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Unity in Diversity? Neoconservative Multiculturalism and the Conservative Party of Canada

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Abstract

Canada's Conservative Party and former government's (2006-2015) attempts to define and at times shift Canadian identity and notions of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism to the right have been part of a significant political project featuring a uniquely creative and Canadian form of authoritarian populist politics in these realms. Their 2006 minority and 2011 majority election victories represented the culmination of a long march to power begun with the 1987 founding of the Reform Party of Canada. While they have at times purged themselves of some of the most blatant, anti-immigration elements of the discourses of their predecessor parties, continuities in its Canadian brand of authoritarian populist politics have continued in new forms since the founding of the new Conservative Party in 2003. This political project's features and contradictions are constitutive of a disciplinary neoconservative variant of multiculturalism and Canadian nationalism. These are examined through a mix of critical discourse analysis of leading party figures' speeches, platforms, government documents and policy analysis.

This paper outlines characteristics and realities of neoconservative multiculturalism, including references to the Conservatives' time in office and dynamics since their defeat in the 2015 election. These characteristics include 1) pragmatically adapting *themselves* to common sense notions of multiculturalism and immigration in Canada while also *seeking to shift* the politics of multiculturalism in Canada rightward by 2) seeking to empty it of anti-racist content and bind its remnants to a neoconservative worldview and 3) engaging in practices and discourses of exclusion, including a) engaging in clash of civilizations and Islamophobic discourses and policies, b) re-ethnicizing Canadian citizenship, c) targeting asylum seekers and 4) bolstering and collaborating with anti-multicultural civil society voices and actors.

Overall, neoconservative multiculturalism is a creative and flexible ideological project enforcing and advancing a highly regressive form of politics and public policy. In part conceding to public opinion in favour of multiculturalism and Canada's demographics, it includes pragmatic nods to diversity but hollows out potentially more progressive interpretations of multiculturalism while demanding adherence to disturbing forms of nationalism and patriotism that police and weaken public debate. While the party's direction is somewhat open with Erin O'Toole having been chosen as their new leader by the party membership in August of 2020, on many fronts Conservative Party and extra-party right discourses have continued to degenerate in this realm since the party's 2015 defeat.

Keywords: Conservative Party of Canada, Reform Party of Canada, Multiculturalism, Neoconservative Multiculturalism, Authoritarian Populism, Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship, Jason Kenney, Andrew Scheer, Erin O'Toole, Stephen Harper

Table of Contents

Introduction

> [There is] particular importance in giving substance to Gramsci's argument that, often, ideological shifts take place, not by substituting one, whole, new conception of the world for another, but by presenting a novel combination of old and new elements.
>> - Stuart Hall, "Authoritarian Populism - A Reply to Jessop et al" (1985, p. 122)

> Sadly, under Justin Trudeau, a record-high number of Canadians believe that immigration should be reduced. Worse, Canadians have lost faith in the fairness of our system. They now question the integrity of our borders. And they're less confident about newcomers' ability to integrate fully and contribute to our shared prosperity . . .

> Among the people I hear from most often on this point are new Canadians themselves. People who have played by the rules and arrived in Canada fair and square. They are the most offended at Trudeau's status-quo, where some are able to jump queues, exploit loopholes, and skip the line. And like you, Conservatives have questioned the current government's ability to preserve the integrity of our immigration system. Now Justin Trudeau and his ministers responded how they always do when confronted with criticism – with more rhetoric and personal attacks . . .

> . . . , before I move on to what a new Conservative government will do to renew faith in our immigration system, I'd like to make something absolutely crystal clear.

> What I'm about to say, I have said many times before. There is absolutely no room in a peaceful and free country like Canada for intolerance, racism, and extremism of any kind . . .

> And if there's anyone who disagrees with that, there's the door. You are not welcome here . . .

> As Prime Minister, my government will restore fairness, order, and compassion to the immigration system . . .

>> - Conservative Party of Canada Leader Andrew Scheer's "My Vision for Canada: Unity in Diversity" Speech on Immigration, May 29, 2019 (Scheer, 2019)

Though replaced as leader of the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) by Erin O'Toole in August of 2020, then-leader of the Opposition Andrew Scheer's "Vision Speech" on the topic of immigration months before the 2019 Canadian Federal Election is helpful in making sense of the recent political approach of the party to questions of immigration and multiculturalism several years after losing power in 2015.

First, the speech provides evidence of some continuity in the creative authoritarian populist approach of *Kenneyism*, the CPC's political project to both reach out to many potential

ethnicized and racialized voters in order to construct what Flanagan has described as an exclusionary "minimum winning coalition" of voters while at the same time frequently pursuing immigration and refugee policies and discourses that negatively impact vulnerable migrants and members of society (Carlaw, 2017; Flanagan, 2011). The phrase "Unity in Diversity" itself is a creative attempt to lay selective claim to a less reactionary but purged legacy of Red Toryism from the former Progressive Conservative Party of Canada's past. The term Kenneyism is inspired by - though not reducible to - the politics and practices of former Conservative Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister and now Alberta Premier Jason Kenney. In his former portfolios he was variously described by detractors as the "Minister of Censorship and Deportation" and supporters as the hands-on "Smiling Budha" and "Minister of curry in a hurry" of Canadian politics for his work in government and as the party's most effective spokesperson and strategist of an approach widely credited for leading the Conservatives' "ethnic outreach" efforts (Canadian Press & 2012, 2012; Cheadle & Levitz, 2012; Friesen, 2010a; Keung & Black, 2013; No One is Illegal- Vancouver, n.d.). Kenney also helped deepen the neoliberal thrust of Canadian immigration policies, while injecting a disciplinary neoconservative dose of militarism and clash of civilizations discourses alongside harsh immigration reforms, some of which would be ruled unconstitutional for entailing "cruel and unusual treatment" towards refugee claimants (Carlaw, 2017; Fine, 2014). *Neoconservative multiculturalism*, the topic of this paper, is an important ideological part of this authoritarian populist project.

In his 2020 Multiculturalism Day Statement Scheer stuck to the xenophilic outreach side of the Kenneyist formula, praising "New Canadians . . . bringing with them their values of entrepreneurship; sacrifice; risk-taking; individual freedoms; cultural, familial, and faith traditions; and a desire to succeed," an asserted set of "Inherently Conservative principles" (Scheer, 2020a). Such statements are illustrative of the creativity of the CPC's approach and attempt to construct a form of neoconservatism palatable to ethnicized and racialized voters combining both old and new elements of common sense notions of Canada, as will be discussed below.

Second, to return to Scheer's 2019 Unity in Diversity speech, the more xenophobic exclusionary side of this dual discourse can be seen in Scheer's pledge to "restore fairness, order, and compassion to the immigration system," where immigrants and racialized Canadians are invited to see *themselves* as orderly, compassionate and respecting of rules, but needing to harshly impose order on a sub-group of others – particularly asylum seekers and refugee claimants - who are racialized in other ways. Thus the targets of Conservative outreach efforts are encouraged to join the Conservative Party's base of supporters in taking offence at "queue jumpers" and "line skippers" while the force of the Canadian state is to be brought to bear to impose order on this politically manufactured category of dehumanized beings, no matter Canada's international or constitutional commitments to human rights and refugee protection.

Third, while recycling Reform Party complaints about being labelled racist for their approach to refugees, citizenship and immigration policy and associations with far right entities and figures, Scheer's speech tacitly acknowledges the credible charges of racism and complicity with racism that are associated with the Conservatives' authoritarian populist political approach as he is forced to address them by quickly disavowing racism before again reverting to his discourse of "fairness, order and compassion."[1] It will be seen that each of these dynamics are illustrative of the Conservative Party's attempted project to fashion and aggressively defend a neoconservative form of multiculturalism to both operate within Canadians' common sense notions of multiculturalism while working to both hollow out such conceptions and potential policies of their progressive potentials and shift them further to the right.

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[1] Sensitive to similar charges, in its first statement of principles the Reform Party admonished critics that "the vested interest of bad immigration policy should not be so quick to label Canadians 'racist' for desiring positive changes and should be more humble and honest about their own motives" (Reform Party of Canada, 1989, p. 24).

The political imperatives of the Conservatives offering a balancing act between satisfying a political base that largely favours policies of exclusion while reaching out to ethnicized and racialized voters have been commented upon and assessed by many authors (Carlaw, 2015a; Gaucher, 2020; Kwak, 2019; Marwah et al., 2013; Tolley, 2017). This paper contributes to this discussion conceptually and analytically by further linking it to discourse and policy analysis inspired by the writings of Gramsci and Stuart Hall that seeks to assess the Conservatives' fashioning of a neoconservative multiculturalism and the ideological work and "steady and unremitting set of operations designed to bind or construct a popular consent into these new forms of statist authoritarianism" involved in that process (Carlaw, 2017, 2020a; Gramsci, 1971; Hall, 1980, p. 161, 1985, 1988).

Focusing on multiculturalism as both a common sense idea and vision of Canada, as well as sets of policies and practices, it will be argued in this paper that after rejecting multiculturalism in its early Reform Party incarnation, the Conservatives have aggressively developed and shaped a neoconservative version that attempts to police the bounds of Canadian nationalism and political participation while hollowing it of any progressive meaning. Such considerations are inevitably bound up with discussions of citizenship and immigration policy. Considering public opinion and survey research Reitz, for example, finds that "for most Canadians, support for multiculturalism is an expression of support for the idea of Canada as a country committed to immigration and its benefits . . . In other words, popular multiculturalism is a pro-immigration ideology" (Reitz, 2011, p. 120).

In many ways multiculturalism is both "co-constituted by the people it purports to engage" while serving as a form of "banal nationalism" (Amarasingam et al., 2016). It also has significant problematic properties in the Canadian context and in its relationship to Indigenous peoples (St. Denis, 2011). The primary focus of this paper is a neoconservative politics of multiculturalism from above, as the Conservative Party of Canada and former government have sought to navigate the country's popular common sense commitment to multiculturalism to compete for political power while pursuing exclusionary discourses and policies that negatively affect many (im)migrants and ethnicized and racialized members of society. This task is undertaken based on a mix of critical discourse analysis of leading party figures' speeches, platforms, government documents and policy analysis.

This working paper will first discuss some key concepts and context to grasping neoconservative multiculturalism in Canada. It will then outline characteristics and realities of neoconservative multiculturalism, including references to the Conservatives' time in office and dynamics since their defeat in the 2015 election. These characteristics include 1) pragmatically adapting *themselves* to common sense notions of multiculturalism and immigration in Canada while also *seeking to shift* the politics of multiculturalism in Canada rightward by 2) seeking to empty it of anti-racist content and bind its remnants to a neoconservative worldview and 3) engaging in practices and discourses of exclusion, including a) engaging in clash of civilizations and Islamophobic discourses and policies, b) re-ethnicizing Canadian citizenship, c) targeting asylum seekers and 4) bolstering and collaborating with anti-multicultural civil society voices and actors.

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Key Concepts to Grasp Neoconservative Multiculturalism: Authoritarian Populism, Exalted Subjects and Xenophobia/Xenophilia in a Settler Colonial State

Any discussion of ideologies and discourse of the Canadian social formation, including questions of national identity and social relations must begin with the reality that Canada is a settler colonial state whose development has promoted the supremacy and hegemony of its "exalted subjects" of European descent (Thobani, 2007). Its "fractious politics" and the terms of treatment of Indigenous peoples, those migrating to Canada and ethnicized and racialized 'visible minorities' needs to be placed into that context (Abu-Laban, 2019; Stasiulus & Jhappan, 1995). Thus situated and within the realm of competition between political parties, the Conservatives' electoral and governing approach is a highly ambitious and creative form of neoconservative politics, emblematic of what Hall labelled a divisive project of "authoritarian populism." Such forms of governance are reinforced by expressions of public morality and populist 'law and order' discourses that legitimize more coercive and neoliberal forms of governance (Hall, 1980, pp. 72–73). These have been combined with what Honig has discussed more generally as novel combinations of *xenophobia* and *xenophilia* on the ideological and policy terrain of multiculturalism and related policy fields in Canada.

Read with Canada in mind, Bonnie Honig's (2001) *Democracy and the Foreigner* helps to capture the creativity of the Conservatives' authoritarian populist approach to both political outreach and exclusion and their basis in immigration narratives, including those of settler colonial states. She explains how xeno*philia* and its negative counterpart, xeno*phobia* operate and feed each off of each other. In both its liberal and conservative renderings, xenophilia -- or a love of the foreigner -- idealizes immigrants who serve the national imagination by boosting its legitimacy as well as through their material contributions. Immigrants boost a state or social order's self-image by being seen to *choose* to join a given society through rituals such as citizenship ceremonies, for example, thereby testifying to its democratic credentials, as well as contributing to the economy by demonstrating the values of hard work, family and community (Honig, 2001, p. 76).

As will be seen further below, in the Conservative imaginary and discourses many immigrants graduated from the demographic or political *threat* of early Reform Party platforms to *models* for their fellow Conservatives. As Kenney argued in a 2008 speech, "If we are honest, Canadians have much to learn from our newest arrivals. The foundation of strong families, the value of faith, the necessity of excellence in education. To the extent that those values need to be renewed in every generation if Canada is to remain strong and free, immigrants are our allies" (Wells, 2010). Such xenophilic formulations were a major ideological advance over the doubts that had lingered with respect to the party's patriotism and in its tone towards potential supporters frustrated with the Liberal Party but uncertain about the Conservatives' treatment of immigrants as well as racialized and ethnicized voters.

In addition to the more generally recognized forms of xenophobia mobilized on the right there are multiple potential conservative uses of xenophilia. For example the hard-working "capitalist immigrant keeps the American dream alive, upholding beliefs in a meritocratic economy," for "if he can do it, starting with nothing and not knowing the language, surely anyone can" (Honig, 2001, p. 80). However in addition to boosting the myth of meritocracy, Honig argues that such an asserted mindset and its singular focus on work can lead to an expectation of de-politicization on the part of (im)migrants, or can be twisted into assertions that immigrants are only interested in material advancement either as *competitors* to those born within a country, or solely as *takers* of societal resources. Characterizations of de-politicized or apolitical immigrants are worse than being misleading, according to Honig, for "they are often *enforced* in response to immigrants who become politicized" and challenge such myths of acquiescence. Such immigrants or migrants are targeted by being criminalized or delegitimized (Honig, 2001, p. 82).

Honig shows that the idealization of the voluntary "super citizen immigrant" can also have the effect of feeding and being deployed in xeno*phobic* politics that seek to demonize the asserted opposite to the positive end of such a binary. Such idealization "feeds the xenophobic backlash against the non-consenting immigrant – the illegal alien – to whom we supposedly do not consent and who does not consent to us" (Honig, 2001, p. 97). Immigrants can thus be upheld as both evidence of the hospitality and positive morality of the host society, but also serve as useful scapegoats for xenophobic politics (Honig, 2001, p. 46). As Kwak has phrased it in the Canadian context, "representations of proper diverse subjects as self-sufficient enterprising individuals are key to a normative racial violence that polices the boundaries of legitimate and illegitimate diversity" (Kwak, 2019, p. 1772). The xenophilic invocation of foreignness in favour of "traditional" family structures can also generate xenophobic responses, as such families or gender relations can be asserted to pose a cultural threat, such as fragmenting politics or undermining a democratic culture (Honig, 2001, p. 91)

Many of these articulations and conservative reformulations are epitomized in the Conservatives' approach to citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism. As will be seen, the Conservatives considerably reconfigured their discourses and approach to multiculturalism as the party switched from a less overtly xenophobic to a more calculated and frequently xenophilic rhetorical approach. This can be seen in the evolution of their discourses -- if not fully in their substantive and more disciplinary treatment -- of multiculturalism in Canada. This compromise-at least, but not only at the level of discourse- has been between the prerogatives of an at times nativist political base of Canada's *exalted subjects* of white Anglo and French-Canadian settlers with the hopes, dreams and expectations of many new or racialized Canadians who are expected to conform to their settler colonial prerogatives (Thobani, 2007).

The Rise of Neoconservative Multiculturalism

The rise of neoconservative multiculturalism must be placed in the context of Canada as a settler colonial state where multiculturalism is a dominant ideology and state practice which had been reduced to a neoliberal and "lowest common denominator" version by the 1990s (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002; Winter, 2014a). This hollowing out has permitted strategies of authoritarian populist dog whistle politics to be combined with a neoconservative form of multicultural incorporation where white supremacy and multiculturalism discourses are not opposite, but even complementary strategies (Sugino, 2020). This contemporary Conservative approach to multiculturalism has taken significant time and multiple incarnations of the party to be formulated. Due to the party's neoconservative instincts of exclusion the balance between discourses and practices of outreach and exclusion has often been an unsteady one.

Left critiques of multiculturalism notwithstanding, challenges to the symbolic and established order of Canada in the second half of the twentieth century were not achieved or maintained without resistance from the right in Canada. As Brodie and Jenson have argued, the rise of the Reform Party itself, the dominant predecessor party to today's Conservative Party founded in 1987 was an integral part of the breakdown of "normal politics" and politicization of social questions in the 1980s and 1990s with respect to citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism in Canada. Reflecting on the 1993 election, they observed that from the right the Reform Party offered a major departure from the post-World War II Keynesian consensus, appearing as "'Tories in a hurry'- complete with homespun rhetoric about ordinary Canadians, living within one's means, and only slightly cloaked racism." The Reform Party was repudiating the state's role on several fronts: in economic development, in encouraging bilingualism and multiculturalism while attacking pan-Canadian institutions that helped support the country's earlier post-war social consensus (Brodie & Jenson, 2007, p. 34). The party was instrumental in the re-

politicization of Canadian identity in a manner that challenged what for many had become the common sense and political party consensus around a multicultural and bilingual definition of Canada that had to some extent accepted what Tully has described as the "politics of cultural recognition" (Tully quoted within and Patten, 1999, p. 28). The rise of the Reform Party was also part of the neoliberal political trends that drove rightward shifts in multiculturalism policy by former Liberal and Progressive Conservative governments (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002; Abu-Laban & Stasiulis, 1992).

Of greatest interest here are the *shifts* in public pronouncements, points of emphasis and party positions over time as the Reform Party and its successors became more pragmatic vehicles for neoconservatism in the late 1990s and 2000s, as well as the *continuities* that remain under neoconservative multiculturalism. As the party soon learned, invading "from the margin" had its limits. The Western Canada-based party was hampered electorally by its negative reputation in other regions and segments of the population and by the vocal intolerance of some of its members (Flecker, 2008, pp. 167–168; Harrison, 1995, pp. 174–175). Its supporters remained "overwhelmingly members of dominant ethnic and cultural (Western European) groups" (Laycock, 2002, p. 132), which left the party far from power, even if it helped drive the centre of Canadian politics significantly to the right. Thus early in its history the need for discursive shifts quickly became apparent. The party would evolve significantly from its founding, when the party frequently exhibited its less politically palatable 'rough edges,' through to its Alliance and Conservative incarnations.

The Conservative and their predecessor Reform and Alliance' evolution on questions of immigration and multiculturalism since the early Reform Party period can be roughly traced in stages. The first, to borrow from Tom Flanagan's writings is that of 1) "invasion from the margin" (Flanagan, 2009b, p. 208). That invasion saw the disruption and breakdown of Canada's political party system and the country's definition of "normal politics" during a period in which multiculturalism was "under siege" (Abu-Laban & Stasiulis, 1992). The second and third stages I identify stem from an awareness of party elites of the former's limitations: 2) that of the cleansing of the Reform Party and its successor parties' discourses concerning questions of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism and 3) the party's ongoing attempts to reconfigure Canadian nationalism and ideas about multiculturalism in more potentially hegemonic neoconservative directions, in a manner more sensitive to Canadians' common sense dispositions towards multiculturalism. Whether the party might fully move to a new stage within the context of the rise of far right populism globally is an open question that may well be defined by the directions in which new leader Erin O'Toole guides the party.

Over the course of the 1990s the leadership of the party, particularly Harper and Flanagan worked to cleanse the party's platform of its most offensive statements (Kirkham, 1998). By 1997, the Multiculturalism Ministry was no longer slated for abolition in party platforms, nor would the notion of abolishing the ministry re-emerge in subsequent platforms, though at least one prominent observer justifiably saw the ministry as having been marginalized through a process of "Reform by Stealth" after the Conservatives assumed power (Abu-Laban, 2014). The Reform Party also recruited several conservative Asian MPs who "were called upon to perform both race and racelessness for their party" with the presumption that they "would inoculate the party against charges of racism" (Kwak, 2019, pp. 1717–1719). Multiculturalism programming had also already been considerably defunded and dispersed under prior governments, thereby making it a smaller target (James, 2013, pp. 32–34; Kirkham, 1998, p. 264).

Nonetheless, as Kirkham noted late in the life of the Reform Party, although "the tone . . . bec[a]me less vitriolic, the perception of an immigration system out of control is still a theme party officials perpetuate" (1998, p. 253). This was particularly the case with respect to refugees. While the party dropped the idea of constitutional amendment and use of the notwithstanding clause "to ensure that Parliament can ultimately control entry into Canada," (Reform Party of Canada, 1989,

p. 23)   the notion of "queue-jumping" and system integrity have remained a consistent preoccupation through the Alliance and Conservative incarnations of the party.

However in attempting to achieve power, the Conservative Party and its predecessors learned from painful experience that they needed to learn to construct their own more positive, confident and nationalist vision of Canada to compete politically rather than just loudly lament the changes in Canadian society since the 1950s. They needed to move beyond simply being angry neoconservatives critical of the country to espousing a more attractive vision. As Marland and Flanagan note, citing interviews with party insiders, Stephen Harper was working on a patriotic branding of the Canadian Alliance and intensified those efforts with the new Conservative Party (Marland & Flanagan, 2013).

These shifts were necessary for Canada's right to have a realistic chance to grow enough electoral support to graduate from the role of official opposition to one day achieve a majority government. The shift towards a more hegemonic form of politics in the Canadian demographic context are evidenced in the 2004 Conservative Party platform recognition that celebrates how "immigration tremendously enriches our economy and national life" and acknowledges the economic struggles many immigrants face, which build upon shifts visible in the party's later Reform and Canadian Alliance Party incarnations. While silent on the fate of the multiculturalism portfolio, such xenophilic rather than xenophobic statements marked a shift from outright antagonism to attempts at hegemonic leadership over racialized and ethnicized Canadians and an attempt to avoid alienating those uncomfortable with overt expressions of racism and xenophobia. Coupled with these platitudes, however, would be a disciplinary neoconservative vision of citizenship and multiculturalism that leading Conservative thinkers were also cultivating.

Some of these shifts in discourse and policy can be seen in tables 1 and 2:

Table 1: Reform, Canadian Alliance and Conservative Party Platform Positions and Select Discourses and Policies Relevant to Multiculturalism, Citizenship, and Canadian Identity

Early Reform "Invasion from the Margin" (late 1980s to mid-1990s)	"Cleansing of the Discourse" late Reform/ Canadian Alliance (late 1990s to early 2000s)	Kenneyism & "Minimum Winning Coalition" Conservative Party (2004 to 2011)	Relevant Policies and discourses of the Conservative Government (2006-2015)	2015 Platform	2019 Platform
Hostility to demographic change

Tone of return to Anglo-Conformity, "integration of immigrants into the mainstream of Canadian life" (1992)

Abolish the multiculturalism program and end funding (1993, 1995, 1996/97)

Opposition to "current concept of multiculturalism and hyphenated Canadianism" (1992, 1996) | Reform Party no mention of citizenship, immigration in 1997 "Fresh Start for Canadians" platform" (1997)

Canadian Alliance (2000):

"Immigration: welcoming new Canadians, keeping out criminals."

"Canada is a nation of immigrants. We have always been enriched by new arrivals to our shores." | Implicit Anglo-conformity

Project confident, neoconservative multicultural society

"Immigration has enriched Canada" (2004a)

Anti-terrorism discourses linked to refugees, civilizational discourses expressed in policies and speeches. | Nationalism of a "Warrior Nation" (McKay & Swift, 2012)

Militarized citizenship guide, ceremonies and Citizenship Act (Bill C-24), including citizenship-stripping provisions

Willingness to make positive statements about multiculturalism, particularly at election time.

Employ Progressive Conservative Party legacy to improve and bolster the party's image and credentials concerning multiculturalism

"Integrationist, social cohesion" rather than anti-racist bent to multiculturalism (Griffith 2013)

Absorption of Multiculturalism into much larger Citizenship and Immigration Ministry, lack of own Ministerial Voice (Griffith, 2013); | "Canada is a welcoming country and attracts many of the world's best and brightest who are searching for freedom and opportunity, while continuing our tradition of family reunification and refugee protection." (32)

"strengthened the integrity of our immigration system, cracking down on those who would abuse Canada's generosity . . ." (33)

Anti-terror & 'barbarism' citizenship discourses prominent (see table 2).

"Reforming the Temporary Foreign Worker Program to prevent abuses, and ensure that Canadians always get the first chance at available jobs" (33)

Recognizing cross-cultural "bridge-builders by establishing a new 'Maple Leaf' designation to honour extraordinary Canadians who cultivate these links" between Canada and country of origin (128) | Support for economic immigration and Temporary Foreign Worker program (24-5)

Support for private refugee sponsorship citing religious organizations prominently, as well as LGBTQ+ and survivors of genocide (57-58)

"Secure our border" against "illegal border crossings" who are portrayed as drawing resources from "the world's most vulnerable" (58)

Promoting "Free Speech on Campus" (63)

"Punish Terrorists who Travel overseas" with "reverse onus offence for travel to designated terrorist hot spots" (86) |
| | No mention of multiculturalism policy in party platforms, "law and order" discourses re: borders prominent, linked to refugees | Significant program underspending on Multiculturalism | | | No mention of citizenship in platform |
| | | | | | No mention of multiculturalism policy in platforms. |

Table 2: Reform, Canadian Alliance and Conservative Party Platform Positions and Orientations on Racism/Anti-Racism and Islamophobia

Early Reform "Invasion from the Margin" (late 1980s to early 1990s)	"The Cleansing of the Discourse" under later Reform/ Canadian Alliance (mid-1990s to early 2000s)	Kenneyism and the "Minimum Winning Coalition" (Conservative Party of Canada since 2004)	Relevant Policies and discourses of the Conservative Government (2006-2015)	2015 Platform and Campaign	Post-2015 Discourses, Proposals and Developments	2019 Platform & Campaign
Defensive stance against charges of racism against the party Support repeal of charter section 15(2) "which permits . . . affirmative action and other forms of 'reverse discrimination'" (1996, 19)	Reform: "Discontinue federal affirmative action programs" (1997, p. 19) Canadian Alliance: "no more affirmative action quotas" (2000, p. 22)	Campaigned on subsequently cancelled "Action Plan against Racism" but withdrew from UN process (Flecker, 2008, pp. 174–175).	Shift from broader anti-Racism policies to focus on anti-Semitism and anti-radicalization & Vetoes of anti-racist programming by political staff (Griffith, 2013) Public statements critical of employment equity and lowering of employment equity requirements for contractors in 2013 (Friesen, 2010b; Thompson, 2013) Anti-Muslim discourses and treatment of those taking citizenship oath wearing face covering (Niqab), discourses and legislation on "barbaric cultural practices"	Concept of "strengthening citizenship" throughout the platform Reasserted plans to ban face coverings for the citizenship oath (152) Citizenship revocation discourse and policy under a "Combatting jihadi terrorism" section (78) Target "brutal practices" "taking place within some cultural communities in Canada" with an RCMP tip line (Conservative Party of Canada, 2015, p. 118)	Rejection of the existence of Islamophobia and downplaying of societal racism in context of M-103 (2018b); several leadership candidates vociferously oppose motion in 2017 leadership contest alongside right wing media (Garossino, 2017; Press Progress, 2017) Organic connections to far right and "Alt" right wing media outlets and individuals (Zine et al., 2019, p. Key Issues 1-2) Alarmist tone and opposition to Global Compact for Migration consistent with far right elsewhere	No mention of pursuing citizenship act changes. Promote role of faith and cultural groups in private refugee sponsorship (57)

In the Conservative imaginary and discourses, as noted above, immigrants graduated from demographic or political xenophobic threats to potential xenophilic models for Conservatives. Such formulations were a major ideological advance over the doubts that had lingered with respect to the party's patriotism and in its tone towards potential supporters frustrated with the Liberal Party but uncertain about the Conservatives' treatment of immigrants. With ever changing compositions of immigrant groups by race, ethnicity, class and gender that feature their own relations of inequality, it should not be surprising that a less hostile and more politically savvy Conservative Party was able to improve its standing, particularly amidst frustration and dissatisfaction with the Liberal Party (Satzewich & Wong, 2003, p. 364).

Ultimately the victory of Reform over Progressive Conservative elements in the parties' eventual 2004 merger saw an unambiguous rejection of Progressive Conservatism, which Harper had referred to as an "oxymoron," and a defeat of Red Toryism (Jeffrey, 2015, p. 36). And while the Conservatives for a time purged themselves of some of the most blatant, anti-immigration elements of their discourse, there remained and continue to remain significant continuities in its brand of authoritarian populism. The Conservatives' renovated discourse continued to function within the realm of right populism while maintaining and even deepening a security risk vision of "criminals and false refugees who are abusing the system" (Conservative Party of Canada, 2004b, p. 38) – harkening to the image of the "good" and "bad" immigrant or refugee that is so prevalent in their contemporary discourses.

The pragmatism yet divisiveness of the Conservatives' political project is significant, as it does not represent an abandonment but rather an adaptation of neoconservative principles to Canada's demographic context. As Jason Kenney had long argued for, the Conservatives decided to "show up" to this political contest after decades on the sidelines and sought to forge strong interpersonal relationships with diverse communities (McDonald, 2014).

However a marketing and interpersonal outreach rather than a substantive mindset has often been apparent in their conservative populist approach. The dominance of an overall centralized marketing approach to politics on the part of the Conservatives- to which other parties have subsequently conformed- has been chronicled by Delacourt, who has characterized the "fusion of marketing and politics" on the part of the Conservatives as "complete and pervasive" (Delacourt, 2016b, p. xi, 2016a). Based on interviews with thirty "Conservative Party elites" in 2011 and 2012 and a "strong" response rate, Marland and Flanagan (2013) confirm the centrality of marketing and quantitative data to the Conservatives' overall approach. They also note that even after the merger of the Reform and Progressive Conservative Parties the Conservatives still faced an uphill battle in growing the party due to several problems with their popular image:

> The party's opinion research found that the merger had not sufficiently eroded the politically incorrect brand associations, leaving three reputational problems. First, it was perceived to be the party of rich, powerful, white Anglo-Saxon Protestants; second, voters believed that it was home to social extremists who opposed abortion and same-sex marriage and were hostile to the concerns of immigrants; and, third, it was seen as pro-American as opposed to pro-Canadian (W1).[2]
> (Marland & Flanagan, 2013, p. 965)

The Conservatives needed to significantly "reposition their brand," (Marland & Flanagan, 2013, p. 966). While highly regressive, it can be seen that big and small "c" conservative nationalist appeals feature much more prominently in Conservative Party Platforms than its Reform Party predecessors, and are today a staple of contemporary Conservative speech-making and symbolic

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[2] "W1," cited as the source for the diagnosis was categorized by the authors as a communications worker: "party staffers who liaised with leaders and consultants on marketing, opinion research and/or publicity" (Marland & Flanagan, 2013, pp. 957–958)

politics. In power the party also asserted a proactive duty to reframe Canadian identity - albeit in a manner that emphasizes a highly Anglicized and militaristic reading of Canadian history and its place in the world, echoing Harper's earlier speeches and writings (Conservative Party of Canada, 2011, p. 32; Harper, 2000, 2003).

Operating in their favour as they sought to shift the country in neoconservative directions, as Martin has noted, were some of the "broad trendlines of the times- the post-9/11 effect, the fracturing of the left, the conservative turn of an aging population, the media trend to the right, the economic ascendancy of the western provinces, the loss of leverage of Quebec" – all conjunctural elements working in Harper's preferred direction (Martin, 2010, p. 269).

In overcoming these challenges the party's long-term project of the 2000s has been painted in highly instrumental, top-down and even paternalistic terms. According to Flanagan, their former campaign manager during part of this period, "Ethnic politics is clientalistic, because people coming to Canada from different cultures and whose English is imperfect naturally band together in ethnic communities. When they participate in politics, it is often through community leaders acting as intermediaries with the larger world of Canadian society . . . It is less a matter of a five-week campaign than of maintaining long-term relationships that can be mobilized at campaign time" (2009a, p. 281).

As one ponders Flanagan's assertions concerning "ethnic politics," it is worth considering reflections and analysis by Thobani and Bannerji that *denaturalize* such forms of political organization and their character where they do exist, linking them long-standing state policies. Both scholars note from a critical lens how rather than being "naturally" organized as top-down and leader driven, that state multiculturalism, dominant society racism, sexism and immigration policies that reinforce patriarchal structures have contributed to the at times hierarchal and conservative forms of "ethnic politics" that Flanagan describes as so accessible to the Conservative political recipe (Bannerji, 2000, p. 48; Thobani, 2007, pp. 137–138).

It is within this terrain in which neoconservative multiculturalism emerged. While the Conservatives eliminated overt anti-multiculturalism from their platforms and discourses, and leading party figures such as Stephen Harper and Jason Kenney could invoke the term to appeal to voters, that did not mean they did not embark on significant ideological, discursive and policy changes to shift the terrain upon which the term is defined and its associated public policies operated. It is these transformations, disciplining of civil society and associated discourses that that which will be explored in the next section.

Neoconservative Multiculturalism in Discourse and in Practice

Neoconservative multiculturalism has been composed of a mix of creative politics and disciplinary discourses and policies that have sought to shift common sense meanings of Canada to the right as well as empty the concept of progressive meaning. Its discourses and practices include the characteristics outlined in the remainder of this paper.

In Discourse: A Creative Neoconservative Multicultural Nationalism to Craft a More Appealing Image to Appeal to Ethnicized and Racialized Voters

i) Casting the Conservative Party as Defenders and Creators of Multiculturalism

The novelty of neoconservative multiculturalism is in seeking to creatively tie rhetorical and ideological work with outreach to immigrants and "ethnic" voters. In the case of the Harper Conservatives, it has involved public statements in favour of multiculturalism in Canada while appropriating the Progressive Conservative Party's legacy to claim it as a conservative value,

despite their rejection of a more socially inclusive Red Toryism. Belying at times eloquent defences of multiculturalism at election time have been other troubling trends (Siddiqui, 2011).

One way in which the Conservatives undertook their project was to cast multiculturalism as a uniquely *Conservative* invention. This can be seen, for example, with the Conservatives' creation of the "Paul Yuzyk Award for Multiculturalism" in 2012. The award was named after a former Progressive Conservative Senator appointed by John Diefenbaker in 1963, who had employed the term prior to the Multiculturalism Act and encouraged the recognition of non-French and British immigrants and their descendants' contributions to Canada (J. Smith, 2017). Griffith notes that the new award was "tailored to the integration theme, recognizing a Conservative pioneer of multiculturalism, and appropriating multiculturalism as a Conservative, rather than a Liberal, initiative" (2013, p. 41).

Through such initiatives, speeches and public statements the Conservatives would call upon Red Tory traditions in Canada to bolster their political prospects and image as a party that embraces immigration and multiculturalism despite strongly rejecting the Red Tory legacy in most fields, such as in their treatment of refugees (Kenney & Uppal, 2015).[3] Such was the tremendous ideological and pragmatic distance travelled by Canada's leading neoconservatives since the Reform Party's founding in 1987 in part out of disgust with the Progressive Conservative Party to the creativity and pragmatism of the newer Conservative Party. It is also an effort emblematic of their attempt to achieve hegemony within Canada's social formation. However through its policies and discourses the Conservatives would demonstrate that the substance of any project or claims concerning multiculturalism lays in the adjectives used to describe the term and give it meaning.

ii) Neoconservatizing Multiculturalism

As an organic intellectual and movement neoconservative, Jason Kenney at times expressed novel interpretations of Canadian multiculturalism when compared to legislation or as a societal vision. For a time Kenney, who was named Secretary of State (in January 2007) and subsequently Minister responsible for Multiculturalism (October 2008 to October 2015) and the Conservatives pondered a formal shift from state multiculturalism to asserting pluralism as a defining value instead, before realizing that was not a politically realistic idea given the popularity of multiculturalism in Canada (Griffith, 2015). However while not replacing the term, minimalist notions of pluralism would feature heavily in their discourses while Kenney sought to shift the meaning and application of discourses and policies in that ream.

While acknowledging multiculturalism as a societal strength, for example, then-Minister Kenney also expressed eccentric and conspiratorial views on the topic as he attempted to assert a neoconservative variant, framed in an invented juxtaposition of Canadian multiculturalism with the notion of "cultural Marxism," a concept that some observers have noted is reflective of Western

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[3] The new Conservative Party's thoroughly neoconservative orientation and its eradication of a somewhat paternalistic Red Tory ideology that had made the development of a welfare state in Canada a relatively bipartisan post-World War Two project is particularly evidenced in the party's treatment of refugees, including their attacks on the Interim Federal Health Program. The Order in Council governing the modern Interim Federal Health Plan that provided health benefits to all refugee claimants and acknowledged the plight of the vulnerable seeking safety in Canada was introduced by the Red Tory Diefenbaker Progressive Conservative government in 1957 and had remained in place without controversy until 2012. In that year Canada's newer, more neoconservative party employed divisive rhetoric concerning refugees as "bogus" outsiders and gutted the program for many refugee claimants (Voices-Voix, 2014). The elimination of the program would be overturned in court, with the judge describing the cuts as "cruel and unusual punishment" that risked "the very lives of these innocent and vulnerable children in a manner that shocks the conscience and outrages our standards of decency" (Fine, 2014).

neoconservative conspiracy theories aligned with white supremacist, anti-Semitic and far-right discourses (Berkowitz, 2003; Mirrlees, 2018; Zappone, 2017). Kenney also asserted a distinctly Canadian variant of multiculturalism, apparently rooted in a purportedly liberal British imperialism (Press Progress, 2015b). This he asserted to be in sharp contradistinction to what he asserted to be an "extreme kind of Frankfurt School Marxism that has unfortunately characterized the European idea of multiculturalism" (Bolen, 2012; Press Progress, 2015a). Through such assertions he sought to protect Canada's settler colonial "Christian patrimony" from critical theorists (Press Progress, 2015a). Kenney did not outline what such a European idea or practice happened to be, but instead asserted that "In this country, to most Canadians, it just means a kind of positive, relaxed, organic approach to the better aspects of cultural diversity." In the same interview from which the preceding quote was drawn he would also defend the language of "barbaric cultural practices" inserted into the citizenship guide, which he juxtaposed against what he characterized as the position of Justin Trudeau and "the old small l liberal, politically-correct consensus on this" (Bolen, 2012). In essence, on behalf of the Conservative Party and government Kenney was acting as a cultural warrior fashioning and asserting his own vision of Canada and multiculturalism. As will be seen further below this was done in a highly disciplinary manner towards those operating under prior or more critical understandings.

Neoconservative Multiculturalism in Practice

i) Hollowing Out Progressive Elements of Multiculturalism and Disciplining Anti-Racism

Neoconservative multiculturalism involves both a hollowing out of the anti-racist potentials of multiculturalism discourses and policies as well as shifting the concept in more conservative directions.

In an important book Andrew Griffith, a former Director General for Citizenship and Multiculturalism under Jason Kenney describes how under the Conservatives the government's approach to multiculturalism involved a downplaying of racism and dismissal of social science research related to the topic (Griffith, 2013, p. 44). Then-Minister Kenney was dismissive of conventional social scientific research on racism and preferred his own anecdotal evidence of societal trends based upon his interactions with new and "ethnic" Canadians. Instead of fighting dominant societal racism, the Conservatives placed far greater attention on asserted "Canadian values" and shifted the focus to conflicts between immigrant groups (Griffith, 2013, pp. 48–51).

During a speech to a Multiculturalism National Meeting in June 2010 Kenney would, perhaps grudgingly, "acknowledge the ongoing reality of racism in our society" which he "suspect[ed] that is something that will never be eliminated." But his "primary concern" was that "as Canada maintains the highest relative levels of immigration in the world, . . . "we find increasingly that the most virulent and sometimes violent forms of xenophobia raises intolerance and prejudice come and are experienced between new Canadians who come from the same country or region of origin" (Griffith, 2013, p. 49). Overall, Griffith notes, citing multiple multiculturalism officials, the Conservatives had abandoned a traditional focus on dominant-minority relations as well as the Multiculturalism Act's provisions to remove barriers to societal participation (Griffith, 2013, p. 51). While intergroup conflict is certainly worth addressing, these reformulated emphases and approach to government and how they informed relations with civil society were highly significant in de-emphasizing the dynamics of Canada as a settler colonial state and undermined efforts to combat dominant society racism. Hegemonic whiteness itself was not to be challenged.

Overall, the Conservative government replaced a poorly resourced and discursively anti-racist approach inherited from their Liberal predecessors with a vision of multiculturalism dominated by discourses of 'social cohesion' while disciplining civil society groups to acquiesce

to their priorities. In his book Griffith employed policy documents of the Liberal and Conservative governments to compare their respective priorities for the multiculturalism file:

Table 3: Multiculturalism Priorities Under Liberal and Conservative Governments

LIBERALS: 2004-05	CONSERVATIVES: 2010-11
Fostering cross-cultural understanding	Building an integrated, socially cohesive society
Combatting racism and discrimination	Engaging in international discussions on multiculturalism and diversity
Civic participation	
Making Canadian institutions more reflective of Canadian diversity	Making institutions more responsive to the needs of Canada's diverse population

Source: (Griffith, 2013, p. 27)

Clear substantive differences are observable from the language employed by the two governments. The Conservatives shifted priorities from mutual understanding and combatting racism and discrimination to merely "discussing" diversity. Rather than pushing for institutions to reflect the country's demographic diversity, institutions were only expected to be "responsive" to Canada's diverse population. Such shifts provide a clear example of the potential for government practices concerning multiculturalism to embed existing inequalities and forestall challenges to what Bannerji calls its property of "encoding a hegemonic European-Canadianness" (Bannerji, 2000, pp. 50–51). Such discursive shifts are significant in showing how such attempted hegemonic understandings are embedded in public policy. While the Liberals' at least offered superficial understanding of the need for cross-cultural understanding, to combat racism and for institutions to reflective the country's demographics, Conservative priorities demonstrated a shift to a more though not totally overt project of settler colonial hegemony. Priorities shifted from a multicultural one based on cross-cultural understanding to a "socially cohesive" one which is to be positively associated with Britain and Canada's colonial history. Such has been the shift from a more substantive approach to multiculturalism on the part of social movements in the 1980s in particular that had some state support, to a neoliberal multiculturalism under the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives to an assertive and politically pragmatic, yet disciplinary neoconservative form of multiculturalism characterized by regressive politics and pragmatic outreach under Stephen Harper's Conservative Party.

In their multiculturalism policies the Conservatives effectively offered a denial of dominant society racism with the exception of anti-Semitism- which they equated with the criticism of the policies of Israel - frequently portrayed as a civilizational ally in what Abu-Laban and Bakan have described as part of a racial contract amongst settler colonial states - and a rejection of substantive multiculturalism to address it (Abu-Laban & Bakan, 2008). In its treatment of diaspora communities who made substantive criticisms of the government and its approach to foreign policy Kenney and the government would also engage in orientalist, clash of civilizations discourses and a withdrawal of funding, particularly concerning conflicts in the Middle East (Hasan, 2013, 2013; Siddiqui, 2012; Voices-Voix, n.d.; Ziadah, 2017).

Griffith chronicles the shift away from any anti-racism focus due to Conservative scepticism, particularly by Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney. The government rejected employment equity policies and held an observable "aversion to any terms like 'white power,' 'racialized communities' or equivalent language, particularly among organizations applying for grants and contributions" (Griffith, 2013, p. 39). The Conservative government refused to approve multiculturalism grants that would have been previously approved under announced criteria. Ministerial staff would police groups' background and use of anti-racist language through google searches, resulting in less than half of allocated program funding in grants and contributions being spent in 2009-10 and 2010-11. This was despite the fact no change in program objectives had

been communicated to potential applicants. This approach by the Conservatives, Griffith notes, led program staff to experience a state of "denial and depression" (2013, pp. 27–28).

Though the Conservatives referred to the plan in public and employed references to it in their training materials on "ethnic outreach," the Conservatives subsequently allowed the Canadian Action Plan Against Racism to expire and withdrew from UN processes related to racism despite using the Action Plan in its early years in office as a convenient reference point in Question Period to reply to inquiries about what the government was doing to combat racism (Griffith, 2013, p. 43, note 81).

"New Canadians," racialized and ethnicized persons and their allies -- lest they wish to face backlash, government defunding or sanction -- were expected to conform as neocolonial subjects. Rather than advancing inclusive policies and facilitating access to citizenship, for example, the Conservatives supported divisive projects in seeking to construct a more neoconservative imaginary of Canada. These include a high-profile and controversially placed monument to the "victims of communism" (Ivison, 2015), funding cuts to organizations supporting Arab and Palestinian rights (Siddiqui, 2012; Voices-Voix, n.d.), as well as the invocation of "barbaric cultural practices" in Canada's citizenship guide (Jhappan, 2010) and in legislation. Immigrants, critics of government policy, and members of "ethnic" communities were invited to participate in public space only within certain ideological limits, while in practice many actual and prospective migrants and immigrants were disadvantaged by the social relations being advanced by the government.

The emergent dialectical relationship between multiculturalism from below and the Conservatives' political project of political outreach and neoconservative multiculturalism from above, along with its predilection for squeezing out the progressive potentials of multiculturalism were on strong display in the case of what Matt James (2013) has described as "neoliberal heritage redress." Neoliberal heritage redress was one of the Conservatives most creative and ministerial hands-on ideological and policy formulations, a policy in the federal multiculturalism portfolio that recognized some historic war time and immigration related rights violations by the Canadian state amidst political competition between the Conservatives and Liberals.

James (2013) notes that the "heritage redress" offered to several groups in the 2000s through this model pioneered in Conservative private members' bills was in some ways highly disciplining, as it forsook formal apologies and compensation for those who suffered historic wrongs and their descendants in favour of commemorative and educational projects that downplayed or ignored the dominant society's role in harming particular groups (36). This approach was in line with the reduced emphasis on dominant society racism discussed above. These projects, James convincingly argues, served to supplant a potentially anti-racist multiculturalism discourse with a neoliberal one centred on communities' "contributions" to Canada in a formulaic manner (41). This recurring theme of downplaying dominant society racism did little to challenge contemporary injustices. As James argues, this Canadian redress culture was characterized by "a tendency to bypass questions of causal responsibility, ignore specific agents and mechanisms of injustice, and duck contemporary reform and accountability issues" (James, 2015, p. 37).

Because of this approach, James notes that "[a]cademic assessments have not been kind" towards the Conservatives' Community Historical Recognition Program (CHRP) whose final determinations rested with then-Minister Kenney. The program, James summarizes, "stipulated which injustices could be recognized," "forbade 'political activities' and 'advocacy'" and "aimed to steer public attention away from the wrongs themselves by emphasizing the experiences and contributions of the relevant communities (James, 2015, p. 39). Overall, he argues that communities pursuing such redress were subjected to markedly different "degrees of freedom" in their efforts and that overall,

The picture is not encouraging. The programme's insistence on downplaying

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> Canadian injustices in favour of redemptive tales of multiculturalist success mocks the very idea of examining historical wrongs in the spirit of introspection and political learning. Much the same can be said about promoting the equal opportunity to influence political outcomes; it appears that the CHRP excluded precisely those voices most engaged in fighting exclusion. The problem for democratic citizenship is this: when equal voice and historical learning are systematically impeded, the prospects for renegotiating relationships of domination and exclusion would appear correspondingly to suffer.
>
> (James, 2015, p. 47)

This was evidenced in what James describes as the program's "dogged" refusal to use the word racism or identify specific agents of discrimination, with the exception of remarks Kenney would make about anti-Semitism (2015, pp. 43–44). Comparatively, James notes – while in no way questioning its significance- to condemn anti-Semitism is relatively "cost free" in the contemporary context when compared to Indigenous claims in Canada, for example, which involve land and sovereignty and did not receive the same bluntly accurate characterizations by the Conservative government (38). Overall in its pragmatism, ideological creativity and disciplinary nature the case of neoliberal heritage redress illustrates some of the defining characteristics of neoconservative multiculturalism in that it represents a highly creative form of outreach to obtain support amongst "ethnic" voters while simultaneously disciplining project recipients and organizations to reinforce status quo social relations, if indeed not celebrate the nature of contemporary Canada.

This approach to the multiculturalism portfolio was also accompanied by major staff and funding reductions as the multiculturalism department "had withered and gotten lost" when merged with the citizenship portfolio by the Conservative government.[4] Griffith has observed that by transferring the multiculturalism portfolio from Canadian Heritage to the larger and enforcement-minded department of citizenship and immigration that the cumulative impact of the Conservatives' approach would "become closer to the Reform Party objective ... of abolishing multiculturalism and strengthening a common narrative of citizenship" (2013, 100). The disciplinary politics of neoconservative multiculturalism could be even more overtly exclusionary when national rituals and symbols were challenged or outsiders could be produced, as we shift from policies within the multiculturalism portfolio to other relevant discourses and policies of citizenship and belonging.

ii) Re-ethnicization and Exclusion

The Conservatives have a taken an aggressive, disciplinary approach to reinforcing some and reconfiguring other elements of the established symbolic order of Canada in a manner that highlights the shallowness of the approaches they inherited and their aggressive approach

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[4] In a story written after the Liberals were elected in 2015, based upon Griffith's reflections and data he had accessed, it was noted that "Griffith, who moved multiculturalism to CIC in 2008, long argued it had withered and gotten lost at Citizenship, a highly operational department that focused on the process side of immigration, refugees and citizenship. Griffith said it will be difficult to tease out the jobs and funding at CIC that should be returned to Canadian Heritage because they were dispersed throughout Citizenship and Immigration. The two departments will have to duke it out over which resources will move. Multiculturalism also faced a significant cut under the Conservatives. When Griffith moved it to CIC, the program had a $13-million budget: $12 million for grants and contributions and 73 full-time positions. The last departmental performance report showed 29 full-time positions with a $9.8-million budget. Money for grants and contributions fell to $7.9 million" (May, 2015).

against those they identify as ideological or political opponents. While there have long been disciplinary mechanisms linked to Canadian nationalism (Arat-Koç, 2005), under the Conservatives the greater coerciveness of their approach meant that while they were in office one must *accept* or *acquiesce* to the national identity and neocolonial practices the Conservatives sought to construct and implement or face serious consequences such as rhetorical attack or defunding.

a) Clash of Civilizations and Islamophobic Discourses and Policies

As was demonstrated by the party's contributions to Islamophobia through its discourses and practices related to the citizenship oath, and its 2015 election campaign promise to enact a "Barbaric Cultural Practices Tip Line, the Conservatives demonstrated a pattern of discourse, legislation and behavior that while not always explicitly racist, contained such overtones and effects as to primarily impact racialized and ethnicized Canadians negatively and play to the anxieties of their white Canadian base" (Andrew-Gee, 2015). In contrast to their efforts at "ethnic outreach," many of their discourses and policies were designed to reinforce the social membership and hierarchies of the country's exalted subjects relative to its racialized and ethnicized others.

Critical scholars have remarked upon the reassertion of a less inclusive, white vision of Canada (Winter, 2014b). Jafri has observed the Samuel Huntington-inspired "clash of civilizations" approach to relations between newcomers and the host society within a paradigm of transnational whiteness employed by Canada's Conservatives. This approach emphasizes colonial and military history, where most racism is confined to the past and "the inclusion of particular kinds of racialized bodies may be read as a means of affirming multiculturalism while remaining committed to the war on terror" (Jafri, 2012, p. 10). Discourses and practices of othering could be seen in the Conservative government's treatment of Zunera Ishaq, a Muslim woman and permanent resident who invoked the principle of religious freedom to wear a niqab in 2014 while taking the citizenship oath and the Conservative government's attempt to generate and profit from a moral panic on the issue, including in their 2015 election platform (Table 2 and Carlaw, 2015b).

As Swift and MacKay have noted in their work chronicling the Canadian right's attempts to turn Canada into a "Warrior Nation," with the rise and promotion of militarist sentiment on Canada's right, the citizenship guide introduced by the Conservatives "could just as well have been titled The Beginner's Guide to Warrior Nation" as wars were a dominant themes of the guide (2012, pp. 14–15). Jhappan (2010) has highlighted the double standards and antagonistic singling out of particular cultures and 'barbaric practices' in the guide within a country where domestic violence and other manifestations of patriarchy continue to be major societal issues. According to Flanagan large segments of Canada's Muslim population were considered not accessible to the Conservatives as a pool of voters due to "foreign policy issues," as he remarked following the 2011 election (2011, p. 106). Their domestic treatment would seem to confirm such calculations. The dog-whistle politics of coded language (and occasionally more vocal prejudice) appealing to the worst instincts of Canadians and type of "social cohesion" on offer are clear in their treatment of this segment of Canada's population.

After losing power some Conservative leadership candidates also courted Canada's far right in their reactions to parliamentary motion M-103, which condemned Islamophobia and systemic racism and became even more prominent in the wake of the January 29, 2017 Quebec mosque shooting, with conservative commentators dubiously claiming it could infringe on their right to free speech (Ansari, 2017; Khalid, 2016).[5] Several leadership candidates condemned the

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[5] Motion M-103 condemned and called for further study to better grasp Islamophobia and racism, which took on even more urgent meaning in the wake of the murder of six Muslims and wounding of many more

motion in February 2017, including participating in Rebel Media organized events against it (Press Progress, 2017).

b) *Citizenship Policy*

Of significant insight is Winter's (2014c) notion of the "re-ethnicization of Canadian citizenship," where she observes how policies implemented by the Conservatives that appeared "objective" or neutral to all societal groups in practice reinforced processes of ethnicization, hierarchy and othering when placed in their historical and political context. In such contexts some members of Canadian society become "impossible citizens" who are expected to "redeem themselves by proving their loyalty to the country" in contrast to what Mackey has described as white "Canadian-Canadians" situated at the core of the constructed Canadian nation (Winter, 2014c, p. 149). The one generation cut-off rule for citizenship that can be readily linked to criticisms of Lebanese Canadian dual citizens during the highly asymmetrical summer 2006 conflict between Israel and Lebanon is just such an example.

It is in this context of differentiated citizenship amongst Canadians where Harder and Zhyznomirska note that "the evacuees were defined against the backdrop of a post 9/11 security environment and a generalized wariness of people of Middle Eastern origin. Indeed, Canada's then-minister of public safety openly speculated about the potential terrorist threat posed to Canada as a result of the country's 'permissive' residency and immigration criteria" (Harder & Zhyznomirksa, 2012, p. 297).

That treatment has been contrasted greatly with that seeking to grant citizenship to Canada's "Lost Canadians," a subset of the country's primarily white "exalted subjects," to cite Thobani, believed to have accidently lost their access to citizenship due to earlier legislative changes, particularly affecting those with ties to military personnel and mostly of Anglo-Canadian descent based in the United States (Winter, 2014c, pp. 53–54). Despite some having few ties to Canada, the "lost Canadians" were the subjects of positive discourses, outreach efforts and citizenship remedies directed at potential citizens both within and outside of Canada. This contrasted strongly with those that had been directed at purportedly disloyal and even potentially dangerous Lebanese dual citizens.

At the same time as working to resolve the problems of citizenship access for the "lost Canadians" the Conservative government introduced a one generation cut-off to citizenship for all citizens that would purportedly affect all citizens equally, but in practice would more readily affect those who had more recently immigrated to Canada with transnational ties and were more globally mobile. When considered together, Winter argues, these policy changes "conflate kinship and Whiteness," with "the construction of possible citizens whose authenticity and loyalty to the nation are unquestioned." Conversely, "non-White, non-Christian 'impossible citizens'" also emerge, "whose lack of loyalty and instrumental use of their Canadian passport are said to be eroding the value of citizenship from within" (Winter, 2014c, p. 46). These changes, she argues, which reversed decades-long trends of liberalization and expansion of access to citizenship

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in a Quebec mosque the previous month on January 29, 2017. Rather than accept that Islamophobia is a significant social issue requiring study, leadership and efforts to combat it, in their dissenting committee report the Conservatives argued against there being "an increasing climate of hate and fear" in Canada and against the use of the term at all by quibbling with its definition and challenging the existence of systemic racism in Canada. Seeking to dilute attention to the issue, in the very first recommendation of their dissenting opinion the Conservatives began with a generic statement as to the "the positive role that religious faith has played in the history of Canada and reaffirming to Canadians that it will continue to be welcomed as a major contributor to the fabric of Canada in the future." Its fourth recommendation advised against government use of the term (Conservative Party of Canada, 2018b).

cannot be understood without reference to Canada's political context, particularly rise of the Conservative Party from its Reform Party and anti-immigrant roots (Winter, 2014c, p. 47).

Similar trends and discourses were observable in the government's approach to its 2014 Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act (Carlaw, 2015a). Such policy and discursive trends were part of an authoritarian populist reordering that emphasized a more exclusionary vision of unquestioning conservative patriotism and illustrated the hard edges of neoconservative multiculturalism as citizenship became a more overtly ideological battleground in Canada.

It can be seen through the Conservative Party's post-2015 leadership contests and their August 2018 convention that there is a significant appetite within the party and its base for divisive policies concerning "Canadian values," refugees and immigration policy. While the issue did not make it into their 2019 platform, their August 2018 convention saw members approve the erosion of birthright citizenship for children without a parent with permanent residence status as party policy (Smellie, 2018). The controversial motion was argued for by party member and self-described "cultural conservative" Keean Bexte, a former party staffer who subsequently invoked fears of a loss of Canadian "cultural identity" in defending it (CBC News, 2018; Rieger, 2018; Seatter & Milton, 2018). Bexte, whose work at Rebel Media has at times been funded by conservative US billionaire Robert Shillman, had been associated with several controversies in Alberta before joining Rebel Media as a reporter the month after arguing for the resolution and has gone on to offer favourable coverage to the "United We Roll" convoy and the Donald Trump-incited protests that devolved into an assault on the US Capitol building in Washington on January 6, 2021 (Anderson, 2017; Bexte, 2019, 2021a, 2021b; PressProgress, 2018, 2019; Seatter & Milton, 2018). Dynamics between the Conservatives and right and far-right media are explored further below.

c) *Continuities and Innovations Concerning Refugee Discourses and Policies*

Loudly clinging to dehumanizing discourses, one major continuity in Reform, Canadian Alliance, and now Conservative discourse has remained the language of "special interests" and "bogus refugees." The former Conservative government even conducted focus groups at taxpayer expense to test the effectiveness of the latter label in advancing their legislative agenda concerning refugees (Berthiaume, 2010). This discourse was and continues in part to be designed to undermine potential support for refugees and other vulnerable migrants from the "hard working" immigrants whose support the Conservatives have sought to win. Conservative authoritarian populist immigration discourses signal to the party's base of exalted subjects that purportedly illegitimate and troubling racialized persons will not take advantage of their asserted generosity.

Since losing power these tendencies have seemed to worsen, with some exceptions that point to creative approaches to both appeal to a more centrist common sense in this realm and justify their foreign policy inclinations. Former party leader Andrew Scheer and former immigration critic Michelle Rempel continued in the tradition of the party and government's authoritarian populist discourses when it comes to refugee claimants, particularly targeting those coming to Canada from Donald Trump's United States (Conservative Party of Canada, 2017). Rather than acknowledge the deteriorating situation for refugees and migrants, particularly Trump's negative discourses concerning refugees and the end of temporary protections for many who had lived in the US for many years, the Conservatives repeatedly blamed Justin Trudeau's 2017 "welcome to Canada" tweet for the inflow of irregular arrivals.

The Conservatives have sought to mobilize, fundraise and create anxiety concerning the border amongst their base and in potential voters by invoking notions of crisis, a lack of control and dog-whistle appeals, including imagery of a Black man crossing the Canada-US border over of a bridge covered with the text of Trudeau's earlier tweet (Canadian Press, 2018). These efforts were conducted through party emails, social media and their parliamentary discourses. To attack

the government the Conservatives insisted upon using the terminology of illegality and queue-jumping to delegitimize refugee claimants from the US.

The Conservatives also followed far-right political parties and movements world-wide in condemning the Global Compact on Refugees with misleading rhetoric (Bauder, 2018; Zilio, 2018). The Conservative Party website and Andrew Scheer particularly cited efforts to promote fact-based discourses concerning migration as a problem, falsely asserting that "**Justin Trudeau wants to give up Canadian sovereignty to an unelected international body!"** (Party Website. Conservative Party of Canada, 2018a. Emphasis in original). Concerted efforts to demonize refugees and other vulnerable migrants and seeking to sow divisions between them and others migrating to Canada are a significant part of the Conservatives' political approach. As will be discussed in the conclusion, the Conservatives' most recent leadership contest saw little improvement in that realm (Brown & MacDonald, 2020).

Notwithstanding these authoritarian populist discourses and the former government and party's treatment of asylum seekers and refugee claimants, the Conservatives have sought to formulate a more defensible approach with respect to some refugees and to help legitimate their overall approach to foreign policy. Making no mention of a plan concerning Government Assisted Refugees (those whose resettlement is funded entirely by the government and to which refugee sponsors have long considered their efforts as supplementing rather than to replace; Labman, 2016), their 2019 election platform called for the lifting of caps on private refugee sponsorship which they associate closely with religious minorities and organizations and making permanent the Rainbow Refugee Assistance Project. The latter is a small program to resettle LGBTQ+ refugees that they first announced on the eve of the 2011 Federal Election, a welcome initiative that helped bring "more than 80 LGBTQ2 refugees" to Canada between 2011 and April 2019 before being expanded by the current Liberal government (Conservative Party of Canada, 2019, p. 57; Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2019; Keung, 2011).

However the Conservative government was heavily criticized for touting the program in 2012 to members of the LGBTQ+ community precisely at the moment the government was introducing harsh reforms targeting refugee claimants within Canada which were anticipated to negatively impact gay claimants as part of a crude political outreach strategy. Their communications, which cited only Iran's negative record drew charges of an attempted "pinkwashing" of their harsh changes to Canada's refugee determination system (CBC News, 2012; CTV News, 2012; Houston, 2012; Kenney, 2012; Various, 2012). Sheralyn Jordan of the Rainbow Refugee Committee highlighted the problematic singling out of Iran at a time of international tension while arguing that the Conservative government had ignored the Rainbow Refugee Committee's comments concerning the negative impacts on Bill C-31 for LGBTQ+ refugee claimants (Christopher, 2012; Houston, 2012). In this instance, and arguably on a continuing basis modest measures for some refugees have been used to bolster negative policies and discourses towards others, particularly refugee claimants, and to paint Canada as a comparatively civilized and enlightened state to bolster justifications for neoconservative foreign policies and discourses.

iii) Bolstering and Collaborating with Far Right Civil Society Voices

In Andrew Scheer's departing speech as leader in August of 2020 he counselled Conservative supporters to "stop being the silent majority" and "Challenge the mainstream media. Don't take the left-wing media narrative as fact. Please check out smart, independent, objective organizations like the Post Millennial, or True North" (Scheer, 2020b). Domestic conservative media outlets and think tanks (Azhar Ali Khan, 2014; Gutstein, 2014) with organic links to the Conservative Party as well as far right social media personalities have frequently engaged in and

tolerated anti-refugee and anti-immigrant discourses. They have been emboldened by right populist movements, governments and politicians in North America and Europe (Pierce et al., 2018; Schain, 2018).

Seeking its own version of the United States' Fox News Network, the Conservatives attempted to strengthen the "Sun News" narrative of Canada during the party's time in office, though ultimately the Conservatives were unable to entrench the right wing network on the Canadian cable dial (CBC News, 2015; Jeffrey, 2015, pp. 350–351; Martin, 2015). Rebel Media has served as former Reform Party MP and media personality Ezra Levant's right wing successor project and was a comfortable home for Conservative politicians as well as far right media personalities Faith Goldy and Proud Boys founder Gavin McInnis until the website became a pariah in mainstream discourse in the wake of the white supremacist Charlottesville riots of August, 2017 (Bridge Initiative Team, 2019; Heer, 2017; Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.). It earned that status due to its "angry, hate-filled, unapologetic and surprisingly successful 'Breitbart North'" like promotion of far-right discourses and positions (Markusoff, 2017). However after distancing themselves many conservative commentators have drifted back to the website, while the True North Initiative cited by Scheer and led by former Jason Kenney political staffer and Sun News columnist Candice Malcom works to collaborate with and rehabilitate Rebel Media and Ezra Levant's public image while frequently publishing its own alarmist content (Goldsbie, 2018; True North, 2020). The websites Scheer cited as the source of "smart, independent" content at times utilize the same figures at different times as employees and/or guests as Rebel Media, including those with troubling connections to alt and far right media (*Cosmin Dzsurdzsa*, n.d.; Craggs, 2018; McIntosh, 2019; PressProgress, 2018).

Well known is that Andrew Sheer's leadership and the Conservatives' 2019 campaign lead Hamish Marshall was formerly a director and service provider to Rebel Media, for example, a key player in the business according to reporting by Justin Ling who described him as "at the core of the Rebel's business strategy and their aggressive campaign to scare up new readers, supporters, and donors" (Craig, 2017; Geddes, 2017; Ling, 2017). Marshall had also worked in former Prime Minister Harper's office. The outlet was comfortably at home during the Conservatives' 2016 convention, interviewing former Immigration Minister Jason Kenney as had been common at Sun News (Rebel Media, 2016). Former Harper communications lead and Sun News Network head Vice Chair Kory Teneycke would serve as an emissary for Levant and Rebel Media for sensitive and tense negotiations with far-right journalists with whom Rebel Media parted ways in the United Kingdom (Goldsbie, 2017).

Flirting with the far right, Andrew Scheer also supported and spoke to the Rebel-media backed United We Roll Convoy to Ottawa that also engaged in border hysteria and racist online social media dialogues (Bexte, 2019; Khandaker, 2019; Wright, 2019). As Jasmin Zine and colleagues from Wilfrid Laurier University have assessed, "Scheer's well documented association with controversial far-right and Islamophobic public figures makes him complicit with their actions through his tacit endorsement and their integration into the Conservative party" (Zine et al., 2019). As right wing online media increase their influence and such mobilizations grow on the streets it remains to be seen if neoconservative multiculturalism will degenerate further or be replaced by more overt forms of white supremacy.

Conclusion: Whither Neoconservative Multiculturalism?

The concept of neoconservative multiculturalism advanced in this paper reflects that to achieve sufficient electoral support to form government in Canada from their Reform Party roots the Conservatives have had to construct a novel form of neoconservative politics to detoxify their image and operate within Canadian common sense notions in favour of immigration, diversity and multiculturalism. They did not just conform to such an ideological centre, however, they have also sought to shift Canadian society and its national identity to the right.

In doing so the Conservatives have engaged in creative and highly disciplinary forms of multicultural politics combining novel forms of xenophilic, xenophobic and clash of civilizations discourses that took advantage of the properties and weaknesses of pre-existing neoliberal multiculturalism. It is a form of multiculturalism that demands acquiescence to conservative discourses, ideologies as well as policies both nationally and globally. Upon winning power the Conservatives engaged to a significant extent in a re-ethnicization of Canadian citizenship and identity while seeking to remove most remnants of anti-racism from multiculturalism policies. They have embodied and enacted the most vocal and active representation of Canada's exalted subjects of primarily European origin in order to achieve hegemony - and failing that - attempted to assert disciplinary dominance over racialized and ethnicized others and their political opponents.

State multiculturalism's property of what Thobani refers to as the *communalizing power* of the state to help organize and generate "ethnic communities" was in some ways ripe for what Flanagan referred to as the at times top down and "clientelist" nature of "ethnic outreach" (Thobani, 2007, p. 149). This was explored through the shifts and transformations they made in the multiculturalism and related portfolios. Though the more positive sounding aspects of their creative authoritarian populist project at least temporarily had the effect of drawing in a sufficient "new multicultural pillar" alongside "the older western populist and traditional Tory pillars" (Flanagan, 2011) by sufficiently detoxifying their "brand," many of their discourses and policies *re*-toxified that image by 2015.

The Conservatives sought to satisfy their at times nativist base with policies and discourses that drew stark lines between "Canadians," "good" immigrants and often racialized others as they parties sought to earn the votes of many immigrant and "ethnic" voters while proving incapable of moving beyond their base exclusionary instincts. This was their balance between dynamics of what Honig has discussed as the interplay between xenophilia and xenophobia. The balance tilting so far towards xenophobia did not serve the government and party well, however, when refugee policy and a public outpouring of support for Syrian refugees became an election issue in 2015. Given the exclusionary nature of their policy approach it is perhaps unsurprising that those policy directions would help contribute to eventual exhaustion with the Harper government as the Conservatives were expelled from office by a form of "social movement electoralism" that ultimately coalesced around the Liberal Party (Kellogg, 2019).

Leading up to the 2019 election, in addition to promoting "order" and "integrity," as can be seen in the excerpts from Scheer's "vision" speech on immigration cited at the beginning of this piece, the Conservatives continued to attempt to project a more positive political project of "unity in diversity" and distance his party from charges of racism but would not abandon authoritarian populist discourses and policy stances towards refugee claimants. This was reflective of a party seeking to both tack closer to but also shift public debate on immigration issues in a bid to once again achieve a minimum winning coalition through a politics of neoconservative multiculturalism. It was a strategy Jason Kenney supported, campaigning in the "905" or Greater Toronto Area to reach out to the ethnicized and racialized voters the Conservatives once successfully convinced to lend them their support, despite now serving as Premier of Alberta (Ibbitson, 2019). However Conservative Party leadership contests (2016 & 2020) and their August 2018 convention once again demonstrated that there is a significant appetite within the party and its base for divisive policies concerning "Canadian values" and immigration policy, particularly targeting refugees.

Only a few months after his August 2020 victory it is too soon to fully outline new Conservative Party leader Erin O'Toole's approach. Optimistic as usual when it comes to the federal Conservative Party, their political project and its relationship to questions of immigration, columnist John Ibbitson of the conservative Globe and Mail argues O'Toole is a "very different Conservative leader," citing comments to his newspaper's editorial board that the government should increase family reunification to make up for a temporary drop in economic immigration (Ibbitson, 2020). In that interview O'Toole stated that family sponsorship could help immigrants

keep their businesses going amidst COVID-19 and that "this is an opportunity for people to take a new look at the Conservative Party, including more women, new Canadians, the LGBTQ community" (Curry & Dickson, 2020). Such a proposal, which speaks to both the "value of family" and entrepreneurship is novel for a Conservative leader compared to prior restrictive directions on family sponsorship and demonstrates that conservatism itself can be defined in more open ways (Bragg & Wong, 2016).

However O'Toole's leadership campaign slogan, "take back Canada" struck a different tone. Reminiscent of Donald Trump's "Make America Great Again" phrasing, it begged the question, take back Canada from whom? Such a slogan, on the cover and on every second page of his platform - but never explained - can be seen as a dog whistle to the party's base as he marketed himself as a "true blue" Conservative (O'Toole, 2020a). He has raised the spectre of "cultural marxism" and railed and continues to make social media posts against "cancel culture," even when decisions to remove names from buildings or take down statues follow formal processes, declaring that "radical mobs are attacking our right to free speech" (Johnson, 2020; O'Toole, 2020b, 2020d). Before backtracking, O'Toole also recently defended the architects of Canada's residential schools for Indigenous children to Ryerson University campus Conservatives as having originally been well-intentioned (Breakenridge, 2020). Such stances reflect a defensive reflex against critiques of Canada and historic figures by those who have been historically marginalized and discriminated against and those who do not wish to see universities offered as a platform to anti-immigrant and white nationalist voices (Paradkar, 2018). His economic message has included right nationalist "Canada first" appeals to unionized workers (Savage & Black, 2020).

While he had previously disavowed Rebel Media, in January 2020 the party found it necessary to distance itself once again after their communications staff provided replies they attributed to O'Toole to questions from Rebel founder Ezra Levant, who subsequently published them in the format of an interview on their website (Clark, 2020; Dickson & Walsh, 2020; D. Smith, 2021). The party's deputy leader has also been under scrutiny for recently surfaced photographs of her in a Make America Great Again (MAGA) hat (Fawcett, 2021). O'Toole's leadership campaign had strong ties to controversial and influential contributors to the right wing media landscape in former Sun News Network and Conservative Party employee and Ontario Proud and Post Millennial executive Jeff Ballingall (Gerson, 2018; Gordon, 2017; McIntosh, 2019; Platt, 2020; PressProgress, 2020; Yates & Rogers, 2019).

As noted earlier, all of the Conservative most recent leadership candidates participated in anti-refugee discourses. During the leadership contest O'Toole travelled to Roxham Road in Quebec to vow to "take on the left" and repeated prior Conservative talking points concerning refugee and irregular border crossers similar to those in Scheer's speech cited at the beginning of this paper (O'Toole, 2020c). With no mention of the treatment received by refugees and refugee claimants in the United States, his platform dealt with the question of irregular crossings entirely as a security threat rather than a human rights issue (O'Toole, 2020a, pp. 26 & 41). However none of these dynamics indicate the Conservatives do not have a credible chance to regain power.

In Canada it is often said that people tend to vote governments out of office rather than in on the basis of opposition platforms. Thus being able to present one's party as at least not posing a threat to the well-being of a significant numbers of voters and to the country's positive self-image while seeking to shift common understandings of the country to the right remains an important piece of the Conservative political puzzle. A pragmatic *Kenneyist* formula of grafting sufficient levels of support amongst new and "ethnic" Canadians to the party's seemingly solid thirty per cent base of support may help the Conservatives achieve power again if they can better suppress some of their base instincts. A creative if troubling version of neoconservative multiculturalism might help them do so. But as partly evidenced by the governing Liberals' increasingly exclusionary approach to asylum seekers, even out of power the rightward direction

of contemporary neoconservative politics and its proximity to far right discourses and policy stances is likely to help encourage more dangerous and retrograde developments in settler colonial Canada (Atak et al., 2020; Canadian Council for Refugees, 2019; Carlaw, 2020b; Neve et al., 2019).

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