it also positions Canada as a victim of its own compassionate nature and casts the new policies as legitimate self-defense against the “unscrupulous.”

In the Montreal Gazette editorial, the introduction of the *Protecting Canada's Immigration Act* (Bill C-31) is described as a “legislation intended to make it more difficult for what immigration minister Jason Kenney calls ‘bogus’ refugee claimants to cheat the system and to streamline the existing cumbersome screening process.” The plans to collect biometric data of people entering Canada on a visitor visa, a work permit or a study visa, and “harsher penalties for those who engage in human smuggling, as well as for asylum-seekers who pay smuggling syndicates” are hailed as “advisable,” even though there is no explication in the article of what the “harsher penalties” are. It should be noted that a concession is made in the article that “refugee advocates have a point in their complaints that the legislation is too harsh in the removal of appeal provisions for persons from designated safe countries seeking refugee status.” This comment

demonstrates that proponents of “get-tough” policy changes to combat frauds and the ostensible national image of being “an easy mark” in the media do not necessarily express support for *all* of such measures by the federal government. The lack of “a committee of experts” to decide on the list of safe countries is criticised in the article as leaving too much power to the hands of the government in “a process in which humanitarian considerations could be overridden by political considerations.” This sentiment has been echoed by a Calgary Herald news article (17-Feb-12, *Tories to use majority to pass refugee bill*) which claimed that critics have argued “the Conservatives are playing politics and flexing their majority muscle with a tough new omnibus bill” on refugees.

Likewise, a Calgary Herald editorial (27-Jun-12, *Send them back; Kenney is right to get tough with foreign criminals*) opened with the following sentence to express approval for the *Faster Removal of Foreign Criminals Act*: “In the category of ‘why didn't anyone think of this before,’ comes new legislation introduced last week to quickly deport foreigners who commit crimes. Duh.” Thus, the new legislation, which grants the government power to deport individuals who are non-citizens and convicted of six months or more in prison while limiting their access to appeal, is positioned as a rational and commonsensical political decision. Its rationality and commonsensical nature are supported by the description of the case of Clinton Gayle, “a Jamaican who was convicted of multiple drug offences and sentenced to a term of two years less a day.” The government had “tried unsuccessfully to deport him” for six years beginning in 1990 to 1996, when he shot and killed a Toronto police officer. Furthermore, the article stated that “the Gayle case is not isolated,” and described another case of “career criminal”

Walford Uriah Steer, “a Jamaican who was one of those put on the Canada Border Services Agency deportation list last year, was convicted of more than 70 criminal acts by the time he was arrested.” It should be noted that the legislation has been criticised of being “over the top,” and “most of the so-called ‘foreign criminals’ affected are going to be permanent residents” who “have called Canada home for years but, for various reasons, have never become citizens. Some may be unaware of the distinctive rights attached to citizenship” (Toronto Star, 28-July-12, *Proposed law could ‘banish’ long-term residents*). According to another Toronto Star news article, “Canada’s top immigration lawyers” have warned that “thousands of permanent residents could lose their status and be deported for minor convictions, from shoplifting to traffic and drug offences” (04-Oct-12, *Thousands could face deportation for minor crimes under Tory bill*), even though the immigration minister Jason Kenney has been quoted as saying the legislation is “putting a stop to foreign criminals relying on endless appeals in order to delay their removal from Canada during which time they continue to terrorize innocent Canadians” (Toronto Star, 21-Jun-12, *Foreign criminals could face tougher rules*).

The following extract is taken from the end of the Calgary Herald editorial (27-Jun-12, *Send them back; Kenney is right to get tough with foreign criminals*):

The new legislation is the latest in a series of get-tough immigration policies from Kenney, ranging from crackdowns on bogus refugee claimants to evicting fake citizens and dealing with human smugglers and shady immigration consultants. Although we have taken issue on the scope of some of his policies, there is no arguing that Kenney is reshaping Canada’s image as a soft target for immigration. By doing so, he has also made more room for legitimate, productive and

deserving immigrants who play by the rules. Instead of accommodating criminals with endless appeals, we'll gladly take more of the law-abiding ones.

Costelloe (2014) proposed the concept of “editorial we” for media usage of the plural pronoun in ways that can be inclusive and exclusive of readers. In the extract, the first use of “we” addresses readership in an inclusive manner as critics who might “have taken issue” with “the scope of some” of the policy changes. However, the article neither provides an explanation of what the “issue” might be nor the reasons why “we” might “have taken issue” with the policy changes. The use of “we” here constructs a more or less united and homogeneous national in-group who, in general, supports the federal government since “there is no arguing that Kenney is reshaping Canada’s image as a soft target for immigration.” The assertion that “there is no arguing” presupposes an “ideology of consensus” with readers, which assumes that “the interests of the whole population are undivided, held in common; and that the whole population acknowledges this ‘fact’ by subscribing to a certain set of beliefs: everyone agrees that *p* and that *q* and that *r*” (Fowler, 1991, p. 49). At the same time, the statement depoliticises the new regulations as rational and sensible decisions to reshape a negative national image of being a “soft target.”

The second use of “we” is, again, inclusive of readers as members of an ingroup: the national “we” who are portrayed as being in consensus that the “get-tough immigration policies” have made “more room for legitimate, productive and deserving immigrants who play by the rules.” It is these “law-abiding” immigrants whom “we’ll gladly take more of” into the nation. There is a differential categorisation of immigrants into those who are “legitimate, productive and deserving,” as well as “law-abiding,” and,

therefore, are *like us* and can be welcome, from those who are “foreign criminals” and “bogus refugee claimants” and, therefore, are *not like us* and must be barred from entering the nation or expelled quickly if they have already been admitted. This differentiation follows a key discursive resource that has been documented in debates over asylum seekers, who are categorised into being “genuine” and “bogus,” in order to legitimise restriction of refugee access and rights in the nation (Augoustinos & Every, 2007; Lynn & Lea, 2003). It has also been documented in debates over minority group members of the nation (e.g., Nairn and McCreanor, 1991, examined the construction of the “good” and “bad” Maori in New Zealand).

Capdevila and Callaghan (2008) argued that the construction of the “good” and “bad” immigrants in British political speech conjures up the notion of *the others* who are *not like us*: immigrants who pose permanent internal threat and danger to the nation’s way of life and cultural identity because of the presumed impossibility that they could ever appropriately be part of the nation. Those “bad” immigrants are thus *unwanted* and their dangerous influence must be so carefully controlled that the identity of the immigrants must be established as “good” before they can step into the nation’s boundaries. In the present study, the frequent association in the media of “bad” immigrants with being cheaters and convicts of serious crimes warrants the claim that *they are not like us* and are *unwanted* for the danger that they pose to *our* society. Furthermore, the rhetorical appeal of being fair to “legitimate, productive and deserving” immigrants, who are “law-abiding” and whose place in the immigration and refugee system (and the nation) is arguably being clogged by “foreign criminals” and “bogus refugee claimants,” portrays the “get-tough” policy changes as *firm but fair*. According to

van Dijk (1992, p. 115), “most characteristic of this kind of [firm but fair] political discourse is not merely the nationalist self-praise, but also the strategic management of impression: whatever we decide, we are fair.”

The firm but fair appeal has also been made by the federal government to justify the cutback to the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) to provide only basic health coverage for refugee claimants, which is limited to services of urgent or essential nature and medications to prevent or treat diseases that can pose risk to public health or conditions of safety concern. The rhetorical victims of fairness are Canadians (we), in contrast to the previous enlistment of immigrants (they) who are like us. A Calgary Herald news article (26-Apr-12, *Rollback of refugee health benefits attacked*) reported:

Immigration Minister Jason Kenney argued Canadians don't get government-funded eye and dental care and neither should refugees. The move, he said, would save the government an estimated \$100 million over five years and he hopes it also will deter bogus claimants from taking advantage of Canada's generosity. "I just think that it's strange that we would be giving better health benefits to refugee claimants," he said, noting two-thirds of them ultimately fail to meet the criteria for refugee status. "This corrects that aberration."

Again, the nationalist self-presentation of “generosity” is raised in conjunction with the notion that this “generosity” is being exploited by “bogus claimants.” The category of “bogus claimants,” with its connotation of being illegitimate and deceiving, and thus undeserving of Canada’s “generosity,” is used to justify the cutback on the grounds that it will “deter bogus claimants” who have come to abuse and take advantage of Canada’s healthcare benefits. The firm but fair rhetoric is invoked by the immigration minister on

the claim that undeserving “bogus claimants” have been receiving healthcare benefits that are “better” than Canadians: *we* who are legitimate citizens of the nation and legitimate recipients of its social services. *We* are being wronged, first of all, by “bogus claimants” and, secondly, by faulty regulations of a broken refugee system. The situation can, thus, be called an “aberration” and the cutback “corrects that aberration” while saving “an estimated \$100 million over five years.” Similar to other “get-tough” policy changes, the cutback is positioned as being pragmatic and rational rather than value-laden.

The cutback on refugee healthcare benefits has been met with ample criticisms in the media, as well as protests and petitions from doctors and healthcare professionals. The grassroots coalition of Canadian Doctors for Refugee Care (CDRC) has been active since the cutback came into force in 2012. In December 2013, the CDRC and the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers (CARL) brought a legal challenge to the Federal Court that claimed the cutback to be unconstitutional and violating the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (CARL, 2013). A Federal Court ruling in July 2014 ordered the federal government to overturn its policy and return health care coverage to refugees who are affected by the cutback. Since November 2014, the federal government has implemented “temporary measures while appealing” the federal court decision (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2015). The CDRC held a National Day of Action on June 15, 2015, calling the federal government “to rescind once and for all the cruel and costly cuts” (<http://www.doctorsforrefugeecare.ca/>).

In what follows, I provide an analysis of some of the arguments that were presented in the press to contest the refugee health care cutback when it was introduced in 2012. A Globe and Mail column (15-May-12, *Cutting health care for asylum-seekers*

*makes no sense*) asserted that “it is hard to imagine a gesture more cynical than nickel-and-diming people who have escaped torture, rape, starvation, war and other forms of persecution and sought out Canada as the land of hope and opportunity.” Furthermore, the article stated,

Jason Kenney, Citizenship and Immigration Minister, has defended the cuts, saying that Canadians should not pay benefits for refugees that "are more generous than they are entitled to themselves." He even suggested that the mandatory medical examination that asylum-seekers undergo is "more preventive health care than most Canadians receive on a regular basis."

To suggest that a mandatory checkup looking for tuberculosis and intestinal worms is superior to daily access to medicare is beyond the pale. This is, at best, dishonest rhetoric.

It is true that not all Canadians have universal public health coverage for "supplementary" care like prescription drugs. But Mr. Kenney is conveniently ignoring that many do, through benefits in the workplace and various social programs for the poor, disabled and seniors. Shouldn't we be trying to improve access for all, rather than looking for new groups to exclude?

The federal government's justification that refugees receive "more generous" and "more preventive" healthcare benefits than "most Canadians" is denounced as, "at best, a dishonest rhetoric" for "conveniently ignoring" that "many" Canadians do receive supplementary healthcare benefits through "the workplace and various social programs." While the federal government has been reported to justify the cutback as a regulation to deter bogus refugee claimants and be fair to Canadians and, hence, position itself as

defending the interests of its people, this article criticises the regulation as being exclusionary and unfair to *genuine* refugee claimants: “people who have escaped torture, rape, starvation, war and other forms of persecution.” The formulation of a list of persecution serves as a powerful rhetorical device to highlight the plight of refugee claimants as being genuine in a counter-argument. Lynn and Lea’s (2003) analysis of the discursive construction of refugees in British national newspapers observed that “the concept of the ‘bogus’ refugee or asylum-seeker is seamlessly entered into the argumentative process, without explanation or qualification. Bogusness no longer needs to be explained – *it just is*” (p. 433). The naturalisation of the concept of “bogus” refugee claimants is evident in the newspaper articles that have been analysed in the present study, irrespective of their stance on the policy changes. The Globe and Mail column stated, “Let’s concede that there are some scammers . . . But there is no evidence that they are anything but a tiny minority of the 28,000 refugees Canada sees each year.” The statement is expressed as a concession rather than any explicit questioning or clarification of how “bogus”-ness is legally defined. Instead, “scammers” are particularised (Billig, 1985) as a distinguished group that forms “a tiny minority” from the general category of refugees to contest the new regulations as being problematic and posit that “the answer [to the issue of “scammers”] is not punishing legitimate asylum-seekers by cutting access to health services, particularly preventive care.”

Similarly, a Montreal Gazette column (04-Jul-12, *Cutting care for refugees sends appalling message*) asserted:

Canada has always had a stellar reputation for its humanitarian policies but this decision [refugee health benefits cutback] flies in the face of all things humane and

sends the message that the Canadian government is willing to turn its back on a vulnerable group of people.

What is interesting in the criticism is that the nationalist self-presentation of having a “stellar reputation” does not function to support the new policy. Rather, it reasserts a positive national identity to protest the new regulation as damaging *that* national identity. This rhetorical strategy appears quite commonly in the media to criticise Bill C-31 and the cutback to refugee healthcare benefits. Moreover, a Toronto Star editorial (23-Aug-12, *Ottawa’s blind policy*), which described the case of Daniel Garcia Rodriguez whose vision was saved by St. Michael’s Hospital eye surgeon Dr. David Wong “in an operation largely funded through his own practice and by the hospital,” proclaimed the cutback an “ill-judged effort to get tough with ‘bogus refugees,’” and stated, “bad government policy mustn't be excused because, in a few cases, others pick up the slack. Altruistic physicians like Wong can't be expected to carry the entire burden of care that's been irresponsibly cast aside by government.” The cutback is thus declared “an ill-judged effort to get tough” and a “bad government policy” made by a government that has “irresponsibly cast aside” *its* humanitarian obligations and downloaded *its* responsibilities for “others [to] pick up the slack.” There is a rhetorical separation of the federal government from “others,” who include citizens like “altruistic physicians,” to position the cutback as a problematic political decision that is not supported by the public.

### **Building the Economy: A Selective Market-Driven Immigration System**

Whereas “get-tough” policy changes are portrayed as pragmatic and commonsensical political interventions to reform an immigration and refugee system in crisis, some of the policy changes regarding economic immigration are portrayed as

making the immigration system “just-in-time” and “responsive” to Canada’s economic needs, albeit being “selective” for the “right” immigrants. As I will argue in this section, immigration discourse in the press is based on neoliberal ideology. In this discourse, emphasis is placed on the imperative of tailoring immigration to meet labour market needs, with the private business sector being given a primary role in the selection for the “right” immigrants rather than the government. Neoliberalism emphasises global competitiveness and a radically free market which seeks to maximise competition, vastly reduced government responsibilities in social welfare issues, cost recovery, individual independence and self-sufficiency, and privatisation and commodification of social services such as education and health care (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002; Clarke, 2004; Nafstad et al., 2009). Neoliberal ideology is also reflected in an increased focus on consumerism and the role of the consumer or customer.

In media coverage of the policy changes, economic immigration is commonly presented as necessary and essential for Canadian economic development and population growth. It is portrayed as a solution to address an aging population, which is accompanied by the prospects of a shrinking workforce and an increasing demand on healthcare and retirement benefits, and to meet labour shortages in the Western provinces as a result of new development in the construction and natural resource industries. The release of Statistics Canada’s 2011 census received considerable attention in the media in early 2012. The census was reported to have concluded that “migratory increase has taken on an increasingly important role in recent Canadian population growth” as a result of a decrease in fertility rate since the late 1960s and 1970s and an increase in the number of deaths from an aging population (Calgary Herald, 09-Feb-12, *Immigration drives 67%*

*of national growth*). As a Globe and Mail news article (04-Feb-12, *Stephen Harper's census*) stated, "Every census is used for political purposes, but this one will be the most significant in a generation. It will be the evidence Mr. Harper relies on to advance an austerity agenda." A Calgary Herald column (09-Mar-12, *Harper Tories intend to transform Canada*) described the federal government's agenda as "a budget that is revolutionary rather than evolutionary, one that will introduce sweeping structural changes in key areas of federal policy." Among the structural changes include budget cuts to "balance the books"; an overhaul of retirement benefits and an increase in the eligibility age for Old Age Security from 65 to 67 "to make them sustainable long-term"; the streamlining of oil pipeline construction in resource management; the negotiation of free trade agreements with India and the European Union; and "in immigration, the plan is, to a greater extent than ever before, to match the 250,000-plus annual newcomers to Canada with the needs of Canadian employers."

The matching of immigrants with labour market and employer needs has been heralded by the federal government as an overhaul "to build a faster, more flexible, just-in-time immigration regime," as reported in a Globe and Mail news article (01-Mar-12, *Immigration overhaul to let employers choose prospects*). The article also quoted the immigration minister Jason Kenney:

"Once people have been identified by employers, if they meet our other standards we would fast-track them into the country," Mr. Kenney said. "Frankly, the employer knows better than a big bureaucracy whose skills are needed and will be relevant to the Canadian labour market the minute they arrive."

The comment that “the employer knows better” shifts the primary role of immigration control and selection from the government toward the private business sector. Aligned with neoliberal ideology, the overhaul is positioned in a way that reduces state responsibilities of overseeing economic immigration and permits the market and employers a more active role and greater power in the recruitment of and selection for the “right” immigrants, or, as described in a Montreal Gazette news article (02-Nov-12, *Skilled-worker immigrant backlog to be eliminated three years early*), “to cherry-pick newcomers based on labour market needs as opposed to who applied first.”

Among the policy changes for an “active” labour market and employer-driven immigration system include the plan to create an expression-of-interest system which allows provinces and employers to select and nominate prospective immigrants from an online pool of skilled workers; the implementation of a separate program for skilled tradespersons to address labour shortages in construction and natural resources industries in the Western provinces; and the overhaul of the point system under the Federal Skilled Worker Program (See Table 1). In general, the announcement of a separate skilled tradespersons stream was reported favourably in the media. A Calgary Herald news article (11-Apr-12, *Skilled tradespeople to get speedier immigration queue*) indicated that “industry leaders are welcoming” the new program, which “will place a greater emphasis on their [tradespersons] practical training and work experience, rather than formal education,” and “more flexibility” in terms of language proficiency. The article quoted the immigration minister Jason Kenney, “You don't need university-level English to weld pipe. You need a workable level of English,” and, “In the past it was virtually impossible for skilled tradespeople to get in through our rigid economic programs at the federal level

[the Federal Skilled Worker Program]." The reputed rigidity of the existing system has been flagged by the federal government to push for policy changes in economic immigration, as illustrated in the following quote from a Globe and Mail news article (13-Apr-12, *Labour groups welcome changes to immigration rules for skilled workers*):

"In Canada we've been welcoming historic high numbers of immigrants, partly to help us fuel our prosperity in the future and fill growing labour shortages," he [Kenney] said. "But, to be honest, our immigration programs haven't been effective in addressing a lot of those shortages. Our immigration programs have become rigid and slow and passive."

In transforming the immigration programs to be more flexible, responsive and just-in-time to labour market needs, the backlog in the Federal Skilled Worker Program became an emblem of a cumbersome immigration system that must be transformed and modernised, as illustrated in a Montreal Gazette editorial (04-Apr-12, *Toward a better system of admitting immigrants*):

In the end, the federal government solved the problem of Canada's eight-year-long, 284,000-applicant immigration backlog the simplest way possible: it erased it

[ . . . ]

It might have been fairer for the government to sift through the waiting list for particularly worthy candidates, but the list had become so long that just starting over made pragmatic sense. The government's goal of creating a "fast and flexible economic immigration system" could never get off the ground as long as the enormous backlog existed.

In the extract, the federal government's "erasing" of pre-2008 unprocessed applications is described as making "pragmatic sense." The backlog measure has correspondingly been reported to be defended by the federal government as a "move, while understandably unpopular, is necessary" (Toronto Star, 23-Apr-12, *Immigration backlog slashed*).

Whereas the backlog measure has been justified by the federal government as a "necessary" move to build an immigration system that is "just-in-time" and "responsive" to labour market and employer needs, it has been disputed by critics as a political decision that is unjust and damaging to Canada's international reputation. The Toronto Star news article (23-Apr-12, *Immigration backlog slashed*) quoted a "frustrated applicant who has been waiting in the backlog since 2007" as having said that "first-come, first-served is a universal value." A National Post opinion article (18-Apr-12, *Canada can't afford new immigration plan*) asserted that "forcing applicants to wait close to 10 years and then implementing retroactive legislation refusing the pending backlog of applicants is the greatest sham in the history of Canadian immigration policy." There were numerous news reports in 2012 of a legal action led by Toronto immigration lawyer Tim Leahy on behalf of 900 applicants to contest the federal government's decision at the Federal Court. There was also news report of immigration applicants staging "simultaneous protests in London, Hong Kong, Chandigarh, Karachi and Lahore to raise awareness of their plight and to condemn Ottawa's plan" (Toronto Star, 30-Apr-12, *Wiping out immigration backlog to cost taxpayers more: Consultants for migrants will also be hit hard*).

In the discourse of a just-in-time and responsive market-driven immigration system, global competitiveness for skilled workers, educational professionals and

entrepreneurs is often mentioned. A Vancouver Sun news article (18-Apr-12, *Minister unveils program changes*) quoted the immigration minister Jason Kenney as having said that "all the changes will make Canada more competitive with other similarly placed countries and more attractive to the best from around the world, and will better match our immigration system with the best interests of the Canadian economy." Likewise, a Globe and Mail editorial (05-May-12, *Canada has to actively recruit*) stated, "To keep Canada attractive to the sharpest minds, the keenest entrepreneurs and greatest innovators, the country must move beyond an inefficient selection system and long waits." Hence, the backlog measure is argued to be a "necessary measure" even though it "puts a stain on Canada's credibility." It is also mentioned that,

The global market for human capital is voracious. There may always be migrants wanting to come to Canada, but they may not be those Canada needs. People with options are less and less likely to tolerate hidebound, cumbersome processes, waiting as long as eight years for their applications to be dealt with.

There is a differential categorisation of immigrants into those Canada needs and those it does not. Here, the undesirable immigrants are not portrayed as fraudsters or criminals. They are juxtaposed with "the right kind of immigrants" who possesses the talents and human capital for Canada to open its doors and welcome.

Abu-Laban and Gabriel (2002) argued that there have been "trends of selling diversity" in the 1990s in policy areas of immigration, multiculturalism, and employment equity, which are premised on a particular ideological discourse of globalisation and neoliberalism. In the media, the notion of "selling diversity" is manifested most obviously in phrases such as "it [immigration] is becoming a seller's market" (Globe and

Mail, 05-May-12, *Canada has to actively recruit*), “the country needs a much stronger sell” and “step up the effort to sell the Canadian brand around the world to get those with the most talent to see it not just as a land of tolerance for diversity, but as a nucleus of economic opportunity” (Globe and Mail, 12-May-12, *A pitch heard ‘around the world’*). A Toronto Star news article (08-Oct-12, *Canada's welcome mat is out for Irish workers*) stated that “Canada is in hot competition with Australia and New Zealand” to recruit Irish immigrants. Arguably, a consumer model of immigration is presented wherein different nations are sellers of their brands and immigrants of the “right kind” are consumers who shop and enter into a transaction with the nation of their choice to trade their human capital for permanent residence and potentially citizenship. The comment in the Globe and Mail news article of selling the Canadian brand “not just as a land of tolerance for diversity, but as a nucleus of economic opportunity,” portrays the familiar national identity of a multicultural country as distinct and self-evident while embracing a new aspect based on economic rather than sociocultural terms. The phrase “not just” implies that the national identity of a multicultural country is no longer considered sufficient to promote Canada on the international stage. As such, the ideological representation of Canada as “a land of tolerance for diversity” retreats, at least partially, for a neoliberal conceptualisation of Canada as “a nucleus of economic opportunity.”

### **Reforming Economic Immigration: Labour Market and the Internal Immigrant Others**

I have shown in the previous section that there is a prevailing market-driven immigration discourse based on neoliberal ideology in the media. In this discourse, the private business sector is given a primary role over the government in the selection for

the “right” immigrants, as well as an emphasis on global competitiveness and selling the Canadian identity in economic terms. I will illustrate in this section that the rhetorical emphasis on selecting the “right” immigrants is also premised on the social categorisation of immigrants as the non-contributing internal “others.” In the mainstream press, immigrants are often portrayed as draining public resources due to their lack of participation in the labour market. The neoliberal belief of individual independence and self-sufficiency, rather than social and institutional factors, is used to explain their economic hardship. In this respect, the national inclusion and belonging of immigrants is reduced to solely economic terms while their presence in Canadian society is cast as an economic burden.

In 2012, the federal government introduced an overhaul to the point system under the Federal Skilled Worker Program as part of the market-driven immigration reform. The point system has been in use since 1967 to assess immigrant applicants by assigning points for different criteria of eligibility including work experience, education and age. The overhaul emphasises higher level of language proficiency, younger age, and having a pre-arranged job offer or experience in one of the listed in-demand occupations. It also requires applicants in a regulated occupation, such as doctors, to submit an assessment that establishes their foreign credentials as being equivalent to Canadian requirements with their application. The following extract is taken from a Vancouver Sun news article (20-Dec-12, *Skilled worker program relaunch planned for May*):

"The reforms we're making are designed to dramatically improve the economic outcome of newcomers and to help Canada's productivity as our workforce shrinks and our population ages," Kenney said.

"Rather than bringing engineers to Canada to drive cabs or doctors to be corner store clerks, we want the engineers who we select to actually be able to work as engineers and the doctors to be able to work as doctors."

The comment of “bringing engineers to Canada to drive cabs or doctors to be corner store clerks” attunes readers to the high rates of unemployment and underemployment among immigrants living in Canada. It is a phenomenon that has been widely documented by social scientists and researchers in relation to *visible minority* immigrants, and has often been attributed to racial and ethnic discrimination; language proficiency which is mediated by having an accent (or not having the “right” accents); and institutional barriers such as credential devaluation and professional regulatory bodies acting as gatekeepers (e.g., Basran & Zong, 1998; Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Galabuzi, 2004; Grant & Nadin, 2007; Li, 2000).

The high rates of immigrant unemployment and underemployment are often mentioned in media coverage of the policy changes relating to the admission of skilled workers. A Globe and Mail editorial (11-May-12) featured the headline, *True Taxi Folklore*, and stated,

Thanks to the government of Canada, we now know that one urban myth is true. Overqualified immigrants do drive taxis - though not all are PhDs. Many of them are architects and engineers. This underscores Canada's need to reform its immigration selection so that newcomers fare better – pun intended - and can actually design highways, instead of ferrying people over them.

The remark that the taxi folklore, “an urban myth [that] is true . . . underscores Canada's need to reform its immigration selection so that newcomers fare better” echoes the

federal government's rationale that the policy changes are "designed to dramatically improve the economic outcome of newcomers" (Vancouver Sun, 20-Dec-12, *Skilled worker program relaunch planned for May*). It should be noted that the immigration minister Jason Kenney has allegedly qualified the overhaul's potential to "dramatically improve" immigrants' economic outcome with the remark that "the credential assessment won't guarantee foreign-trained professionals a job in their field since 'rigid' and 'Byzantine' regulatory agencies ultimately have the final say on licensing." The gatekeeper role of professional regulatory agencies has frequently been brought up in the media. According to a Vancouver sun opinion article (06-Apr-12, *Revamping immigration system won't solve all the problems*), "professional bodies are not always free of bias. In 2010, the Quebec Human Rights Commission found that foreign trained doctors faced discrimination when they applied for residency, a final stage of training before they are licensed."

Although the Globe and Mail editorial (11-May-12, *True taxi folklore*) reported that "one of every three taxi drivers is born in India or Pakistan" and "immigrants with business degrees from China, India and the Philippines had a hard time finding work; those who had studied in the U.S., U.K. and France did not," it is not often that the immigrants' visible minority status is explicitly referred to when comparing their economic outcome to another group of immigrants. Typically, the racialised context of immigrant underemployment is minimised in the economic comparison between "immigrants" and "Canadians," or between "new immigrants," who are more likely to be

visible minority, and “immigrants in the past.”<sup>7</sup> A Toronto Star article (09-Apr-12, *Kenney's big job shakeup*) indicated, “As Kenney argues, and studies confirm, many newcomers aren't doing as well as they might or as others have done in the past.”

However, no further information is provided for who the “newcomers” and those “in the past” are, or to account for why the “newcomers” fare worse economically.

Similarly, a National Post column (09-Feb-12, *A growing Canada, reshaped by immigration*) asserted,

Immigration, particularly of skilled workers, is commonly touted as a counterweight to declining fertility, and the current Conservative government is prioritizing the import of high-earning migrants in its immigration policies.

Unfortunately, recent research shows that, unlike previous generations of immigrants, today's new immigrants may not be net contributors to government coffers. In a paper released in May 2011 by the Fraser Institute, author Herb Grubel calculated that immigrants represent an annual "fiscal burden" of \$25-billion to Canadian taxpayers. Today's immigrants earn less and pay less tax, but get more from the government than their forebears. As a result, "the low average incomes of immigrants, combined with the provisions of our welfare state, have reduced the average per-capita incomes of [all] Canadians."

While the racialised context underlying the poor economic outcome of “today’s immigrants” is minimised, attention is drawn to their “fiscal burden of \$25-billion to Canadian taxpayers.” In particular, it is emphasised that “today’s immigrants” are not

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<sup>7</sup> The majority of immigrants arriving in Canada came from Europe until the late 1960s after the implementation of the point system, which resulted in a shift of the immigration pattern to “non-traditional sources” from outside of Europe (Triadafilopoulos, 2010).

“net contributors,” and “earn less and pay less tax, but get more from the government.” In the article, a recommendation is made to the federal government to “prune the welfare state not only to increase immigrants' net contribution to Canada, but to draw people who aren't looking for handouts.” The right-wing characteristic recommendation to “prune the welfare state” in order to “draw people who aren't looking for handouts” suggests that there are more people among “today's immigrants” who are “looking for handouts” than in “previous generations of immigrants.” The statement not only detracts from institutional responsibility to address racialisation in the labour market; it redistributes the blame on “today's immigrants” by claiming them to be cheaters and freeloaders.

Herbert Grubel, a co-author of the cited Fraser Institute paper, wrote a commentary in *Globe and Mail* (11-May-12, *Let the job market choose our immigrants*) which claimed:

This fiscal burden will never be repaid. The 2005 employment income of the sons of second-generation visible-minority immigrants (where one or both parents were born abroad), was only two-thirds of non-immigrant Canadians. Third and later generations will most likely have the same average incomes as other Canadians and thus will never pay enough taxes to compensate for the fiscal shortfall recorded by their parents.

The fiscal burden is reported in the article to be “around \$20-billion for immigrants who arrived between 1987 and 2011.” The visible minority status is invoked explicitly to highlight that it is visible minority immigrants who impose the fiscal burden, and support the claim that “the fiscal burden will never be repaid” because later generations of visible minority immigrants “will never pay enough taxes to compensate for the fiscal shortfall

recorded by their parents.” The minimisation of racialised context in the labour market is evident in the lack of regard that the second-generation of visible minority immigrants, who are native-born Canadians, earn “only two-thirds” in employment income in comparison to “non-immigrant Canadians.” Moreover, the federal government’s regulatory change to give preference to immigrant applicants who have a pre-arranged job offer is “recommended” along with the caution:

The avoidance of the fiscal burden also requires that the immigrants' prearranged contract offers pay equal to at least the average income of Canadians. This condition is needed to prevent a flood of low-skilled immigrants with little earnings capacity who would not pay enough taxes to cover the cost of the public programs to which they are entitled.

Ensuring that “the immigrants’ prearranged contract offers pay equal to at least the average income of Canadians” is certainly merited even if it is done *just* to avoid fiscal burden. However, the shift of attention to “low-skilled immigrants with little earnings capacity” insinuates that it is the immigrants’ “low-skilled” abilities and “little earnings capacity” that have contributed to their poor economic outcome (and the nation’s plight in the form of \$20-billion fiscal burden). It underplays the racialised context of immigrant underemployment, which has occurred among visible minority immigrants *despite* their high education and professional qualifications. Furthermore, the purported fiscal burden and “little earnings capacity” portray these immigrants as the “internal others,” who legally belong to the nation but are simultaneously deemed outsiders (Dhamoon & Abu-Laban, 2009), by reducing their national belonging solely to economic terms while casting them as an economic burden to society.

The selection for the “right” immigrants, who can meet labour market needs and be employed after arrival, emerges as a crucial matter in the federal government’s transformation of the immigration system, which allegedly can “dramatically improve the economic outcome of newcomers” (Vancouver Sun, 20-Dec-12, *Skilled worker program relaunch planned for May*). The racialised context of skilled-worker immigrant underemployment is redefined in terms of language and youth; factors that accentuate the individual and thus are more aligned with the neoliberal belief of individual independence and self-sufficiency. According to a Toronto Star news article (19-Aug-12, *Immigration focusing more on language, credentials*), “language proficiency - a strong indicator of how well new immigrants do economically - will become the most important factor” for the point system and, “the revised grid will favour younger immigrants by awarding a maximum of 12 points for applicants in the 18-35 age bracket.” The importance of language proficiency as a facilitator of labour participation is unquestionable. However, the new (or, perhaps, renewed) emphasis on language proficiency as a compelling reason for the regulatory change of admission hinges on the representation of an immigrant in Canada being someone who does not speak or speaks very little English or French, and, by extension, is implied to be non-white, have low labour participation and rely on tax-funded public resources.

The following extract is taken from a Vancouver Sun editorial (19-Apr-12, *Ensuring immigrants' success - and that of Canada - is the purpose of reforms*):

None of this is the fault of the immigrants who are seeking a better life for themselves and their children and who often feel they've been sold a bill of goods after they arrive.

They find their degrees are diminished, their professional accreditations are not recognized, that "Canadian work experience" is required and that English or French is mandatory in the workplace.

Although the devaluation of immigrant education and professional credentials in the labour market is acknowledged, the comment of finding that "English or French is mandatory in the workplace" suggests a low level of language proficiency among skilled-worker immigrants who are already in Canada, as well as a certain level of paternalistic sympathy toward these immigrants: they are not at fault for seeking a better life and yet not realising that speaking one of the official languages would be mandatory in the workplace. The representation of a typical immigrant as someone who lacks language proficiency and, therefore, does not participate fully in the labour market not only lends legitimacy to the regulatory change in skilled worker admission; it directs attention to and emphasises individual self-sufficiency over social and institutional factors.

Politically, individual self-sufficiency is affirmed in economic terms through the selection criteria of having a job offer or being in an occupation that is in-demand; being young; and having language proficiency in English or French. The federal government's emphasis on being "just-in-time" and "responsive" to labour market and employer needs through the selection of immigrants with a job offer or having work experiences in an in-demand occupation has been criticised in the media as focusing on short-term needs of the labour market over long-term needs of the nation. A Toronto Star news article (06-Oct-12, *Study assails immigration policies: Researchers examine changes brought by Tory government*) cited a report by Maytree Foundation as having raised "concerns about how these changes are reshaping Canada's future as a country for immigrants," including

the changes to economic immigration and refugee determination, the moratorium on family sponsorship, the tightening of citizenship requirements, and an increasing reliance on temporary foreign workers. The article quoted a co-author of the report, Queen's University public policy professor Naomi Alboim as saying, "It's the way these changes are made, the speed and breadth of these changes. It's too much, too fast," and, "we haven't really had the opportunity to understand what they all mean, how they will interact with each other, and what potential impacts these changes will have."

The selection in the skilled worker program for young immigrants preferably between the ages of 18 to 35 has also been problematised in the media. According to a National Post news article (02-Oct-12, *Youth jobless squeeze; Immigration plan aims at 18-to-35 group*), the criterion has been argued by the federal government as "an essential shift to fill the tax-generating gap being left by the exodus of Baby Boomers from the labour market" with immigrants who are "more likely to succeed and contribute more in terms of taxes." As suggested by the article's headline, *Youth Jobless Squeeze*, the new regulation has been disputed on the grounds that it will be "sure to aggravate the already troubling unemployment problem for Canada's existing youths." The viewpoint that new skilled-worker immigrants can diminish the job prospects of Canadians, particularly youths, marginalised groups like Aboriginal Peoples, and earlier immigrants is frequently expressed in the media. Similarly, the announcement of a separate admission program for skilled tradespersons has been welcomed as a solution to address labour shortages in the construction and natural resources industries; yet there are concerns that the "scheme is moving in the wrong direction" (Calgary Herald, 11-Apr-12, *Skilled tradespeople to get speedier immigration queue*). The president of the Alberta Federation of Labour was

quoted, "The real question is whether we should be opening the floodgates to tradespeople from outside the country when we have 1.4 million Canadians looking for work," and there are concerns that the new immigration program might "remove the incentive for construction employers to take on Canadian apprentices and train the next generation of Canadian tradespeople." The polarised discourse on economic immigration has long been documented in research on immigration (e.g., Bauder, 2008). On the one hand, economic immigration is considered to be positive and necessary to meet labour shortages, help build the nation's economy and make it more globally competitive. It is also considered to be imperative at the current time to help fill the gap of the population structure and workforce as a result of low fertility rate and in anticipation of the retirement of Baby Boomers. On the other hand, economic immigration is considered to be threatening as it constitutes labour market competition, especially to the more vulnerable groups of the nation.

### **“Biting the Bullet”: Family Reunification as Draining Healthcare and Public Resources**

I have argued that the emphasis on the private business sector as having a primary role in the selection of the “right” immigrants involves the neoliberal belief of individual independence and self-sufficiency. Furthermore, while economic immigrants of the “right” kind are positioned as desirable, the argument for their selection is premised on the social categorisation of immigrants in Canada as the non-contributing internal “others.” Here, I will illustrate how family-class immigration of parents and grandparents is also positioned as being problematic for public resources and, thus, must be limited in this market-driven immigration discourse.

In her examination of the federal Liberal government's immigration policies under Jean Chrétien (1993 – 1997), Abu-Laban (1998, p. 200) stated that “the emphasis on selecting immigrants who will not drain public resources is principally based on pitting (good) self-sufficient independent immigrants against (bad) family class immigrants.” Under the current federal Conservative government of Stephen Harper, market-driven immigration based on neoliberal ideology selects the “good” immigrants who meet the economic criteria to be independent and self-sufficient and are “right” for the labour market: immigrants who purportedly will not become unemployed or underemployed after arrival and drain tax-funded public resources. The emphasis on selecting the “good” immigrants who are “right” for the labour market follows in the footsteps of its Liberal predecessor's perspective on family-class immigration. The following extract is taken from a Globe and Mail news article (06-Nov-12, *Ottawa moves to unify families*):

Canada will welcome 25,000 parents and grandparents as immigrants next year, despite concerns about the economic impact of targeting older rather than younger immigrants.

Citizenship and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney said the federal government has decided to "bite the bullet" on family reunification in order to reduce a backlog of applications that had grown unmanageable.

"I don't suggest that this is an economic benefit to Canada," Mr. Kenney said.

"We have a certain commitment to family reunification as one element of our immigration program, but as I've said, it has to be limited because of fiscal constraints."

As illustrated in the extract, “family reunification” has become synonymous with immigration of “parents and grandparents,” and, therefore, “seniors” who “will not be in the tax-paying workforce.” The implication is that the admission of this class of immigrants has no economic benefit to the nation; it is a drain on healthcare and other public resources that pragmatically “has to be limited because of fiscal constraints” when there are already concerns over a greying population. It is a decision that the government has to “bite the bullet” out of “certain commitment” to an element in the immigration system, albeit one that has to be “limited” and tightly controlled to avoid further constraints on public resources.

According to a Vancouver Sun news article (18-May-12, *Newcomers over age 50 costly*), “older immigrants cost governments about \$3 billion a year in health care, while none of those immigrants over age 50 has reported earning more than \$15,000 a year.”

The immigration minister Jason Kenney is quoted in the article as having said:

Family sponsorship is a privilege, not a right. We are committed to family reunification within our system, but it has to be linked to our scarce public resources. It's not fair for us to raise taxes on Canadians to pay for future health care costs for folks who've never lived in the country or paid taxes in it.

The statement that “family sponsorship is a privilege, not a right,” affirms family sponsorship as under the authority of the government to grant and not a democratic right of immigrants to demand from the government. Note that family sponsorship is not entirely dismissed in the extract. Framed as a “privilege,” it is formulated as a special benefit to be granted and, by implication, can be justifiably restricted during hard times in consideration of “scarce public resources.” The rhetorical appeal of being fair to

Canadians positions family-class immigrants as *the others* who are *unwanted* for the costs that they can pose to healthcare and public resources, and the threat that their presence might have on the economic wellbeing of Canadians since taxes would have to be raised to cover *their* costs. It also asserts the common-sense notion that a nation has the right and duty to protect its “scarce public resources” from *them*: “folks who’ve never lived in the country or paid taxes in it.”

The political rhetoric of healthcare costs imposed by family-class immigrants has often been endorsed in the media, as illustrated in the following extract from a National Post column (21-Apr-12, *At last, a sane policy for immigration*):

At long last, Canada has a federal government that is willing to fix the country's broken immigration system and become what it should be: the human resources and recruitment department for the economy.

[ . . . ]

The biggest drain is family reunification on our health care. For many years, Ottawa allowed in as many as 60,000 parents and 20,000 grandparents annually, creating a huge financial burden on our health systems.

Reunification should be possible, but only if relatives support their family members and pay for their health care. This is the case in Australia and in the United States.

Underlying the commendation for the federal government’s willingness to “fix the broken immigration system” and turn it into “the human resources and recruitment department for the economy” is a familiar distinction between “good” immigrants, who contribute to the economy, and “bad” immigrants, who drain public resources. The

figures of “60,000 parents and 20,000 grandparents annually” are presented to warrant the claim that family reunification is “the biggest drain” and creates “a huge financial burden on our health systems,” and justify the recommendation that “reunification should be possible, but only if relatives support their family members and pay for their health care.” Additionally, the mention that it is “the case in Australia and in the United States” normalises the recommendation as a political practice that has been in use internationally. The Vancouver Sun news article (18-May-12, *Newcomers over age 50 costly*) reported that “Kenney rejected the notion that Canada was moving toward a two-tiered health care system for immigrants, but indicated a premium aimed at defraying health care costs is something the government is considering.” The idea of a premium to be paid up-front is allegedly supported by Vancouver-based immigration lawyer Richard Kurland who “thinks \$150,000 up front would be reasonable and that many immigrants he's spoken with are more than willing to pay a premium.” However, it has also been criticised by Queen's University law professor Sharry Aiken as a shift that means “family reunification is for those who can afford to pay.”

In late 2011, the federal government announced a two-year moratorium on new sponsorship applications for parents and grandparents and introduced the Parent and Grandparent Super Visa. The super visa is a “10-year, multiple-entry super-visa that requires visiting relatives to show proof of a year's worth of health insurance,” as reported in the Vancouver Sun article (18-May-12, *Newcomers over age 50 costly*). A Toronto Star news article (15-Mar-12) featured the headline, *Super Visa falls short for many families*, and reported, “As of February, 1,361 Super Visa applications had been assessed, with 313 - or 23 per cent - of the cases refused,” even though the immigration

minister Jason Kenney had allegedly “touted it as the ‘most generous’ visa provision for travellers to Canada.” The super visa has been criticised in a Globe and Mail commentary article (09-May-12, *Shaping the face of Canada*) as moving “away from permanent residence for our immigrants’ parents and grandparents” and choosing “transience over inclusion.”

Despite criticisms of the super visa and concerns over the idea of a healthcare premium payment for family reunification, the prioritisation of economic over family-class immigration and refugee admission by the federal government has often been reported favourably in the media. According to a Montreal Gazette news article (16-Mar-12, *Majority supports economic policy*), an Ipsos Reid poll that was “conducted exclusively for Postmedia News and Global Television” found that “a majority of Canadians support the Conservative government’s management of the economy and skills-focused immigration reforms.” More specifically, on the immigration front, “roughly eight in 10 Canadians agree that Canada should reform its immigration system to focus more on the skills necessary for today’s economy, rather than on humanitarian and family reunification needs.” The claim of a majority support of “roughly eight in 10 Canadians” suggests that the federal government’s political decisions democratically reflect the people’s viewpoints on immigration issues, even though the article does not indicate how the poll was conducted or its sample size.

The federal government’s immigration direction, however, is not without challenge in the media. As reported in a Globe and Mail news article (06-Nov-12, *Ottawa moves to unify families*), NDP immigration critic Jinny Sims has allegedly expressed concerns over the federal government’s “foreboding language on the future of family

reunification,” and asserted that “reunification also means the economic advantage of additional caregivers and greater stability for many families” and “a factor that could help attract skilled immigrants.” A Toronto Star column (09-Mar-12, *Kenney's immigrant song sounds strangely off-key*) stated:

What helped cushion the damage lurking in the uncertainty among those earlier waves? Clearly it was family and community. But this is what Kenney's policies will undermine, by weakening family unification as a rule, even though most Canadians support it. Instead, who will those entrepreneurial professionals turn to? Their employers and the government so well-disposed toward them. As relatively isolated individuals, they'll have fewer ways to draw on their culture and thread it into their new nation's. But they may find time, while rising to their \$79,000 average, to join their local Tory riding association.

In the extract, family reunification is declared to be “a rule” that “most Canadians support,” which presumes there is consensus on the matter among readers (Fowler, 1991). This is a common rhetorical strategy that has also been used by some newspaper articles which express support for the federal government’s decision. However, instead of being a drain on health care and public resources, family reunification is portrayed in the extract as a “cushion” for people who have arrived as “entrepreneurial professionals” and are “relatively isolated individuals.” Although economic immigrants remain the centre of discussion, there is an extension of immigrant national inclusion and belonging beyond economic terms to non-economic aspects of “family and community.” This extension translates to a need for family-class immigration lest economic immigrants will “have fewer ways to draw on their culture and thread it into their new nation’s.” Thus, there is a

rhetorical deployment of the ideological representation of Canada as a cultural mosaic in which different ethnic groups and their cultures are interwoven to criticise the federal government's stance on immigration issues.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have presented and discussed the findings of an empirical study in which I examined the rhetoric on recent immigration and refugee policies in mainstream Canadian press using a discursive analytical approach. Abu-Laban (2014a) argued that the current Conservative Government has been engaging in a “reform by stealth” to reconfigure the country's national narrative with an emphasis on military history, patriotic citizenship and enduring ties to British institutions and traditions in ways that exclude or include ethnic minorities “only on the terms of those in power” (p. 150). The extensive overhaul in immigration and refugee policies has been described as “potentially positive” for certain policy changes but “problematic” for other changes (Alboim & Cohl, 2012). In the present study, I have argued that the ample coverage of immigration and refugee frauds in the mainstream press constructs an immigration and refugee system in crisis due to rampant frauds. This construction is premised on representing Canada as a generous and compassionate country, but also as a soft and easy target for exploitation, while implicating immigrants and refugee claimants as unscrupulous exploiters and as criminals or accomplices. I have argued that the construction of a crisis enables the policy changes for more restrictive immigration and refugee admission to be justified and positioned as necessary, pragmatic and commonsensical government interventions.

I have also illustrated in my analysis that immigration discourse in the media is predominantly based on neoliberal ideology. In this discourse, rhetorical emphases are placed on the needs to select the “right” immigrants who are economically independent and self-sufficient and to give a primary role to the market in this selection. The national inclusion and belonging of immigrants is thus conditioned on and reduced to mainly economic terms, while those already in Canada are cast as the internal “others” who lack economic participation and impose an economic burden on society. Overall, social categorisation of immigrants into “right” (and, thus, “good”) and “bad,” and refugee claimants into “genuine” and “bogus,” are deployed to restrict the admission of those considered a burden on public resources (i.e., refugees, family-class immigrants).

In the next chapter, I will discuss some of the implications of the policy changes and the prevailing neoliberal, market-driven immigration discourse in the mainstream Canadian press, followed by a discussion on some of the limitations of the thesis and possibilities for future research.

## **Chapter 3: Discussion**

The first aim of this thesis has been to critically examine the shifting, and often contradictory, meanings and implications of Canadian multiculturalism. In the introductory chapter, I first provide a brief historical account on the institutionalisation of multiculturalism for Canadian society. I then discuss multiculturalism in terms of political ideology and lived ideology. Finally, I conceptualise and discuss multiculturalism as a “contested space” where politics intersect with academic and public discourses with respect to ethnocultural diversity issues stemming from immigration. This chapter serves also as a historicised account of the sociopolitical context in Canada for the second aim of the thesis, an empirical study examining the rhetoric regarding recent immigration and refugee policy changes in mainstream Canadian press. A brief summary of the critical discussion and empirical analysis has been provided at the end of each chapter, respectively. In this concluding chapter, I discuss some of the implications of the policy changes and the prevailing market-driven immigration discourse in mainstream Canadian press. I end with some reflections on the limitation and outline some possibilities for future research that can extend the work of this thesis, as well as offer a reflexive account of my positionality as a researcher.

### **Constituting Subjectivities**

At this point in time, it is difficult to discern the potential long-term impacts of immigration and refugee policy changes on Canadian society or how the material consequences of the policies might influence immigrant and refugee subjectivities. Lacroix (2004) examined refugee subjectivities in relation to the refugee determination process at the time in an interview study with eight refugee claimants from Africa.

Interviewees constructed the experience of being a refugee as out of their control, which was accompanied by feelings of loss and sadness, and as a profound rupture of their life, including their roles and responsibilities toward their family and community. The process of refugee determination was described as painful, disempowering and fraught with anxiety and uncertainty of what to expect and what was expected of them. In addition, the claimant status was constructed by the interviewees as a barrier to finding work and forcing them onto welfare, and described as disruptive and humiliating to their subjectivity as a professional in their field and their capacity to contribute to society. Lacroix concluded that,

The refugee claimant subjectivity is imposed on them, one fraught with contradictions and confusion, a direct impact of Canadian refugee policy. . . . Claimants' discourse reflected this contradiction between official discourse, which is humanitarian and welcoming to "real" refugees, and practices which impede their self actualization through participation in the society through work and family (p. 164).

Arguably, the current political and public discourses for more restrictive admission of refugees and family-class immigrants and the selection for the "right" immigrants, along with changes in citizenship rules and reported "crackdown" on residency and citizenship frauds, could negatively impact the subjectivities of refugees and immigrants living in Canada. In the next section, I discuss the conception of the ideal immigrant in a prevailing immigration discourse based on neoliberal ideology and market logic, and the implications such a conception might have on immigrant settlement and integration.

## **The Neoliberal Conception of the Ideal Immigrant**

Taking the media as constituting a readily accessible site for public discourses, I have argued that the prevailing immigration discourse in mainstream Canadian press is based on neoliberal ideology. Clarke (2004) stated that the conception of the individual in neoliberal ideology rests on distinctive understandings of “independence” and “self-sufficiency.” The neoliberal individual is abstracted from social relationships and constructed as a market actor in the pursuit of rational self-interest. In the Canadian press, emphases are placed on the imperative to tailor immigration for the labour market and to select the “right” immigrants who are independent and self-sufficient and, most importantly, can meet immediate labour market needs. Hence, independence and self-sufficiency are defined first and foremost in terms of labour market participation.

In this neoliberal, market-driven immigration discourse, immigrants are first objectified as consumers in the pursuit of a rational self-interest for a desirable destination, while Canada is positioned paradoxically as desirable but precariously so. Its desirability is contingent on its ability to be globally competitive and able to sell itself better to the “right” immigrants. Moreover, since the “right” immigrants are considered to be those who can meet labour market needs, they are economised as market actors and thus potential taxpayers in contrast to refugees and family-class immigrants of parents and grandparents. Objectified and economised as consumers, market actors and taxpayers, the settlement and integration of the “right” immigrants appear to be centred on the notion of economic integration in media discourse (and arguably in political discourse as well) in the context of the present study with its focus on the immigration reform. In other words, the ideal immigrant needs to have a job, participates in the labour

market, and pays taxes. There is a lack of discussion regarding the integration of immigrants into Canadian society socioculturally and politically. In this respect, cultural diversity as a result of immigration and its value for Canadian society, which has long been valorised by the national identity of being a multicultural country and the metaphor of a cultural mosaic, is largely absent in this market-driven immigration discourse. Instead, economic contribution figures prominently as the most important value of an ideal immigrant.

### **The Silencing of Inequalities**

In terms of policy making, the rhetorical emphasis on selecting the “right” immigrants has materialised in the form of new regulations for economic immigration. These regulations include an overhaul to the point system to reward more points for higher level of language proficiency, younger age, and having a pre-arranged job offer or work experience in one of the listed in-demand occupations. Immigrant applicants in a regulated profession are also required to submit an assessment of their foreign credentials. In the media, the rationale for the new regulations is often made in connection to the high rates of unemployment and underemployment of visible minorities living in Canada, with the regulations being justified as measures to improve immigrant labour market participation by selecting for the “right” immigrants. Furthermore, the justification is also premised on the social categorisation of immigrants living in Canada as the internal “others” who lack language proficiency and, thus, do not participate fully in the labour market and pose an economic burden on society. In this respect, the term, “immigrants,” is used to imply persons of visible minority status even though this state-defined status is not explicitly mentioned.

The predominant discourse in the press seems to stress economic hardship of immigrants living in Canada as a problem caused by the immigrants themselves because of their lack of language proficiency and low skilled abilities, or by professional regulatory agencies acting as gatekeepers. These kinds of tropes not only minimise the racialised context of the labour market where visible minorities fare worse economically; they arguably absolve the government from responsibilities to address existing institutional or structural factors that have contributed to social and economic inequalities. Furthermore, failure to be a successful participant of the labour market appears to carry moral connotations of being a cheater and freeloader who is “looking for [welfare] handouts” (National Post, 09-Feb-12, *A growing Canada, reshaped by immigration*). By emphasising individual immigrants’ responsibilities to effectively maximise their human capital in the pursuit of economic opportunities and economic well-being, political and public debates on social justice and inequalities are silent and rendered as unimportant social issues.

### **The Problematisation of Family Reunification**

The embedding of neoliberal ideology in concrete policy making can also be observed in the new regulations with regard to sponsorship of parents and grandparents. According to Chen and Thorpe (2015), family sponsorship was regarded positively by the government in the years following World War II and it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that questions started to arise about an influx of unskilled immigrants under family sponsorship. But, immigration of spouses, dependent children, elderly parents and grandparents over sixty years of age continued to occupy an unquestionable legitimacy. Therefore, the sponsorship of parents and grandparents has not been problematised by the

government until recently. Chen and Thorpe argued that this problematisation is driven by a low birth rate and an aging population.

In terms of concrete policy making, the problematisation of immigration of parents and grandparents by the government has led to the introduction of a 10-year multi-entry super visa, which allows eligible applicants to come to Canada as visitors provided that their sponsors demonstrate financial support and cover their health insurance. Regulations of family sponsorship are arguably political measures to define who should and should not be considered close family members. As such, the super visa circumscribes the definition of family to that of a nuclear family at the expense of the importance of extended families in many cultures. Chen and Thorpe (2015) commented that the super visa produces inequalities in rights to family life and the cross-generation functioning of the family by rendering family reunification dependent on the health status of elderly family members, family purchasing power, and private insurance companies.

### **Impact of Representing the “others”**

I have demonstrated in my analysis that the sponsorship of parents and grandparents is often positioned in mainstream Canadian press as draining public resources and threatening the economic well-being of Canadian society. Abu-Laban (1998, p. 205) argued that,

The problemitization of immigrant families ultimately fuels legitimacy for the idea that immigrants are a social/welfare/economic cost to Canadians and Canadian society and may, ultimately, negatively impact all naturalized Canadians as well as Canadians who are ethnocultural and racial minorities.

As a site for public discourses, the Canadian press is not lacking in representing immigrants and refugees as economic burdens, cheaters, fraudsters and queue jumpers. These representations raise questions of how they might be construed and used to fuel the binary framework of “us/them,” which has long been used to make the racialised distinction between “us” as the civilised, tolerant, and liberal West and “them” as the uncivilised and barbaric (Arat-Koc, 2005; Haque, 2010).

Regarding the implications on the international stage, Alboim and Cohl (2012) in their review of the policy changes that had been implemented between 2008 and 2012 commented that representing people coming to Canada as cheaters, fraudsters, and queue jumpers in policy-making “can create an anti-immigrant climate which does not send a welcoming message to attract the immigrants that Canada needs” (p. 70). It is arguable that the “anti-immigrant climate” not only has potential consequences for Canada’s global competitiveness for the “right” immigrants; it also has major consequences on the social relations between majority and minority groups, particularly with immigrants and visible minorities often being categorised and portrayed in the media as the non-contributing internal “others” who pose economic burdens on society.

I began my empirical study of media representations with the assumption that multiculturalism and the national identity of a land of diversity would have been an inevitable topic in the discourse regarding the immigration reform. Therefore, the lack of discussion about multiculturalism or cultural issues in the rationale provided for the immigration policy changes is surprising. The identity of a multicultural country with its cultural mosaic has enjoyed great popularity domestically among Canadians (Adams, 2007; Haque, 2010; Reitz, 2014) and is used to market Canada on the international stage

as a tool to enhance its global competitiveness (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002; Kymlicka, 2004; Winter, 2015). However, the symbolic significance of multiculturalism is dissociated from the practical level of policy making regarding immigration and the discourse about these policies. Instead, immigration policies appear to be driven by neoliberal ideology that emphasises economic benefits. The discourse about these policies is thus centered on neoliberal ideology, along with messages about scarcity of public resources and the need to safeguard against the immigrant “others” who drain these resources. In this discourse, the emphasis on selecting the “right” immigrants as the “welcomed/model others” polarises economic immigrants against the “unwelcomed others” including family-class immigrants and refugees. Such polarisation constructs a social hierarchy among different categories of immigrants in a way that specifies some belonging in the national space for those who are viewed as being able to contribute economically at the exclusion of those who are viewed as threatening to the economic well-being of society. If the metaphor of a multicultural country has fostered the social imaginary of Canadian society as a horizontal space, recent immigration policy making and the rationale provided for these policies construct a ladder of social classes among immigrants.

### **Limitation and Future Direction**

In my introductory chapter, I have discussed Canadian multiculturalism as a political framework for society and how it became institutionalised, a political ideology embedded within a broader neoliberal democratic framework, a lived ideology that has immensely influenced the social imaginary of national identity, and a “contested space” where political, academic and public discourses intersect and result in diverse and

contradictory arguments and claims about its societal impact. While I have endeavoured to review and include as many resources as I could during the development of ideas and thoughts and writing of the chapter, I cannot claim that I have covered the full complexities, nuances, and contradictions associated with the term, “multiculturalism,” in the Canadian context. It is a term that traverses multiple disciplines, each with their theoretical approaches to knowledge and ways of gathering, analysing, and presenting data and making claims. I have also barely touched on the meanings and implications of multiculturalism at an international level, especially in consideration of the alleged retreat from the term in many European states nowadays.

My focus on mainstream Canadian press published in English language for the empirical study limits my data source and, thus, my analysis in specific ways. First, although sampling articles from the two national newspapers and four provincial newspapers has helped manage the process of data gathering and the number of articles for the data corpus, I cannot claim to have regional representativeness of local newspapers across the nation. The newspapers were chosen because they are among the most widely distributed daily newspaper and are based in the provinces with the largest shares of immigrant and refugee settlement. However, there are no data from many other provinces, especially the Eastern provinces, and the territories. Secondly, the focus on English language newspapers limits the analysis to the rhetoric presented in English language media and neglects potentially different rhetoric in the French language media or the so-called ethnic media. The focus on mainstream daily press also excludes alternative forms of news communication. These include online press, such as the Huffington Post, or social media sites. While news reporting in mainstream daily press is

constructed by professional journalists, columnists, and the editorial teams, the content of other media sites may be constructed by members of the general public without professional training in news reporting. An analysis of the mainstream daily press can only speak to how news are constructed and made available to readers, but cannot make claims about how the news will be taken up by readers. Thus, an analysis of alternative media sites written by the general public can provide an interesting comparison to the analysis on mainstream daily press with regard to immigration policies and related immigration issues.

Multiculturalism in terms of representing Canada as a land of diversity is seldom invoked in the prevailing neoliberal, market-driven immigration discourse in the press. It is more often that Canada figured into the discourse as a generous and compassionate country and as a soft target for abuse. I have analysed these shifting images of Canada in the context of how they have been invoked to support or contest the policy changes. It might also be a function of the key search words (i.e., immigration policy/reform, refugee reform, Jason Kenney) that I had used to sample the newspaper articles that alternative representations of Canada have not figured as prominently in the discourse. I did not include multiculturalism as a key search term due to my assumption that multiculturalism and its various connotations would figure inevitably into the immigration discourse given the prominence of the national identity as a multicultural country and a land of diversity. However, it is possible that an expansion of key search words to include terms that capture the identity of a multicultural country could provide an opportunity to further examine the shifting representations and meanings of Canada and multiculturalism, and how they might have been transformed, validated, or undermined in an immigration

discourse encroached by neoliberal ideology and market logic. Furthermore, my analysis has focused on media representations of the immigration reform at a broad level to take into account the major policy changes that influence economic immigration, family-class immigration and refugee admission. I have thus not provided an account of potentially different discourses associated with each of these different categories of migrants.

### **A Reflexive Account of the Thesis**

The importance of reflexivity and taking accountability for one's research has been widely acknowledged within social science research involving the interpretation of qualitative data. In this section, I reflect on how my positionality might have influenced the undertaking of my doctoral thesis. As indicated by Mauthner and Doucet (2003), methods of data analysis carry the epistemological, ontological and theoretical assumptions of the researchers who use them. I came to my doctoral research from a positivistic and quantitative background. While my theoretical and methodological position explicitly rejected the positivistic notion of a detached and objective researcher who was searching for the "truth out there," I nonetheless felt the tension to render my role invisible especially at the early stage of data analysis and writing. This was coupled with the tension of having to reconcile the social constructionist notion that my analysis was an interpretative account among many other possible accounts. These tensions meant that it was challenging to see how my analysis was positioned and guided by my cultural background, sociopolitical stance, and my view of myself as a researcher committed to social justice issues.

During the data analytical processes, I came across the book *The Discursive Construction of National Identity* by Wodak et al. (2009) who stated,

The aim of Critical Discourse Analysis is to unmask ideologically permeated and often obscured structures of power, political control, and dominance, as well as strategies of discriminatory inclusion and exclusion in language use. . . . Critical Discourse Analysis, which is committed to an emancipatory, socially critical approach, allies itself with those who suffer political and social injustice. Its aim is therefore to intervene discursively in given political and social practices (p. 8).

I found such a sociopolitical stance resonated positively with my view of myself as a researcher committed to social justice issues. In this respect, I would also be more likely to criticise those who I consider to be in a social position of power. Reflecting back on the data analytical processes, I am more aware of how adopting such a sociopolitical stance has led me to particular ways of analysing media representations of the immigration reform. I accorded more weight during data analysis to critiquing the rationale that had been provided to support the policy changes driven by the Conservative federal government, who I considered to be in the position of power. This was also partly because such critique resonated well with the theoretical and methodological literature on discourse and critical discourse analysis that I was exploring for my thesis, making it easier to draw on those academic texts to provide guidance for my own analysis. Furthermore, my sociopolitical stance and my choice of academic texts, along with my own experience as an immigrant to Canada, inevitably shaped my greater emphasis on scrutinising negative portrayal of immigrants and refugees.

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Table 1

*Summary of Immigration and Refugee Policy Changes in the Media in 2012.*

<b>Family Class Immigration</b>
<p><b>Parent and Grandparent Super Visa</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Announcement in November, 2011, of a two-year moratorium on new sponsorship applications for parents and grandparents to reduce backlog.</li> <li>❖ Introduction of the super visa in November, 2011, which permits eligible parents and grandparents of Canadian citizens and permanent residents to visit for up to two years, and is valid for 10 years. Applicants must have financial support from their children or grandchildren and health coverage for at least one year to be eligible. The super visa will have to be renewed at the end of every 2 years.</li> </ul> <p><b>Sponsorship of Spouses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New regulation, which came to force in October, 2012, imposes that sponsored spouses will be subjected to a conditional permanent resident status of two years during which time they must cohabit with their sponsors. There is also a five-year ban from sponsoring another partner. The regulation applies to spouses or partners in a relationship of two years or less and who have no children in common at the time of application.</li> </ul>
<b>Economic Class Immigration</b>
<p><b>Expression of Interest System</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announcement of an application system in which provinces and territories, and Canadian employers, will be able to select from an online pool of skilled workers based on local labour market needs. Applicants provide information about their skills, educational credentials, work experiences and other attributes electronically. The Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) will invite eligible candidates whose skills are in demand or have job offers to apply for permanent residence.</li> <li>• The system is modelled after the approach used by New Zealand and Australia, and has been announced by CIC to be implemented in January, 2015.</li> </ul> <p><b>Federal Skilled Worker Program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announcement of a moratorium and an elimination of unprocessed applications prior to February, 2008, to reduce backlog.</li> <li>• Overhaul of the points system, which became effective in May, 2013, to target applicants with pre-arranged job offers or work experiences in one of the listed in-demand occupations; higher language proficiency in English or French with language factor being given a maximum of 28 points, instead of the previous 24 points; and younger immigrants with applicants between 18 and 35 receiving 12 points. The available points decrease by one for each year afterwards, and</li> </ul>

applicants aged 47 and over will receive no point for age. The passing mark of 67 out of 100 remains. There is also a requirement of overseas assessment of education and professional credentials to establish that they are equivalent to Canadian requirements as part of immigration application prior to arrival.

### **Federal Skilled Trades Program**

- Announcement of a separate stream for skilled tradespersons which was implemented in January, 2013. The program emphasises work experiences and practical skills, having a job offer or a certificate of qualification issued by a provincial or territorial body, and permits a lower threshold of language proficiency than the federal skilled worker program.

### **Provincial Nominee Program**

- The program was first created in 1996 for provinces to nominate a limited number of economic immigrants to respond to local labour market needs. The federal government announced a cap to the provincial nominee programs in 2010.
- After an evaluation of the programs in 2011, the federal government announced that it would impose language criteria starting in July, 2012. Applicants in semi-skilled and low-skilled jobs (e.g., trades, manufacturing, sales and services, certain clerical and assistant categories) are required to meet minimum language standards in English or French, and must provide valid test scores from a designated testing agency.

### **Immigrant Investors**

- ❖ Pilot of a new start-up visa program for immigrant entrepreneurs in which applicants must secure the support of a Canadian venture capital fund or angel investor group. The program was officially launched in April, 2013.
- ❖ The Immigrant Investor Program, in 2010, set a minimum net worth of \$1.6 million and doubled the minimum up-front investment to \$800,000 in the form of an interest-free loan to the federal government for five years. Announcement in February, 2014, of the federal government's intent to terminate the program.

### **Canada Experience Class**

- ❖ Created in 2008, the program is designed to enable eligible international students and highly-skilled temporary foreign workers, who have studied or have prior work experiences in Canada and have demonstrated language proficiency in English or French, to apply and be fast-tracked for permanent residence from within Canada. It excludes temporary foreign workers in low-skilled or semi-skilled jobs.
- ❖ New regulatory change announced in April, 2012, that highly-skilled temporary foreign workers under this class are required to have one-year Canadian work experience instead of two years.

## **Refugee**

***Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act, or Bill C-31*** (assented in June, 2012)

- Among the most important legislative changes in the bill are:
  - 1) The immigration minister is given ministerial power to designate countries as safe and democratic, and do not normally produce refugees. A list of 23 countries was released in December, 2012, which consists of mostly European states and the United States. Hearings for refugee claims from the designated countries will be fast-tracked and held within 30 to 45 days. Failed refugee claimants will not have access to the Refugee Appeal Division and will not be able to apply for a work permit upon arrival.
  - 2) The creation of the “irregular arrivals” category to designate groups of people who arrive in a way that can prevent timely investigation of their admissibility (e.g., boat), or on grounds of suspicion of human smuggling, as “designated foreign nationals”. Refugee claimants over the age of 16 in this category will be subjected to mandatory arrest and detention. Their cases will be reviewed initially after 14 days and then after every six months, instead of the previous review period of every 30 days. Furthermore, those who have obtained their refugee status receive a conditional permanent residency and bar from sponsoring family members for five years.
  - 3) Legal authority is granted the right to collect biometric data, including fingerprints and digital photos, from people entering Canada on visitor visa, work permit or study visa.

**Cutback to Interim Federal Health Program**

- Cutback of healthcare benefits for refugee claimants except resettled refugees who arrive through government assistance or initiative, or are privately sponsored and receive income support from Resettlement Assistance Program.
- Healthcare coverage is limited to services which are of urgent or essential nature, and medications and vaccines to prevent or treat a disease that is considered risk to public health, or a condition of safety concern.
- Supplementary health benefits are no longer covered (e.g., pharmaceutical care, dental care, vision care, mobility assistive devices or prosthetics, and psychological counselling)

**Permanent Residence and Citizenship**

**Citizenship Application**

- New citizenship rule requires that applicants between the ages of 18 to 54 will have to submit proof of language proficiency in English or French with their application. The Federal Conservatives has introduced a new citizenship test, *Discover Canada*, in 2010.

***Faster Removal of Foreign Criminals Act, or Bill C-43*** (introduced in the House of Commons in June, 2012, and assented in June, 2013)

- Among the most important legislative changes in the bill are:

- 1) Individuals who are non-citizens and are convicted to 6 months or more in prison will be deported without access to the Immigration and Refugee Board's appeal division, instead of the previous 2-year mark.
- 2) Foreign nationals deemed inadmissible on the grounds of security, human or international rights violations, or organized criminality no longer have access to humanitarian considerations.
- 3) Foreign nationals who are family members of foreign nationals deemed inadmissible (accompanying or not) will not be admitted to visit Canada.
- 4) The immigration minister is given ministerial power to deny temporary resident status for up to three years on the basis of public policy considerations.

### **Immigration Consultancy**

- New regulation, which came into force in April, 2012, permits sharing of information on an immigration representative's professional or ethical conduct between the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB).
- The new regulation supplements Bill C-35, an *Act to Amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, which was introduced in 2010 and came into force in 2011*. Bill C-35 requires that an immigration representative used at any stage of an immigration application or a proceeding must be in good standing with the provincial or law society, the Immigration Consultants of Canada Regulatory Council (ICCRC), or the *Chambre des notaires du Québec*. The Bill's short title, *Cracking Down on Crooked Consultants Act*, was deleted "because of its pejorative connotation with respect to the profession of immigration consultant" (Library of Parliament, Publication Number 40-3-C35E).