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**A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY:  
RECONCEPTUALIZING THE CITIZEN IN MULTICULTURAL CANADA**

by

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A Major Research Paper  
presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
Immigration and Settlement Studies  
Ryerson University

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# **A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY: RECONCEPTUALIZING THE CITIZEN IN MULTICULTURAL CANADA**

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Master of Arts  
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## **ABSTRACT**

As immigration continues to transform the ethno-racial composition of Canada, growing evidence of barriers to integration compels a re-evaluation of multiculturalism. Integration based on multicultural citizenship problematizes immigration by reproducing exclusionary nationalism and essentializing culturalism. The concept of citizenship preserves the myth of a national community although global issues manifest within national borders and local policies prioritize global capital. While multiculturalism implies cultural equality, the reality is a social hierarchy influenced by shifting identities resulting from migration and a constructed 'Canadianness' stemming from colonization. To replace the one-sided approach of immigrant obligation with mutual responsibility, integration must challenge the nationalist/culturalist tendencies of multicultural citizenship by reconceptualising the citizen from a critical transnationalist perspective that connects the local with the global. Therefore, this paper will present a revised concept of citizenship based on interdependency, which contradicts nationalism by localizing global inequality and challenges culturalism by globalizing local identities.

### **Key words:**

citizenship; integration; multiculturalism; nationalism; transnationalism

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## INTRODUCTION

Although Canada was the first country in the world to adopt multiculturalism as an official policy, the implications of the 1971 decision speak to the policy's deficiencies at best and its contradictions at worst. As a policy framework that promotes a sense of national unity based on the acceptance of cultural diversity, multiculturalism serves to address the issue of nation-building through immigration. However, increasing evidence of barriers to economic and social integration is both surprising and alarming when immigration remains an essential strategy for economic growth in Canada. According to unemployment rates from the 2001 census, new immigrants must reside in Canada for over ten years before their economic outcomes match those of the native-born population, which indicates a doubling of the transition period within 20 years (Lochhead 2003: 2). Furthermore, it seems rather unexpected that poverty levels and unemployment rates for recent immigrant populations have risen significantly (Lochhead 2003) despite the fact that the selection criteria of the point system have brought in a higher percentage of well-educated, economic immigrants (Picot 2004: 26).

While Canadian immigration policies favour potential migrants with suitable skills and education for the expanding knowledge economy, practices in the private sector are simultaneously maintaining internal restrictions that seem to favour native-born over foreign-born Canadians. For instance, based on 2001 statistics, employment rates for Canadian-born women increased regardless of race whereas foreign-born non-white women had poorer participation even though their education levels exceeded those of other women (Tran 2004: 11). The requirement of Canadian experience also becomes an impossible obstacle to overcome when there is a lack of internship opportunities in the professional occupations (Lopes 2004: 13; Basran & Zong 1998, cited in Bauder 2003: 703). In fact, many professional immigrants are

forced to work in undesirable jobs that do not seem to require Canadian experience; however, regardless of its applicability to a particular position, the lack of cultural knowledge has been used by some employers as justification for rejecting foreign-born applicants (Bauder 2003: 711).

Examining the level of social integration among immigrants is equally troubling as research shows that Canada may not be as inclusive as its multicultural image suggests. In the Ethnic Diversity Survey conducted by Statistics Canada in 2003 (Levine-Rasky 2006: 92), 20 percent of non-white respondents and 32 percent of black respondents claimed that they had experienced discrimination based on their ethnicity, race, accent, or religion in the past five years. Following an annual assessment on the Multiculturalism Act in 2005, Canadian Heritage reported that among second-generation Canadians, 42 percent of non-white respondents and 61 percent of black respondents believed that they had faced discrimination (Levine-Rasky 2006: 92). In addition, findings from a recent report by Reitz and Banerjee (2007, cited in Jimenez 2007) reveal a weak sense of belonging in Canada among non-white immigrants and their children.

Such negative outcomes not only raise obvious concerns about the effectiveness of national immigration and settlement policies, but also compel a re-evaluation of multiculturalism given that immigration continues to transform the racial and ethnic composition of Canadian society. In fact, Canada has been experiencing a significant rise in immigration from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America, resulting in almost 4 million non-white residents or 13% of the total population (Tran 2004: 1) while flows from traditional European sending states now account for less than 20% of immigrants (Ray 2005: 2). Therefore, a national context that tends to favour the native-born over the foreign-born and the 'white' Canadian over the 'non-



white' Canadian is an indication of the discrepancy that exists between the policy of multiculturalism and its practice.

The word *integrate* is defined as the action "to combine (parts) into a whole" or "to bring or come into full membership of a community" (Oxford Dictionary 2004); however, the process of integrating into multicultural Canada has tended to be one-sided. Rather than being a mutual process that involves respect and adaptation from both the native-born and the foreign-born community, the reality of integration is more aptly characterized as immigrants adjusting to an environment that favours conformity when the notion of Canada as a British settler state continues to maintain a hierarchy of citizenship based on race and ethnicity (Li 2003). Consequently, striving to integrate into Canadian society becomes an extremely frustrating pursuit as the very framework of multicultural citizenship is exclusionary in its assumption of neutrality and misleading in its connotation of equality.

The concept of citizenship is based on a legal interpretation of the relationship between the state and its citizenry, which not only overlooks the historical tendency of states to control the criteria for membership, but also presupposes the normalcy of organizing the world into nation-states. Instead of questioning the gap between the legal status and the lived experience of citizenship or challenging the relevance of the nation-state system, the current framework of integration is grounded in the neutrality of the nation-state to justify the prioritization of national interests and frame immigration as a choice.

The discourse of immigrant integration in Canada continues to be dominated by the expectation of assimilation, which contradicts the multicultural framework of Canadian citizenship (Li 2003). By perpetuating a colonial view of Western cultural superiority, policy-makers, academics, and immigration critics promote a zero-sum approach to integration that

emphasizes immigrant obligation and host society entitlement. Adding to the nationalistic bias apparent in such an approach is the perception of immigration as a choice, which serves to legitimize the expectation that immigrants should at least contribute as much economically as native-born Canadians (Li 2003: 8-9) and aspire to become a part of mainstream society by detaching from ethnic communities (Li 2003: 5).

Regardless of the issue of choice, official multiculturalism has not protected immigrants from discriminatory practices in Canada as the policy fails to recognize the domination of European values as well as white privilege and ignores other forms of inequality by focusing on cultural differences. National identity is still linked to the myth of Canada being a British settler state despite the presence of well-established Aboriginal communities and the invaluable contributions of non-British labourers. As non-white Canadians continue to face questions about their 'true' origins, whiteness remains the physical marker that differentiates the 'authentic' Canadians of European descent from the 'ethnic' immigrants of the 'Third World' and the Aboriginal 'subjects' of the nation-state (Bannerji 2000: 42). By focussing on cultural diversity, multiculturalism neither addresses other forms of discrimination based on such categories as race, gender, and class, nor prevents the essentialization of cultural communities. Furthermore, it is presumptuous to think that non-white people necessarily identify with their ethnic or racial group given that class and immigration status may influence intra-group relations.

Considering the multilayered complexity of identity and the multidimensional forms of oppression, the inadequacy of intercultural approaches to integration becomes undeniable. The barriers faced by immigrants cannot simply be overcome by promoting cultural exchange as the experience of differential citizenship involves economic, political, and social inequality. Although incorporating anti-racism into the Multiculturalism Program presents a radical

departure from the discourse of cultural diversity, merely emphasizing ethno-racial discrimination can create false categories of discrete identities without considering the issue of intra-group conflicts, which involve the intersectionality of identity boundaries such as birth origin, immigration status, religion, gender, class, and sexual orientation.

Integration based on a multicultural framework of citizenship reproduces the very nationalist and culturalist perspectives that problematize immigration as citizenship perpetuates an exclusionary form of nationalism, and multiculturalism maintains a simplistic façade of inclusion. The concept of citizenship preserves the myth of a national community while national policies prioritize global capital over local interests and global issues manifest within national borders. Whereas multiculturalism advocates cultural equality, the reality is a complex social hierarchy influenced by shifting identity boundaries resulting from migration and dominated by a constructed white 'Canadianness' stemming from colonialism. In order to replace the one-sided approach of immigrant obligation with the two-way approach of mutual responsibility, integration must challenge the nationalist/culturalist tendencies of multicultural citizenship by reconceptualising the citizen within a transnational framework that connects the local with the global. This paper will, therefore, propose a new perspective of citizenship based on interdependency, which contradicts nationalism by localizing global inequality and challenges culturalism by globalizing local identities.

Before examining the issue of interdependency, a review of multicultural citizenship in theory and in practice will provide a background on current and ongoing criticisms that serve as the departure point for a re-evaluation of citizenship and the implications for integration. To support the argument for a revised framework of citizenship informed by the principle of interdependency, the following analysis will employ a critical transnationalist perspective that

interprets globalization as the reproduction of existing hierarchies and contextualizes transnational phenomena within the realm of the nation-state. Citizenship based on interdependency will not only situate the nation-state within a global context, but also provide a more accurate conceptualization of citizens as interconnected.

Borrowing from the concepts of mutuality and hospitality elaborated by Kristeva (2001, cited in Amin 2004: 14-16), a new approach to integration that links interdependency with mutual responsibility will be presented. By highlighting the way in which the citizen is implicated within the local-global nexus of oppression, integration can begin to move beyond the discourse of national unity through cultural diversity as well as the practice of immigrant adaptation through interculturalism and anti-racism. Such a re-conceptualization of citizenship attempts to anchor the responsibility of integration onto the shoulders of not just immigrants, but also native-born Canadians who must face their own failure to live up to the ideal of equality in a diverse society.

## **A REVIEW OF MULTICULTURAL CITIZENSHIP**

### ***Theoretical Considerations and Practical Assessments***

As societies within national borders have become more racially and ethnically diverse, issues of social cohesion and models of integration are being debated in most immigrant-receiving states that perceive immigration as both an economic strategy and a social problem. Discussions about managing diversity and protecting group rights have surfaced primarily from anxieties about the impact of multicultural societies on national unity, and especially the issue of recognizing difference without jeopardizing the legitimacy and governability of the nation-state. Emerging from such considerations is the theoretical ideal of multicultural citizenship, whereby

the rights of individual citizens become subsumed within a framework that prioritizes the protection of group rights.

The radical or 'strong' version of multicultural citizenship focuses on the need to protect disadvantaged groups as it assumes the existence of social hierarchies (Young 1989, cited in Soutphommasane 2005: 403). Taking a more balanced approach that addresses the relationship between individuals, identity groups, and the state is the liberal or 'weak' variant of multicultural citizenship, which connects the relevance of group rights with the preservation of individual liberty and equality within the greater national community (Soutphommasane 2005: 403). As one of the leading theorists on the issue of multicultural citizenship, Kymlicka (1995, cited in Soutphommasane 2005: 404) proposes a liberal model that differentiates national minority groups from immigrant ethnic groups by arguing that the voluntary national membership of the latter nullifies their entitlement to group rights. Although the group-based framework of radical multicultural citizenship relies on an essentialist view of identity groups, the national versus immigrant group distinction proposed by the liberal alternative presupposes the validity of nationalism and ignores the role of immigration in nation-building.

The culturalism and nationalism evident in the two forms of multicultural citizenship are reflected in wider debates about the implications of adopting multiculturalism as an official policy. From the conservative Right, arguments against multiculturalism raise the issue of its divisiveness as there is a tendency to prioritize cultural communities over national identity (Werbner 2005, 760). In other words, fostering unity by promoting diversity is contradictory as the goal of multicultural nationalism contributes to fragmentation, extremism, and cosmopolitanism rather than national cohesion. In fact, some supporters of assimilationist and anti-immigration policies have also applied the culturalist arguments of multiculturalism to

defend the protection of a liberal national identity from the growing presence of illiberal cultures (Tebble 2006).

An alternative to the cultural preservation model of multiculturalism is the intercultural approach, which promotes dialogue between cultures to establish a new political community grounded in the framework of universal human rights and democracy (Sandercock 2006; Amin 2004). Sandercock (2006) discusses the increasing relevance of cultural hybridity in so-called “mongrel” cities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and how interactions between cultural groups can be the starting point for renegotiating culture and national identity. Interculturalism may seem like a feasible and preferable option to other frameworks that overemphasize either cultural rights or civic duties; however, scepticism remains about its actual implementation and some of the conflicts that may arise.

Vincent (2002) argues that interculturalism ignores structural inequality and overestimates the impact of cultural understanding on social cohesion. In other words, merely encouraging dialogue between different cultural groups does not address economic, political, and social inequalities that are structural in nature. Furthermore, the concept of interculturalism proposed by Sandercock (2006) is limited in its application as it is based on a micro-level model that focuses primarily on cultural exchange among immigrants rather than engaging native-born Canadians. Kymlicka (2003) acknowledges the incompatibility of intercultural interaction within multicultural states and presents three points of contention. First of all, local interculturalism inevitably competes with cosmopolitanism as transnational ties become more prevalent. Another source of tension is the right of cultural groups to isolate themselves from intercultural exchange in order to preserve their traditions despite internal differences. Kymlicka

(2003) also challenges the possibility of acquiring in-depth knowledge about other cultures when cultural groups are neither homogeneous nor fixed in their practice and understanding of culture.

Although the points presented by Kymlicka (2003) are valid from a theoretical perspective, his lack of consideration for the impact of inequality and discrimination on economic and social integration is a major shortcoming. Indeed, transnational practices are common among immigrants; however, establishing and maintaining ethnic ties overseas often serves as an alternative to struggling with economic barriers in the host society. Secondly, what Kymlicka (2003) labels as isolationism on the part of ethnic groups may actually be an expression of cultural insecurity in an environment that is hostile to difference. For instance, the rise in anti-immigration organizations and parties in the European Union (EU) demonstrate a disturbing trend towards nativism, which is fuelled especially by Eurocentric views that essentialize Muslim immigrants as extremists (Ley 2005: 6). Even though ethnic groups clearly have the right to organize and associate as they wish in a true multicultural liberal democracy, there are more practical reasons for allowing ethnic communities to thrive given that a strong sense of cultural identity has beneficial effects for both the academic performance of second-generation youth (Mouw & Xie 1999, cited in Sanders 2002: 343) and inter-cultural relations (Berry 2001: 623).

In regards to the issue of acquiring cultural understanding through intercultural exchange, Kymlicka (2003: 164) argues for the need to focus on building mutual respect rather than cultural knowledge. While there is merit to his recommendation, the perspective from which he speaks is essentially Eurocentric as it ignores the institutionalized relations of power that privilege white Christian Anglo or Francophone Canadians and render non-European cultures, religions, education, and even accents inferior or tolerable at best. Without addressing the

underlying ideological constructions of inequality that serve to justify systemic forms of discrimination, the ideal of two-way integration remains in the realm of political rhetoric.

Coming from the Left are attempts to target such ideological constructions by claiming that multiculturalism simply obscures social, economic, and political inequalities by promoting the façade of neutrality (Ley 2005: 4; Mooers 2005; Werbner 2005: 760). By incorporating multiculturalism into a liberal democracy, the Canadian state actually creates the contradiction of difference and equality, which basically results in the essentialization of non-white “others” and the depoliticization of gender, race, and class (Bannerji 2000: 156). Anthropologists have also presented the essentialization critique of multiculturalism as culture becomes characterized as something fixed and homogeneous (Werbner 2005: 761) while other scholars have argued that the essentialized cultural communities are also commodified by multicultural states to attract tourism and foreign investment (Mitchell 1993: 2004a, Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002, Murphy *et al.* 2003, cited in Ley 2005: 4). Even influential theorists such as Charles Taylor (1994, cited in Bannerji 2000: 147) and Will Kymlicka (1995, cited in Kernerman 2005: 96) have been complicit in maintaining the status quo of Eurocentric nationalism by perceiving difference as merely cultural without acknowledging that the concept of culture is a reflection of gendered, racialized, and class-based relations of power.

Whereas the emphasis that multiculturalism places on cultural diversity can ignore other forms of discrimination, the establishment of universal rights within a liberal democracy may fragment community solidarity. Given the cultural essentialism in the Canadian context, internal inequality is often silenced for the sake of the community; thus, the combination of multiculturalism and liberalism presents a challenge for individual rights as their protection is both dependent on and undermined by a strong cultural identity. For example, the construction



of an “authentic community” often perpetuates patriarchal power relations as women are constrained by traditional cultural norms that maintain male dominance and justify the negative stereotyping of “others” from the Third World (Bannerji 2000: 169). In essence, accommodating an essentialist conception of cultural communities to prove authenticity and disprove extremism becomes common practice in a diverse society that functions under a framework of multicultural governance (Kernerman 2005: 101-104; Lentin 2005: 394). As argued by Kernerman (2005: 101), diversity is managed through multicultural panopticism, whereby state control operates through the exercise of a disciplined citizenship that falls within the constraints of cultural recognition and the protection of group rights.

The appeal of multiculturalism lies in its ability to both acknowledge the issue of growing diversity and appear to offer a fair solution; however, addressing inequality as a matter of reconciling cultural differences paradoxically nurtures the hierarchical relations that such an approach was intended to eradicate (Bannerji 2000; Mooers 2005). Bannerji (2000) argues that the establishment of official multiculturalism is another strategy employed by the Canadian state to simultaneously accommodate the economic contributions and undermine the political participation of non-white immigrants. Mooers (2005) also interprets the shift to multicultural citizenship as an ideological tool that serves as a direct response to diversity and an indirect mechanism of global capitalism. At a time when the Canadian state began to pursue neo-liberal development, the switch to an open door policy served to enlarge the labour force, yet the growing presence of non-white immigrants was also unsettling for the more established Canadians (Bannerji 2000: 43). Therefore, multiculturalism was a top-down policy that attempted to evade the socio-economic issues facing non-white immigrants and suppress the

discontent among the white native-born community through a new discourse of cultural diversity (Bannerji 2000: 45).

Transpiring from such an economic agenda is the commodification of ethnic diversity by the state, community organizations, and the private sector, which has subsequently blurred the line between empowerment and exploitation given the simultaneous legitimization of difference (Goonewardena & Kipfer 2005: 672). On the other hand, perceiving multiculturalism as either empowering or exploitative is a simplistic reduction considering the relationship between class and political clout. As the elite have been less affected by cutbacks to multiculturalism programs than those with lower socio-economic status, internal class cleavages have deepened within ethnic communities (Jedwab 2001: 30). To illustrate the differential impact of multiculturalism, investors of a proposed development project in the Chinatown area of Toronto managed to use their economic influence to override a previous decision based on the recommendations of social service leaders in the community (Tan and Roy 1985, cited in Jedwab 2001: 28). Although the commodification of diversity may produce exploitative results, assuming the universality of such an outcome is presumptuous as class influences the application of multiculturalism. By concentrating on horizontal divisions such as culture at the expense of addressing vertical stratification in the form of class, multiculturalism tends to maintain the socio-economic hierarchies inherent within a capitalist system of development (Zizek 2002: 65, cited in Mooers 2005: 5).

At present, the policy of multiculturalism in Canada is primarily executed through the implementation of the Multiculturalism Program through the Department of Canadian Heritage, which provides funding grants to initiatives that align with the four goals of the Program: facilitating the participation of ethno-racial minorities in public decision-making; promoting

broad public engagement in informed dialogue and sustained action to combat racism; eliminating systemic barriers in public institutions; and enabling federal policies, programs, and services to respond to ethno-racial diversity (Canadian Heritage 2003). Despite these seemingly worthy objectives, the fundamental flaw in the Multiculturalism Program lies in its oversimplification of inequality and overemphasis on diversity.

First of all, merely facilitating active political participation among ethno-racial minorities not only overlooks the more pressing issue of increasing barriers to economic integration, but also fails to address the common perception of ethnic interests as inherently contentious. The tendency to categorize non-white representation as special interest, and thus, disassociating it from the general public demonstrates the perception of the white Canadian as the norm (Nestel 2006: 130). Despite the even greater risk of violating the democratic rights of citizens if ethnic groups are denied the political space to voice concerns that are not prioritized in the broader state agenda, the rise of identity politics fuelled by official multiculturalism and the proliferation of ethnic organizations is often perceived to fragment Canadian society and further marginalize ethnic interests (Jedwab 2001: 27).

Concentrating on strategies to combat racism represents a positive shift from the inconsequential discourse of interculturalism; nevertheless, simply focusing on ethno-racial diversity without confronting the colonial legacy of oppression or the complexity of intra-group differences results in the same dehistoricized and decontextualized understanding of inequality that plagued the culturalist interpretation of multiculturalism policy. For instance, a critique of anti-racism based on its exclusion of the history of internal colonization and the contemporary reality of Aboriginal marginalization has been put forth (Lawrence & Dua 2005). The elision of whiteness has also been raised as a major shortcoming in anti-racism frameworks given the

dependency of a constructed racialized otherness on the silent dominance of a non-racialized norm (Yee 2005). Furthermore, overlapping and conflicting identities challenge the relevance of integrating multiculturalism with a narrow conceptualization of anti-racist practice that neglects the entangled nature of oppression characterized by hierarchies of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, as well as race (Dei 1999: 400-403).

In terms of addressing systemic barriers in public institutions and developing inclusive federal policies, programs, and services, responding solely to ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity is inadequate considering the impact of the native-born bias and white privilege on the continuation of discriminatory practices. As the growth of racialized populations has surpassed that of non-racialized groups in Canada (Teelucksingh & Galabuzi 2005: 2-3), the ethnicization of citizenship becomes increasingly contradictory as many non-white residents are actually native-born Canadians (Pearson 2002, 1002). Even though the experiences of foreign and native-born non-white Canadians vary, the media may still present them as homogeneous groups of ethnic immigrants (Pearson 2002, 1003). Such a tendency illustrates how public perceptions may continue to perpetuate the ethnicized 'foreignness' of all non-white Canadians, which may play a role in the less favourable economic outcomes of more highly educated native-born non-white groups compared to their less educated white counterparts (Tran 2004, 10). On the other hand, services and programs that cater to non-white immigrants are inaccessible to their native-born counterparts who may be exposed to the same type of systemic barriers due to ethnicization (Yee 2005: 99).

Despite the perceived neutrality of a culture-sensitive equality promoted by the Multiculturalism Program, egalitarianism is expressed as a preoccupation with cultural distinctions in Canada (Bannerji 2000). The contradiction is apparent in a Canadian equality that

hides white hegemony by focussing on the promotion of diversity. Having the power to name others and lacking the power to resist being identified by externally constructed labels are two sides to the relationship between language and ideology. For instance, Bannerji (2000: 34) argues that 'women of colour' is an expression that serves to depoliticize non-white women as it promotes the recognition of gender and race without raising the issue of class, white privilege, or heterogeneity among those who are considered 'coloured'. Furthermore, the term 'visible minority', which is also attached to non-white women, emphasizes a distinguishable and subordinate 'otherness' that establishes a hierarchy of belonging in Canada (Bannerji 2000: 111-112). The domination of whiteness as the universal norm is, therefore, rendered invisible by the language of diversity demonstrated by these examples.

The re-conceptualization of the nation-state as being multicultural has definitely influenced national identity; nevertheless, such a new vision of Canada has been more of a state-imposed transformation that has been embraced by some native-born Canadians and rejected by others, especially if they perceive immigrants as competition and a threat to their own concept of national identity. According to a study comparing public attitudes towards multiculturalism in countries with and without such an official policy (Hjerm 2000), Canadians were less xenophobic compared to other nationals, yet strong support for reducing immigration and cultural funding expose the lack of correlation between policy and public opinion. For instance, Jackson and Esses (2000) have found that Canadians who perceive immigration as an economic threat are less likely to support policies that would empower immigrants although such perceptions have little effect on attitudes about the provision of social programs. Moreover, when Canadians hold nationalistic views, they tend to perceive immigrants as a cultural threat,

which leads them to support assimilation and accept that immigrants should be responsible for their own needs (Jackson & Esses 2000).

The findings from Jackson and Esses' (2000) research are significant as they demonstrate how perceptions of immigrants are not simply influenced by general prejudice or discrimination. Rather, maintaining group dominance, whether economic or cultural, is the most important issue for Canadians when they assess the implications of immigration and public policy (Jackson & Esses 2000). Such results basically reveal the divisive influence of nationalism, which manifests as a misinterpretation of the actual power relations and dynamics within the nation-state in order to justify inequality. By using immigrants as scapegoats for the economic hardships and social issues stemming from global capitalism, the state, the media, and political parties demonstrate the enduring legacy of colonial ideology, which manifests as chauvinistic nationalism evident in a righteous 'us' and an undesirable 'them' mentality (Bannerji 2000: 115). Public perceptions of undocumented migrants serve as an example given that these workers are often characterized as a national security and economic threat even though their contributions are supporting national industries and their predicament is the result of global economic changes beyond their control. Therefore, the ideology of nationalism maintains what Sharma (2005) has described as a "fortress rich world" by dehumanizing and commodifying migrants from the developing world to promote national economic interests in the developed world.

Regardless of the formal recognition of Canada as a multicultural society for over 30 years, the barriers to economic and social integration faced by recent immigrants clearly indicate that citizenship needs to be redefined by deconstructing nationalistic perceptions about citizenship and culturalist assumptions about identity. In fact, there seems to be growing discontent about multiculturalism not just among new immigrants, but their realities have also

provoked criticism from many social and political theorists who have attempted to explain the many contradictions between multicultural policy and its actual outcomes. The challenge remains to develop a more inclusive form of citizenship that addresses the contradiction between unity and diversity, the essentialization of culture, and the global capitalist collusion perpetrated by a multicultural framework of citizenship.

### **PROPOSING A METHODOLOGICAL TRANSITION** *Integration from a Critical Transnationalist Perspective*

Within the context of global capitalism, the Canadian state has applied a multicultural strategy that attempts to maintain national unity by embracing the diversity resulting from changing patterns of immigration. The implications of such an approach have been a nationalistic perception of immigration stemming from the normalization of the nation-state and a culturalist understanding of integration based on the essentialization of identity. Due to the theoretical and practical limitations presented thus far, multicultural citizenship is rendered counterproductive to the intended goal of two-way integration as nationalism and culturalism remain unquestioned. One potentially promising shift has been the development of an anti-racist framework, which attempts to replace cultural competency models that misinterpret discrimination as a lack of cultural knowledge. Another optimistic turn is the emergence of alternative organizing concepts to the nation-state system such as transnationalism and postnationalism. Although these examples indicate that a need to re-evaluate the concept of national identity and citizenship is acknowledged, neither of them provide a comprehensive analysis of the shifting relations of oppression nor offer an accurate assessment of the role of the nation-state within the contemporary system of global capitalism.

As anti-racism incorporates the historical relations of domination examined in post-colonial theory, the shortcomings of such a perspective are inevitably linked to the limitations of its theoretical basis. To begin, a post-colonial conceptualization of current forms of oppression implies “a past-oriented redemption, but a future-oriented unsettling of the settler’s colonization” (Chen 1996: 45) characterizes the present circumstances of Aboriginal people. Internal colonization continues to be a reality in Canada as the state has maintained colonial relations of power through the establishment of separate institutions and laws, its management of reserves, and the paternalistic approach taken in negotiations about land and self-governance (Bannerji 2000: 75). Furthermore, excluding the genocidal implications suffered by Aboriginal people, the process of subjecting internal populations to forms of oppression is also evident in the immigration experience of non-white Canadians. Bannerji (2000: 157) explains how migration to Canada is, in many respects, a re-colonization of those who have emigrated from de-colonized states where they overcame much of the Eurocentric discourse into which they are once again reinserted as racialized and ethnicized ‘others’. Nevertheless, failing to consider the impact of settlement, whether through slavery or migration, on existing Aboriginal communities also presents an incomplete analysis of racism, which perpetuates a disjointed politics of intertwined inequalities (Lawrence & Dua 2005).

Due to the dynamics of shifting hierarchies between as well as within dominant and subordinate groups, the dichotomous conceptualization of oppression presented by post-colonial theory is a rigid framework with which to address the issue of one-sided integration. In fact, the term ‘white’ had a narrower definition when immigration was predominantly from European states; however, once Canada adopted a more open policy to include non-traditional source countries, the scope of ‘whiteness’ expanded in the ever growing presence of ‘visible others’



(Bannerji 2000: 112-113). By interpreting dominant and subordinate relations as static, post-colonial theory overlooks the way in which migration reconfigures the hierarchical context of national societies. In speaking about the consequences of advocating for difference, Dei (1999: 401) implies the homogeneity of minority group experiences even as he argues for a nuanced analysis of interlocking oppressions. Notwithstanding the potential for ethnic communities to use multiculturalism to legitimize their claims to citizenship rights when faced with discrimination (Ley 2005: 12), the impact of class is often overshadowed by the issue of ethno-racial diversity. Moreover, it is presumptuous to think that racialized individuals necessarily relate to one another based on their shared experience of being differentiated from the white majority. An example is the situation of housing redevelopment in Vancouver, where long-standing non-white residents in an affluent neighbourhood were just as resentful as white residents of the changes brought on by new immigrants (Rose 1999, cited in Hiebert 2000: 33). Although Western colonialism has undoubtedly played a major role in shaping current relations of oppression, all forms of inequality are not necessarily the direct product of white, European domination (Ong 1999, cited in Pon 2005: 165).

In building the nation of Canada, the state has continuously redefined the boundaries of inclusion by constructing difference in a manner that legitimates and sustains colonial power relations. As such, failing to recognize the nation-state of Canada as an ideological construction in itself precludes the ability to challenge the foundation of power that continues to problematize Aboriginal peoples and immigrants despite the rhetoric of diversity and equality. Presenting an alternative to the national framework of citizenship are theories of transnationalism and postnationalism, which propose a globalized conception of economic, political, social, and cultural relations. From capital flows and migration patterns to universal human rights and

cultural hybridity, the emergence of transnational and postnational practices seems to have overshadowed the relevance of national boundaries and identities. Although claims have been made about the decline of the nation-state, the reality is much more complicated as “economic globalization is *denationalizing* national economies, whereas immigration is *renationalizing* politics” (Sassen 1996, cited in Arat-Koç 2006: 217). Frequently used expressions such as ‘fortress North America’ and ‘fortress Europe’ are, therefore, oversimplifying the context. Rather than being fixed boundaries that are merely physical in nature, borders function as political, economic, and psychological barriers that can be managed, manipulated, and transformed to benefit some while impeding others.

Various academic disciplines have taken for granted the existence and necessity of the nation-state, resulting in the widespread and unquestioned acceptance of such an organizing concept (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002). However, as the economic imperative of neo-liberal restructuring and the implications for international migration have forced governments to re-evaluate the role of immigration within the new global economy, a more political connotation of the seemingly neutral concept of the nation-state is being revealed. To manage immigration flows, governments must develop policies that effectively recruit immigrants with the skills, education, or wealth to contribute to the knowledge economy while they promote private sector demands for a flexible and cheap labour market that meets service sector and specific industry needs. On the other hand, for governments to preserve their legitimacy, they must gauge how citizens perceive immigrants and how changes in immigration patterns affect social cohesion. With so many demands and so much at stake, nationalism is both intentionally utilized and unintentionally provoked, raising contentious issues such as national security, nation-building, citizenship rights, and national sovereignty.

In immigrant-receiving countries such as Canada, the type of status granted to those who cross the border is a direct reflection of their place within the global hierarchy of labour and capital. By defining migrants as legal or illegal, states are essentially promoting what some have called 'global apartheid', which is the stratification of migrants into privileged nationals and disadvantaged foreigners in order to justify the provision of entitlements or the practice of exploitation (Sharma 2005). Although borders have long been associated with the territorial sovereignty of nation-states, their significance must be understood in relation to nationalism as it is an ideology that serves to re-conceptualize physical territory into a psychological boundary of identity to legitimize exclusion.

By exaggerating the pervasiveness of hybridity and ignoring the impact of class, transnational and postnational theories also serve to depoliticize difference. With the socio-cultural transformations resulting from increased globalization, cultural authenticity has been replaced with the concept of hybridity. Such an interpretation assumes the inevitable blending of multiple influences without accounting for the internal and external constraints on the expression and recognition of identity. For instance, the credibility of immigrant intellectuals has been accepted without adequately assessing the extent to which their diasporic positions are distorted by their privileged location in the First World or legitimized by those whom they claim to represent in the Third World (Chen 1996: 51). Furthermore, in contesting the essentialist perspective that immigrant communities prefer to retain their ethnic identity, the discourse of creolization simply reasserts a culturalist view of difference through the more nuanced analysis of hybridity (Goonewardena & Kipfer 2005: 674).

In terms of citizenship, transnational practices and postnational institutions undoubtedly challenge the national framework that currently dictates the rights and obligations of citizens.

Nevertheless, the experience of citizenship within the denationalized context of globalization is actually determined by socio-economic class rather than legal distinctions (Sassen 2005: 84). According to Shachar (2006), the search for 'the best and the brightest' has resulted in the commoditization of citizenship within competitive immigration regimes as developed countries revise their immigration policies to lure educated and business elites wishing to flee the political instability and economic struggle in developing regions. Although the capital assets of business class immigrants enable them to become global citizens, their transnational lives have generated concern over the issue of national loyalty and the entitlement of rights. On the other hand, the economically disadvantaged class from the same regions have little choice but to enter developed countries as migrant workers with conditional status and endure employment conditions that are not desirable but still preferable to what they left back home (Stasiulis & Bakan 2003: 52).

Despite the contributions of migrant labour in the receiving context and the dependency on migrant incomes in the sending context, the hypocrisy of national citizenship is obscured by the legal basis of entitlements and obligations. The contemporary phase of transnational and postnational dynamics is, therefore, much more complicated than the common claim of a borderless world as sending and receiving states are compelled to constantly re-strategize in order for their national interests to be served amid global economic changes. In the case of managing international migration to suit national objectives, countries either manipulate the selection criteria or re-conceptualize existing definitions of citizenship that perpetuate global inequality between the developed and the developing world, as well as political, economic, and social stratification within national borders. Furthermore, as there appears to be a transition towards more circular patterns of migration that involve the policies of sending states as much as

those of their receiving counterparts (Agunias 2006), the impact of transnationalism on citizenship and nation-building becomes impossible to ignore.

Given the de-contextualizing effect of postcolonial theory and the de-politicizing influence of transnational/postnational theories, the barriers to two-way integration continue as inequality is simply reframed through discourses that ignore the shifting boundaries of identity and the hierarchical structure of citizenship. To address the limitations of the racialized and ethnicized citizen of anti-racism and the hybridized and globalized citizen of transnationalism or postnationalism, this paper will attempt to reconceptualise the citizen as a passive and active agent of global interdependency through the lens of critical transnationalism. Such an approach provides a comprehensive analysis of the current role of citizenship as it focuses on the contradictory implications and alternative practices of transnationalism, examines global inequality from the local context, and explores the reproduction of existing hierarchies through globalization (Ang & Stratton 1996).

By situating the citizen within the context of global interdependency, the goal of integration becomes a matter of mutual responsibility rather than immigrant obligation as nationalistic biases and ethno-racial differences are rendered inconsistent with transnational developments. Just as the principles of mutuality and hospitality present a philosophical foundation for a new multicultural vision of Europe (Kristeva 2001, Amin 2004: 14-16), the concepts of interdependency and responsibility offer an alternative to the current notion of citizenship and national identity in Canada. Through an understanding of the shifting relations of advantage and disadvantage as well as the fluid nature of inclusion and exclusion, hospitality as the unequal dichotomy between host and guest evolves into mutual responsibility within the wider context of a shared humanity that transcends nationality, ethnic community, or any other

form of constructed identity (Amin 2004: 16). In order to move beyond a limited framework of integration that focuses on immigrant adaptation and ethno-racial diversity, this paper proposes a critical transnational reconceptualization of citizenship that illuminates the contradictions between nationalism and global interdependency as well as culturalism and transnational realities.

## **MISTAKEN NATIONAL IDENTITY**

### ***Nationalism and the Myth of Citizenship***

The legitimization of policies that are detrimental to new immigrants and the favouring of native-born citizens in the private sector are direct manifestations and reinforcements of nationalist views that persist within the general public. Perceptions of Canada as a British settler state, recent immigrants as non-Canadians, and illegal migration as an invasion of national territory serve to generate negative attitudes toward immigration as it is understood to have a destabilizing and transformative effect on the nation-state of Canada. Contrary to the notion of migration as a means to a better way of life, neo-liberalism and nationalism have created a transnational context that is replicating global economic inequality within individual states.

As neo-liberal programmes involving deregulation and privatization in the developing world have provoked increased flows of international migration, states are taking advantage of their national sovereignty by making policies that enable them to control the undesirable consequences and reap the benefits of such a trend. Instead of having to find cheap labour elsewhere, the developed world seems to be generating its own supply as a result of discriminatory immigration policies and private practices. Furthermore, to increase the flow of capital investment and human capital, states are also able to use their control over citizenship to attract the right immigrants to meet those needs.

Although some scholars have claimed that emerging patterns of circular migration may have positive consequences for the developing world (Agunias 2006: 5), the continuing impact of neo-liberalism and the heightened levels of nationalism render that projection rather improbable as national policies in receiving and sending states function to produce global citizens out of those with financial capital and global labourers out of those without such an economic advantage. Contemporary patterns of transnational practices, therefore, reveal the ambiguity of using citizenship as a legally-binding identification or a morally-binding duty to a particular nation-state (Galloway 2000).

### **Nationalism Deconstructed: *Global Inequality Replicated within the Canadian Context***

Ideas have the power to transform the way in which people understand the world and their particular role and interests within that perceived sphere of existence. In the case of immigration, policies are not simply based on an objective evaluation of costs and benefits to the country; rather, they are shaped by particular belief systems that perpetuate the economic, political, and social power relations of global inequality. More specifically, the ideological combination of neo-liberalism and nationalism produces immigration policies that replicate global economic stratification within Canada. As the neo-liberal logic of development prevails in constructing a global economy centred on competitiveness, nationalism functions to justify institutions, policies, and practices that promote an exclusionary atmosphere for immigrants based on dichotomous conceptualizations of the developed versus the developing world as well as the foreign-born versus the native-born Canadian. The localization of global inequality, therefore, stems from global economic development driven by neo-liberalism and the manifestation of nationalism within such a competitive environment.

“Neo-liberalism is concerned with enhancing the competitiveness of the Canadian economy by adjusting to the perceived imperatives of global capitalism” (Patten 2003: 97-98). The key word in this quote is the term ‘perceived’, which emphasizes the process of reifying the demands of capitalist interests as a necessity to all countries and all people wishing to survive within the new global economy that seemingly functions on its own. By projecting such a phenomenon as real and unavoidable, neo-liberalism serves to legitimize state decisions that prioritize national economic interests at the expense of humanitarian and egalitarian values. At a time when economic stagflation and the subsequent recession triggered fears among the corporate elite of the industrialized world, neo-liberal governance provided the most effective strategy to promote global capitalism amid democratic and socialist forces (Patten 2003: 97). In the 1970s, economic initiatives ranging from privatization and deregulation to social spending cutbacks and free-trade agreements began to dominate the political agenda. As developed countries and their corporations were wary of protecting their economic advantage, the developing regions of Africa, Asia, and Latin America became ideal targets for exploitive development programs and capital investment strategies (Castles & Miller 2003: 78). Another dramatic change is the shift from industrial to service and knowledge-based economies in the developed world and the increasingly precarious nature of employment, which has also become stratified according to gender, age, and ethnicity (Castles & Miller 2003: 78).

Since the emergence of neo-liberal policies, global economic restructuring has not only affected national economies, but also the pattern and management of international migration. Most movements have generally flowed from the developing South to the developed North whereas post-Cold War Europe has seen an increase in migration from the politically unstable East to the stronger economies in the West (Castles & Miller 2003: 79). Furthermore, the type of



migration has also changed considerably as temporary work programs, family reunification, and illegal border crossings have become more common (Castles & Miller 2003: 79). Some possible push factors have included environmental displacement and urban overcrowding due to capital-driven development strategies based on neo-liberalism, as well as political unrest and repressive regimes that are intertwined with the interests of global capital (Castles & Miller 2003). Although reasons for individual cases may vary, escalating economic and political instability in much of the developing world combined with rising demands for labour and skills in the developed world have had a major role to play in creating such a change in migration patterns.

Following the neo-liberal line of thinking, the global market is portrayed as an uncertain and fluctuating environment whereas the reality is an economic imperative intentionally and actively promoted by nation-states through the development of economic, political, and social policies that favour profit over people. Not only are more countries interested in recruiting affluent and highly-skilled immigrants to enable them to compete in the knowledge-based and capital-driven global economy, but many are also equally aware of the need to supply low-skill and labour-intensive sectors of their domestic economy with cheap labour. Although Canada continues to pursue economic growth through immigration, its objective of attracting more labour and capital combined with a nationalistic approach that undermines the needs of new immigrants has inevitably resulted in policy contradictions. Whether it is the creation of a stratified system of labour despite promoting multiculturalism, or the discrepancies between selection criteria and economic realities, the publicized goals of immigration and integration policies seem to differ significantly from the actual experiences of immigrants. Canada's contribution to global inequality is, thus, directly linked to its own nationalistic policies that exploit the already existing economic disparities between the developed world and the

developing world, as well as the capitalist class and the working class within and across national boundaries. The transition from a primarily industrial to a service and knowledge-based economy has undoubtedly led to changes in the selection criteria for immigrants; however, based on the fact that there are roughly 200,000 non-status migrant workers occupying labour-intensive, low-paying jobs in the construction and hospitality industries (Bauder 2006: A25), it seems as though illegal avenues may have become more efficient and convenient in meeting national economic demands.

Despite their significant contributions to the Canadian economy as cheap labour, undocumented migrants receive retribution for breaking the laws of entry rather than amnesty for being the victims of global inequality. Instead of offering humanitarian assistance to the many developing regions that have been dealing with the issue of displacement stemming largely from the adoption of neo-liberal policies, the Canadian state recognizes the economic advantage of withholding legal status from a growing pool of migrants (Sharma 2005: 2). Furthermore, portraying these victims of the global economy as ‘illegals’ who are somehow jumping the cue to reap the benefits of the developed world is effective not only as an economic strategy, but also as means to deflect public attention away from their hardships and contributions by focussing on the legality of their entry and relating that to the issue of national security.

At the other end of the spectrum, those who possess the skills and education applicable to the knowledge economy are exposed to a more client-based approach to immigration, whereby citizenship is offered as an immediate incentive. According to Shachar (2006), the competition for international talent is intensifying as more states are recruiting skilled and educated immigrants and many sending countries have begun to tap into the economic potential of forging ties with their emigrant communities abroad. Canada and many other developed countries are,

therefore, simply looking out for their own best interests by ignoring the disadvantaged position of the developing world or the possible negative implications of taking away their human capital. Consequently, the practice of attracting capital and talent is perpetuating rather than changing global inequality since those who are granted citizenship either already belong to a privileged economic class that is simply replicated in another context or contribute to Third World brain drain only to undergo a process of skill devaluation based on First World biases.

According to policy analysts, the future economic success of Canada is dependent on a high-skilled labour force that can effectively compete in the knowledge economy; nevertheless, current labour market trends indicate an increase in precarious employment rather than appealing high-skilled, well-paying positions in the knowledge sector (Cruikshank 2002: 4). In 2002, Canada introduced a new Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) that emphasized flexibility over specific occupational fields to address the new demands of a knowledge-based economy. Even though recent immigrants have higher levels of education with relatively similar levels of language proficiency as past cohorts, their economic outcomes are actually much worse than their previous counterparts (Reitz 2005: 5). In fact, many professionals who were granted entry based on their education and skills find themselves in occupations that are completely wasting the very assets for which they were selected. Some of the more common explanations for such unfavourable results include bureaucratic obstacles to foreign credential assessment and recognition, a lack of intergovernmental cooperation, and racial discrimination (Reitz 2005). Although addressing these issues may reduce some of the challenges faced by new immigrants, there is a need to examine the basic question of why immigration policy objectives do not correlate with the present economic reality. Since it is increasingly the case that educated and skilled newcomers in North America are filling jobs in the low-paying sectors of the service

industry, perhaps the major benefit of devaluing foreign qualifications is the creation of a large labour pool of immigrants that can be flexibly utilized as cheap labour (Liu & Kerr 2003: 130).

While immigration policies may be creating a domestic context of external openness for potential migrants with the right skills and education for the so-called thriving knowledge economy, practices in the private sector are simultaneously maintaining internal restrictions that seem to favour native-born over foreign-born Canadians. To further elaborate on such a bias, the private sector seems to allow their negative perceptions of the developing world and stereotypes about foreign cultures affect their hiring practices. For instance, the Public Policy Forum (Lopes 2004) conducted a survey of Canadian employers to investigate their perceptions of recent immigrants and found that concerns over foreign qualifications, cultural differences, and inter-ethnic conflict were not uncommon. Despite diversity training, some employers in the private sector still favour those who have been socialized and educated in Canada as they hold nationalistic views that place Canadian standards and values above those of other countries. In terms of labour regulating bodies, which oversee credential assessment and accreditation, there is a tendency to discredit foreign qualifications in order to control the labour market (Wanner 1998: 10). Many professional organizations also create arbitrary stipulations such as high assessment fees and supervision requirements that only apply to qualified applicants who have been educated or trained abroad (Bauder 2003, 703). Although racial discrimination plays a role in the hiring practices of the private sector (Teelucksingh and Galabuzi 2005), there is increasing evidence that indicates the importance of birth country in addition to race.

### **The Myth of Citizenship: *Rights and Responsibilities for Whom?***

As the Canadian context demonstrates, neo-liberalism and nationalism in immigrant receiving states have definitely resulted in contradictory implications for new citizens;

nevertheless, examining divergent streams of transnational migration such as Chinese business immigrants and Filipina migrant workers illustrate the way in which sending states are also implicated in the perpetuation of global economic inequality. As most recent permanent residents have come from China, and next to the United States, the Philippines has provided the country with the most foreign workers (CIC 2005), comparing the immigration experiences of Chinese business immigrants to that of Filipina migrant workers seems to be an appropriate starting point for exploring the relationship between class, citizenship, and transnationalism.

Looking at the post-1997 statistics for Chinese business class immigration to Canada, there has been a dramatic decline in the number of immigrants coming from Hong Kong and a gradual reduction in Taiwanese migration (Wong 2004: 127), which is likely due to the settling of political instability spurred by China's rising presence in Asia. On the other hand, as the economic circumstances have begun to improve in the People's Republic of China (PRC), business emigration from the mainland has increased consistently to over 90% of all Chinese immigrants to Canada (Wong & Ho 2006: 254). Furthermore, mainland Chinese immigration, the majority of which were professionals, accounted for more than 20% of total immigration to Canada in 2000 (Liu 2005: 294). To understand the reason for such changes in the composition and flow of Chinese migration, it is necessary to analyze these new trends within the context of particular economic and political changes that have taken place in the PRC.

In the early 1980s, China introduced its open-door policy on emigration due to the domestic pressures of overpopulation, high unemployment, and growing economic inequality (Liu 2005: 296). However, with close to 30 million Chinese living overseas today (Agunias 2006: 7) and the emergence of a knowledge and capital based global economy, the PRC is clearly tapping into the immense pool of financial and human capital that resides in its diaspora.

Recent economic development in the PRC and its membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) have also created a new domestic environment that is potentially lucrative for both capital investment and technological entrepreneurship. In fact, a substantial portion of the \$40 to \$50 billion in direct investments since the late 1990s is attributable to the Chinese diaspora, and according to 2002 data from the Shanghai Personnel Bureau, over 2000 foreign-trained entrepreneurs are directly involved in private businesses (Zweig et al, cited in Agunias 2006: 7). Agunias (2006) has also indicated the tendency for many foreign-trained professionals to bring back technology developed abroad, which is especially beneficial and profitable when there is nothing comparable in the domestic field. Despite becoming citizens of developed countries, many transnational entrepreneurs maintain family ties and personal relationships in the PRC, which not only serve as a cultural linkage, but also provide an economic advantage for those wishing to establish business operations (Liu 2005: 308).

The PRC has also begun an active nationalist campaign through policies that promote the prioritization of national interests among overseas Chinese communities. Although the previous official objective was to encourage return migration, the PRC has caught on to the benefits of transnationalism and has begun to emphasize serving the country without the need to return (Liu 2005: 302). Some specific incentives that the government has offered to its overseas community include green cards for professionals (Liu 2005: 302) and the establishment of science parks, development, and high-tech zones in urban centres (Agunias 2006: 23). Another nationalistic PRC policy is the creation of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office to essentially “[bring] the nation-state, both as a sovereign entity and a cultural symbol, to the Chinese transnational communities” (Liu 2005: 303). In 2001, officials of this government body travelled to more than

20 countries to promote national unification with Taiwan based on the 'One Country, Two Systems' approach as well as Chinese culture among the diaspora (Liu 2005: 303).

From such developments, it becomes increasingly clear that the PRC is utilizing its diaspora as an economic as well as a political transnational network that functions to increase support for its unification movement. Although it is important to keep in mind the differences within the overseas Chinese community, nationalist tendencies seem to be on the rise as there is growing support for a unified China and more of a general revitalization of Chinese identity and pride (Liu 2005: 311). For instance, over 700 international representatives were present at the 2002 Global Fandu Cutong Convention, which was aimed at furthering the unification cause overseas (Liu 2005: 311). Another example of rising Chinese nationalism among the diaspora is the immense support for China's Olympic bid and the patriotism expressed by many following Beijing's win (Liu 2005: 312). Thus, Chinese immigrant communities abroad may have citizenship status in other countries; however, the political and economic interests of the PRC remain influential in their transnational practices as Chinese nationalism coupled with its global economic presence create a new context of circular migration that involves competition among sending and receiving countries.

Just as the PRC used nationalism to reap the economic benefits of a transnational class of immigrants, the Philippines has also attempted to re-conceptualize their overseas migrant community as national heroes. By replacing 'Overseas Contract Workers' (OCW) with 'Overseas Filipino Workers' (OFW), the Ramos government seemed to be cultivating a new perception of migrant workers as national representatives abroad in order to generate a greater sense of loyalty to the country (Rodriguez 2002: 347). Moreover, the image of overseas migrants as national heroes has even been spread through the public school system (Rodriguez

2002: 347), which demonstrates the intention to maintain a migrant worker class of nationals. Although such an official policy is understandable based solely on the enormous contributions provided by the billions of dollars in remittances that migrants send back each year (BLES 2000, cited in Rodriguez 2002: 347), analyzing the domestic and the global context within which transnational practices have taken place will provide a clearer picture of why the Philippines has become so dependent on its overseas labour force.

Amid the global economic restructuring of the 1970s, the Philippines began to adopt a neo-liberal paradigm of development, which eventually forced the government into a policy of exporting labour as debt payments and unemployment levels were quickly becoming unmanageable (Rodriguez 2002: 346). In addition, the growing demand for flexible, cheap labour in the global economy led the government to continue with its policy of labour exportation even though it was only meant to be a temporary strategy to mitigate domestic instability (Rodriguez 2000: 346). Like most sending countries that promote emigration, the Philippines undoubtedly realizes the social benefit of enhancing human capital, the economic benefit of remittances, and the political benefit of using its diaspora to influence policy decisions in receiving countries (Bauböck 2003: 709). However, with such benefits arising out of emigration, the entitlements of national citizenship are being overlooked and, in many cases, even suppressed through the provision of conditional rights while abroad.

According to Bauböck (2003), emigration and transnational practices serve as effective ways to prevent social unrest stemming from national poverty and unemployment as the former reduces economic competition and the burden on the state while the latter controls the level of permanent return migration and human capital drain. In the case of OFWs, the Philippine government is essentially exploiting the poor and unemployed as a lucrative global export and



using emigration as a political strategy to avoid substantial change at the national level. For example, the Republic Act 8042, which outlines the specific rights of workers abroad, is basically a piece of legislation that provides a false image of government integrity. Although the right to employment and welfare services are protected under this act, the inability to vote or file a complaint while abroad, the introduction of remittance quotas, the obligation to pay taxes to the receiving state as well as the Philippines, and the mandatory employment processing fees are some of the conditions that render it exploitive rather than protective (Rodriguez 2002). Moreover, if disputes should ever arise between overseas employers and OFWs, the Philippine state takes full responsibility for its workers, which prevents the possibility of ever pressuring foreign governments to address their own policies regarding migrant labour (Rodriguez 2002: 350). In fact, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration or the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration functions more as a monitoring body that ensures compliance with the financial obligations of citizenship than a neutral government agency involved in the protection of citizenship rights. Therefore, the granting of social rights abroad has essentially come at a price in that OFWs may receive protection as long as they comply with a list of conditions that neither protect them legally nor economically.

While there is much emphasis on the rights of OFWs in the host country, there is very little attention paid to the actual social and psychological implications of leading a transnational life on a continual basis. For instance, when the wife or the mother is constantly working abroad and sending remittances to her family in the Philippines, marriages tend to break up and children suffer from feelings of abandonment (Agunias 2006: 16). Due to their reliance on remittances, many families also maintain such a dependency as there are few incentives to find other options that are as lucrative, and even when OFWs decide to start a business upon return, their lack of

experience and knowledge about the domestic economic context prevents them from being successful (Agunias 2006: 16). It is, thus, not uncommon for OFWs to end up living a life of permanent migration when their financial obligations as 'national heroes' make saving their earnings next to impossible and the consistently precarious domestic context provides no viable alternatives to transnational strategies that serve to perpetuate their current disadvantage as global labourers.

## **MISTAKEN GROUP IDENTITY**

### ***Culturalism and the Construction of Canadianness***

Following the atrocities of the Holocaust, imperial powers began a process of neutralization that involved replacing the notion of racial difference with a discourse of cultural diversity, which simultaneously rendered colonization unacceptable (Lentin 2005). As a result, such attempts at eradicating racism served to establish a world system of nation-states under the pretense of independence and justice (Lentin 2005: 385). Although the end of World War II marked an international shift towards decolonization and the formal recognition of human rights, the contemporary context of global capitalism has re-established colonial relations of power within national borders. Through the promotion of diversity and universal rights, the Canadian state obscures the fact that the ideology of colonization remains intact albeit under the guise of multiculturalism and liberal democracy (Bannerji 2000). The superiority of whiteness and European values represented by the economically developed First World is conveyed by emphasizing the inherent inferiority of non-white people and non-European cultures demonstrated by the economically underdeveloped Third World. Nevertheless, the dialectical process of constructing the 'inferior other', which privileges European values and whiteness at

the expense of non-white migrants and citizens, is overshadowed by discourses of national unity and cultural diversity.

As Canada continues to be a major immigrant-receiving country, diversity has become both a social issue that must be managed and an economic advantage that should be promoted. Although seemingly inconsistent, such an approach reflects the contradictory nature of the relationship between nationalism and multiculturalism. In other words, the nation-building project manifests as equal rights and cultural pluralism in the constitutional realm while differential citizenship and Eurocentrism is experienced by those who continue to be categorized as outsiders to a national imaginary shaped by the colonial ideology of racial and cultural hierarchy. Just as the construction of unity articulated as Canadian values and traditions erases the impact of colonization, the construction of community within the framework of multiculturalism overlooks the relevance of migration. In other words, addressing the issue of integration without consideration for intra-group differences based on immigration status reproduces the power relations that determine the construction and application of cultural identities. Unless the concepts of Canadian culture and ethnic community are examined from a perspective that situates the nation-state in the context of colonization and migration, local inequalities will continue to serve the interests of global capitalism.

### **What about Canadian Culture? *Constructing Unity amid Diversity***

Whether it is the confusing vagueness of respecting shared values or the assumed neutrality of liberal democratic universalism, public policies and theoretical assertions that encapsulate Canadian identity have only served to highlight the elusive and socially constructed nature of culture. Underlying the question of national identity is the tension between promoting unity and embracing diversity as nation building requires the former while internal differences

necessitate the latter. For instance, Kymlicka (2003) has argued that maintaining a balance between the two objectives is a challenge as multiculturalism legitimizes intercultural relations beyond the local. Although multicultural citizenship is conducive to global interculturalism, perceiving such a consequence as jeopardizing local connections demonstrates a nationalistic bias that prioritizes unity among citizens despite the experience of differential citizenship.

Throughout the nation-building project of Canada, constructing a unified national identity out of disparate subjectivities has been a common theme. Lacking a cohesive national identity from which its citizenry can develop a collective sense of pride, a unified set of values, and a clear vision of where the nation should be headed, Canada has appropriated Aboriginal cultural symbols to compensate for the absence of viable alternatives that would satisfy a heterogeneous society. The irony behind such a phenomenon is that the national image is being represented by the culture of internally colonized people who have been the target of assimilation policies throughout history. As demonstrated by the unsettling ease with which the Canadian state has incorporated Aboriginal culture into the nation-building project, 'Canadian' as a cultural category is a construction of unity that contradicts the dialectic of identity formation through differentiation.

In the case of Aboriginal peoples, internal colonization has been based on the premise of indigenous savagery contrasted against European civility. Grounded in such a dichotomization, policies of assimilation were viewed as hopeful mechanisms for advancing indigenous culture to the point of European standards of civilization (Cairns 2000). To legitimize an economically driven process, colonization is intertwined with ideology as justifications for political and cultural domination of another nation or group depend on beliefs about the inferiority of the colonized and the absolute superiority of the colonizer. Without the internalization of such a

dichotomy by both groups, resistance on the part of the subjects and conflict amongst colonialists would undermine the objective of domination. In other words, colonization was understood as being beneficial to those who were fortunate enough to be subjects of such a cause; however, as a motive of economic self-interest was always behind every decision, colonization required the guise of good intent, which was a combination of spreading Christianity, civilization, and mercantilism (Cairns 2000).

Many non-Aboriginal people have misunderstood the actual historical context of contemporary relations as their perceptions have been based on the Eurocentric notions of egalitarianism, meritocracy, and individualism. Such ideological biases cause non-Aboriginal people to overlook the fact that each minority group within Canada has had very different historical experiences and relationships with the state, and a diversity of cultural backgrounds may include value systems that are contrary to European principles (Dyck 1991). Therefore, many non-Aboriginal people have been quick to interpret Aboriginal hardships as a direct result of their own weaknesses, which may translate into pity, condescension, or even resentment of state assistance. Similar attitudes have been directed at immigrants who experience barriers to integration even though such obstacles are often the result of institutional structures and public perceptions that favour a white Eurocentric standard of Canadian identity. In addition to internal colonization, nation-building through immigration creates another dialectical process of identity construction as the inclusion of foreign-born subjects challenges the assumed homogeneity of the nation-state and complicates the issue of citizenship (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002: 310).

Despite the common expectation of improved standards of living in Canada, non-white immigrants are admitted into a country where they are expected to integrate into an economic, political, social, and cultural environment that rejects their presence as ethnicized 'others'

(Bannerji 2000). Through the mass media, the Canadian state has projected non-white immigrants as an economic burden in order to legitimize illiberal practices such as the exploitative stipulations for Filipina or Black Caribbean domestic workers and the differential treatment of non-white refugee claimants (Bannerji 2000: 114-115). In fact, refugee cases involving gender persecution tend not to be challenged when they are framed within the context of a traditional and oppressive culture as such a depiction confirms already established notions of Third World inferiority (Razack 1999, cited in Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002: 92-93). The skills of non-white immigrants from economically disadvantaged regions of the world also become devalued within the Canadian context, which is assumed to be more 'advanced' than the 'less developed' environment that they left behind (Bannerji 2000: 46). Such constructs basically mask the reality that "there exists two labour markets in Canada – one that is Canadian and another that is foreign – each with their differential entitlements and rights" (Sharma 2006: 107).

Considering the barriers mentioned above, it is not surprising that many immigrant communities have relied on their own kinship and ethnic ties to establish a new life in Canada. Ethnic organizations and networks serve as valuable resources and support systems for immigrants who lack the necessary capital and skills to immediately adapt to the Canadian context or face the type of nativistic nationalism that manifests as economic and social barriers in the host society. Raymond Breton (1964) coined the term "institutional completeness" to refer to the development of extensive ethnic organizations that enable immigrants to function primarily within their own communities rather than having to utilize mainstream services. Although immigrant communities in Canada vary in their degree of institutional completeness, such a concept is relevant to the issue of integration as a dependency on the social capital of ethnic enclaves is often perceived as incomplete integration (Li 2003: 5).

Despite the many advantages of institutional completeness during the difficult process of settlement, public perceptions seem to focus mainly on the incompatibility of ethnic association with the goal of integration. Much of the research on residential segregation in Canada emphasizes the element of choice within immigrant communities without carefully analyzing the economic, social, and cultural barriers that may shape their preferences for residing in ethnic neighbourhoods. For instance, with their high degree of institutional completeness (Fong & Ooka 2006: 357) and residential concentration (Balakrishnan 2001), there is a tendency to view the settlement patterns of Chinese immigrants as incompatible with integration into the wider society. In a study examining the social integration of the Chinese community in Toronto (Fong & Ooka 2002, 2006), the methodology and the discussion of the findings seem to be based on the normalization of whiteness and the assumption that Canadian society excludes the ethnicized native-born population. By separating Chinese social activities from those in the wider 'Canadian' society, a dichotomous view of ethnic versus Canadian is constructed despite the fact that multicultural citizenship renders native-born Chinese just as Canadian as their white counterparts. Another indication of such a biased perspective is the failure to address the role of the dominant white economy within the discussion of the Chinese economy and its negative effects on social integration.

Given the discrepancy between the multicultural image of Canada and the conformist approach to integration, the construction of a national identity based on the acceptance of difference serves to obscure the reality of white hegemony. By virtue of a revised colonial context that relies on the ideology of diversity, even a respected scholar such as Charles Taylor (1994, cited in Bannerji 2000) overlooks the paternalism inherent in the notion of 'recognizing difference'. As Bannerji (2000: 147) has argued, 'recognition' reflects the dominance of those

that are in a position to validate difference and the subordination of others who must make their case in order to be granted legitimacy. To use hyphenated identities in Canada as an example of recognition, attaching ethnicity to identity categories is problematic as 'Canadian' becomes the norm from which ethnicized citizens differentiate. Consequently, Canadian culture is neutralized and de-ethnicized in spite of the unspoken privileging of whiteness and the assumed universality of European values. Furthermore, such divided categorizations represent the paradox of multiculturalism as the recognition of difference liberates as well as constrains individuality. On the one hand, acknowledging ethnicity in identity labels is an act of self-empowerment as individual difference is publicly asserted; however, hyphenation also homogenizes ethnic groups and their experiences in Canada (Gardiner Barber 2003: 45-46).

### **Transnational Ties and Ruptures: *Immigrant as Ethnic/Ethnic as Immigrant***

Whereas multiculturalism has been used to promote a false sense of equality for the sake of national unity, the discourse of diversity has conveniently constructed ethnic communities as essentialized groups. Moreover, the tendency to ethnicize immigrants within the Canadian context results in the presumptuous overlapping of ethnic and foreign-born identities (Pearson 2002). By placing immigrants and ethnic groups in the same category, intra-group differences based on class and birthplace are rendered invisible even though such internal variations affect the experience of integration. For instance, neither social capital nor cultural identity among immigrants are necessarily linked to ethnic affiliations. In terms of immigration status, not all ethnicized individuals are foreign-born or relate to others on the basis of shared ethnicity. Thus, considering the impact of class and birthplace on local identities can lead to a more accurate understanding of the nuanced process of integration.



Ethnic associations provide economic opportunities, welfare services, and settlement information to new immigrants who lack the financial and human capital to access resources in the host society (Breton 1964). For instance, in their study of Asian immigrants in Los Angeles, Nee and Sander (2001, cited in Cheong, Edwards, Goulbourne, & Solomos 2007: 38) found that employment opportunities for immigrants with a low socio-economic background were most prevalent in the ethnic enclave economy. Although the major drawback of relying on ethnic ties is a reduction in out-group contact (Breton 1964: 197), without convenient and effective mainstream alternatives that meet their initial settlement needs, new immigrants may struggle even longer to adjust to life in a new country if they do not take advantage of ethnic networks.

On the other hand, the financial capital of cosmopolitan immigrants simply renders geographic or cultural attachments both unnecessary and even unproductive (Roudometof 2005). Despite the importance of ethnic business ties for many immigrants, the economic assets of Chinese transnational capitalists provide them with the luxury of gaining citizenship wherever they choose to invest (Wong & Ho 2006: 246). Nevertheless, preferential treatment based on the capital or knowledge acquired by these global citizens has generated envy among those without the same options in the sending country. Zweig, Keren et al (Agunias 2006: 41) have found that such tensions have surfaced between some returning transnationals and nationals in China given the increasing tendency towards state-supported circular migration and diasporic ties.

Although differences clearly exist along class lines, some ethnic communities have managed to cooperate on common issues. An example of such collaboration can be found in the Chinese community, which has combined the cultural capital of second-generation Chinese professionals and the financial capital of business class immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan,

and mainland China to empower themselves through the politicization of ethnic identity (Jedwab 2001; Bloemraad 2005: 883). Without trivializing the potential of ethnic mobilization, it is also worth noting that the subjective nature of identity formation renders political activism a challenge for many ethnic communities. For example, perceptions of anti-racism among Asians tend to vary as class, education, as well as personal experiences influence individual attitudes and expectations (Pon 2005).

In addition to differences within ethnicized immigrant communities, the issue of birthplace also warrants further analysis. First of all, Sanders (2002: 334) states that the notion of 'foreignness' attached to ethnic groups becomes less common after the first generation of immigrants; however, immigrant status remains a reality for many native-born visible minorities (Schrover & Vermeulen 2005: 827). Even after Filipina migrants are granted permanent residency in Canada, their overrepresentation in the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) maintains their identity as domestics, which is a stereotype that also extends to native-born Filipina women (McKay 2003: 31-32). In the case of Breton's (1964) work on institutional completeness, the dichotomous categorization of community into either 'ethnic' or 'native' is highly ethnocentric as 'native' refers to a community that excludes native-born Canadians who belong to a non-white ethnic community. In other words, being a part of an ethnic community still indicates a separation from the native community despite the multicultural framework of Canadian citizenship. Due to the underlying assumptions about ethnic representation, the definition of ethnic organization can also be problematic (Fennema 2004: 440). Rather than relying solely on the mandate of an organization, ethnic interest is often determined by the ethnic makeup of board membership even when such a focus is not made explicit. To base the definition of ethnic

organization on the background of board members implies a direct correlation between ethnic identity and the representation of ethnic interests.

Assuming ethnic identification without considering the differences between native-born and foreign-born Canadians is a major oversight in terms of integration as intercultural and anti-racist frameworks inadequately address intra-group conflicts. Animosity and marginalization among ethnicized youth are often centred on the type of immigration status and the degree of social and cultural conformity. Terms such as 'freshie' and 'guru' have been used as derogatory labels for newcomers from Jamaica and India while native-born South and East Asians have been referred to as 'coconuts' and 'bananas' to describe their internalization of the dominant culture (Grewal 2007: A1). Even in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), which has promoted diversity as its strength, intra-ethnic divisions are still an issue as indicated by the recent news coverage of the ongoing conflict among newcomer Sri Lankan youth and their native-born or more established counterparts (Grewal 2007: A1).

Besides intra-ethnic conflicts stemming from migration, transnational practices also influence relations of oppression that manifest within the local context. In the case of the Philippines, the rise in female migration has created exploitative chains of female care that usually involve immediate members of the family such as mothers, sisters, or daughters, extended female kinship networks, or hired help (Parreñas 2005b). Even after experiencing the often dehumanizing circumstances of overseas domestic work, some migrant women, upon returning to the Philippines, surprisingly continue to participate in similar forms of exploitation that place local women of lower socio-economic status in positions of subservience (Parreñas 2006: 58). According to Parreñas (2005a), rather than reconceptualising gender roles to accommodate the reality of economic migration, transnational families in the Philippines

continue to perpetuate patriarchal norms that result in a double burden on migrant mothers who must fulfill their role as breadwinners without neglecting their responsibility as nurturers. Furthermore, Ong and Nonini (1997, cited in Pon 2005: 164-165) challenge the notion of transnationalism as progress by referring to the exploitation perpetrated by Chinese transnational capitalists in the American as well as the Chinese context. Although East Asian capitalism has been contrasted against the calculating individualism of Western economic development, such a constructed alterity is based on the romanticized notion of a humanistic orientalism that is contradicted by the oppressive conditions in Chinese factories and the neo-liberal perspectives among Chinese elites (Ong 1999: 131).

## **BEYOND MULTICULTURAL CITIZENSHIP**

### ***Interdependent Citizens and Mutual Responsibility***

When immigration is the topic of conversation, all too often, the discussion becomes centred on the adaptability of immigrants while the role of the host society is often neglected. Despite the image and notion of a multicultural Canada, the diversity resulting from immigration has been perceived as a burden on the domestic economy and democratic governance as well as a threat to social cohesion and national identity. Based on such negative perceptions in the host society, the issue of immigration tends to be framed as a problem that must be managed even though immigrants make significant contributions to the national economy in terms of capital (Wong & Ho 2006: 245) and labour (Cruikshank 2002: 2; Liu & Kerr 2003: 130; Sharma 2005: 2; Shachar 2006), and the push factors in sending states are often directly intertwined with Canadian foreign policies and corporate practices (Castles & Miller 2003: 78-79).

In order to replace the expectation of immigrant integration into the host society with a truly mutual process whereby native-born Canadians integrate with newcomers, the assumptions underlying the zero-sum perspective must be deconstructed. When citizenship is confined to a nation-state framework of rights and obligations as well as a culturalist typology of identity, immigration threatens the concept of unity and integration controls the issue of diversity. However, analyzing the nation-building project and the protection of national interests renders citizenship a contradiction and diversity an oversimplification. Within the context of transnationalism, interdependency in the form of a local-global nexus of oppression emerges as nation-states have localized global inequality and migration has globalized local identities. Consequently, power relations evade the binary categorizations of citizen/foreigner and in-group/out-group that result from multicultural citizenship.

Building on the notion of interdependency, a promising departure point for reconciling citizenship and transnationalism is the principle of hospitality presented by Kristeva (1998). To promote reciprocal integration between the host society and newcomers, Kristeva (1998) has conceptualized identity as a process of mutual construction. Citizenship is, thus, reconceptualised as an interdependent relationship among all individuals regardless of the constructed categories of nationality. Much like the limitations of the type of recognition elaborated by Taylor (1994, cited in Bannerji 2000), hospitality has also been criticized as contradictory due to the connotation of inequality that distinguishes the host as the provider from the guest as the receiver (Dikeç 2002). Moreover, such a dichotomy ignores the presence of other forms of oppression that take place among citizens (Marcano 2003). In an attempt to address those concerns, the principle of hospitality will be supplemented with an extensive definition presented by Derrida

(1999, cited in Dikeç 2002) and an inclusion of Kristeva's concept of abjection (1993, cited in Kristeva 1998), which is the internalization of the stranger/foreigner.

### **From a Construction of Unity to a Recognition of Interdependency**

Nationalism is an ahistoric sentiment that serves not only the state, but also the dominant group within a nation-state as the preoccupation with national citizenship misrepresents the local context of global interdependency. Although the nation-building project in Canada has involved colonization for land and migration for labour, a national identity that incorporates multiculturalism within a universal human rights framework has served to evade the suffering of Aboriginal peoples and the exclusion faced by immigrants. For the sake of constructing national unity, the underlying hierarchy of Eurocentrism and whiteness is concealed through the discourse of equality despite diversity. Egalitarianism may seem ideal in principle; nevertheless, when it is placed in the context of real life, the idea of equal status and rights completely disregards the varied and nuanced historical experiences of communities within nations and individuals within groups.

From the time of European colonization to present day Canada, indigenous populations have been rendered subjects of the Euro-Canadian system, which has demonstrated neither respect for nor understanding of the cultural, social, economic, and political traditions that are incompatible with its own objectives. British tutelage of indigenous populations in Canada was characterized by exploitation and domination due to the decline of the fur trade and the reduced likelihood of invasion by the United States, which made land acquisition the primary objective and concern of the colonial government (Frideres 1988). The Royal Proclamation of 1763, which led to the creation of the marginalizing and dehumanizing reserve system, and the subsequent Indian Act, which redefined diverse Aboriginal identities as a legally binding concept

based on European interpretations, were the foundations from which current forms of tutelage have evolved. Despite the objective of civilizing the indigenous population into Euro-Canadian conformity, what has actually taken place after such a policy transition is cultural genocide and greater marginalization (Dyck 1991). Whether motivated by the economic interest of land and resource control or the political interest of nation-building and conflict prevention, Canadian state policies have created communities of disadvantaged people whose needs are continually redefined or disregarded by government administrations that prioritize their own interests under the guise of what is best for Aboriginal communities.

Once immigrant labour became a vital component of nation-building, policies began to reflect fears of non-white settlement as they served to prevent female immigration and family reunification (Das Gupta 2000). As a source of cheap labour for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), Chinese migrants in the last part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were among some of the first victims of such an exclusionary context. Despite their significant contributions to the nation-building project and other aspects of the domestic economy, Chinese migrants who chose to remain in Canada were the targets of racism, which was further exacerbated by the perception of competition among the white working-class (Wong & Ho 2006: 243). At a time of increasing social tension, public discourse essentialized the Chinese as “dirty, disease-ridden, dishonest, immoral, and totally incapable of integrating within the larger community” (Kelley & Trebilcock 1998: 95). Although economic and political interests of the state rendered migrant labour indispensable, many federal and provincial laws were passed to restrict the entry, residency, and employment of Chinese labourers (Kelley & Trebilcock 1998: 97-98).

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The nation-building project of Canada has been dependent on the expropriated land of Aboriginal populations and the exploitive labour of migrant communities; however, differential citizenship is justified by a national identity that differentiates from the constructed inferiority of both Aboriginal peoples and foreigners. Given the role of colonization and migration in shaping the nation-state of Canada, interdependency characterizes the economic as well as the cultural dynamics within the local context. To emphasize the interconnections that challenge an exclusionary notion of citizenship, the concept of mutuality provides a useful analysis of the shifting relations of national membership and the dialectical process of identity formation within nation-states (Dikeç 2002, cited in Amin 2004: 16).

In an attempt to address the increasingly multi-ethnic composition of European states with a more inclusive vision of Europe, Amin (2004) has proposed the idea of mutually constituted identities developed by Kristeva (2001, cited in Amin 2004: 15). Such a concept is relevant in Canada as colonization and immigration have not only influenced national identity, but Aboriginal and immigrant communities have also been redefined by the state. Furthermore, Dikeç (2002) extends the notion of mutuality as the dialectic of culture to that of national membership. Rather than the dichotomy of host and guest, which structures the mentality of nationalism, the concept of mutuality interprets such a relationship as fluid and intertwined. When applied to the Canadian context, the host and guest relationship manifests as a web of interdependency that renders the binary distinction entirely dependent on perspective. For instance, the Canadian state has constructed the notion of the host society in relation to the presence of immigrants; however, such a division erases the history of Aboriginal peoples. On the other hand, the contributions of immigrants to the nation-building project also invalidate the white Eurocentric concept of the host society. Given the ambiguity established by



interdependency, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship become problematic as a nation-state framework of entitlements and obligations is not necessarily justified within a broader colonial and migratory context of social hierarchy.

The construction of unity has also served to maintain the relevance of the nation-state amid increasing transnationalism and the resulting contradictions of national citizenship. With the practice of neo-liberal economics leading to privatization, a dependency on foreign investment, and the signing of international free trade agreements, the emergence of a decentralized Canadian state presents some pressing issues regarding government responsibility to its citizens and its ability to promote national interests amidst global pressures (Galloway 2000). Just as the nation-state must consider its interests in a global perspective, migrants must also strategically weigh the costs and benefits of living or working within or across borders (Ong 1998). Nevertheless, the status of citizenship is neither a definite guarantee of rights nor a clear indicator of responsibilities as demonstrated by the current transnational context of interdependency.

Although the Canadian government was quick to realize the economic potential of attracting wealthy Hong Kong capitalists fearing the economic and social implications of the imminent handover to China, it failed to consider the strategic planning that developed out of such a volatile context. Essentially, many immigrant investors came to Canada because it offered both the chance to remain as free transnational capitalists and “a politically stable and secure environment where world-class education can be found for the children and real estate is available for homesick housewives to speculate in” (Ong 1999: 124). Therefore, a Canadian passport became a valuable commodity as it awarded its consumers with the right to flexible citizenship whereby transnational capital accumulation would not be sacrificed despite

superficial political affiliations. In fact, many new Chinese immigrant investors have maintained close economic ties to overseas networks that seem to leave little room for economic partnerships to develop in the local economy (Mitchell 1997). “[T]he cultural politics of being Chinese varies in different countries, but for many overseas Chinese, there is no obvious continuity between family interests and political loyalties (especially given their rather common experience of anti-Chinese discrimination in their host countries)” (Ong 1999: 116).

If citizenship is actually assessed beyond the mere possession of legal status, the myth of rights and responsibilities becomes even more apparent. Considering the fact that 95 percent of domestic workers are women from the Third World (Cornish 1992, cited in Sharma 2006: 126), compensation for the decline in social citizenship in the First World is directly linked to the increasing feminization of migration due to global capitalism. Given the reduction and revised stipulations in social assistance as well as the dramatic cuts to public spending in education, health, and childcare, Canadian women have been placed in a much more economically insecure position that continues to fuel the demand for affordable migrant domestic workers from the Third World (Arat-Koç 2006: 91). Instead of ensuring that the social rights of citizenship are upheld, the Canadian state encourages private solutions for public issues by providing an acceptable pool of migrant domestic workers whose illegal or conditional status enables employers to maintain their standard of First World living through institutionalized exploitation (Arat-Koç 2006: 88-89). Furthermore, the price of providing care to the First World remains obscured by nationalistic notions that justify differential rights between citizens and non-citizens, who are perceived as being the responsibility of sending states even though global capitalism has virtually reversed such a relationship (Sharma 2005).

Even though the Canadian state continues to use citizenship status to justify privilege and exploitation within its borders, the interdependency resulting from the practice of transnationalism contradicts the meaning of national citizenship. Legal status, whether acquired through birth or immigration, presents a false sense of protection and duty given the compensation of migrant labour and the commodification of citizenship. As such, the denial of rights experienced by non-citizens may not be any more justifiable than the expectation of responsibilities directed at citizens.

In order to deconstruct citizenship based on the nationalistic binary of ‘us’ and ‘them’, the apparent discrepancy between status and practice must be emphasized. Similar to the normalization and neutralization of the nation-state, taking for granted the notion of being a citizen also obscures the contradictions of the lived experience with a dangerous complacency that perpetuates inequality. Originating from the psychoanalytic work of Kristeva (1998: 325-326), abjection is a useful conceptual tool with which to approach the deconstruction of citizenship as the acceptance of a simultaneous subject and object position leads to the realization that the foreigner exists within. Depending on the particular context, each person, regardless of status, holds multiple positions in relation to others. In the case of transnational investors, they may belong in the category of citizens in both the sending and receiving context; however, the preferential treatment that they receive combined with their questionable national loyalty, may undermine their social belonging among citizens who are less mobile and affluent. With respect to migrant domestic workers, the stipulations of acquiring Canadian citizenship force them to jeopardize their own family relations in order to become “part of a Canadian family” in terms of responsibilities but not as equal members (Anderson 2006). Thus, it seems

rather absurd that they are qualified to raise First World children but somehow perceived as unsuitable candidates for citizenship.

### **Integration as Mutual Responsibility**

As the concepts of mutuality and abjection demonstrate, citizenship, like any other type of identity, is a lived experience that cannot be objectified into a category as rights and responsibilities are dictated by the dynamics of interaction rather than the rules of law. The transnational practices emerging within the present stage of global capitalism have shifted the boundaries of national and cultural identity while nation-states continue to maintain their legitimacy through the discourse of unity amid diversity. For instance, debates on citizenship in multicultural societies tend to focus on promoting either civic membership or cultural diversity; however, contradictions arise as equal citizenship requires more than cultural recognition or civic participation. Without examining the relations of power that define the entitlements and obligations associated with recognition and participation, frameworks such as multiculturalism and civic integration merely obscure, and thus, maintain the hegemonic discourse that normalizes the construction of the nation-state and neutralizes the conceptualization of national citizenship.

Despite the formal establishment of Canada as a multicultural society for over 30 years, the barriers to economic and social integration faced by recent immigrants clearly indicate that citizenship needs to be redefined by deconstructing the validity of a nationalistic conceptualization of citizenship and a culturalist assumption of belonging. To adequately address the issue of integration in multicultural societies, the notion of interdependency grounded in mutuality and abjection needs to be incorporated into a reconceptualized understanding of citizenship. As the nation-state framework justifies exclusion based on legal status and given that multiculturalism policy ignores internal subjugation based on the process of

ethnicization, the concept of hospitality (Kristeva 1998) offers an alternative perspective that connects interdependency with reciprocity.

According to Kristeva (1998: 322), hospitality involves mutual respect and obligation stemming from the primacy of a shared humanity. By accepting the reality of a world that is constantly being reconfigured by global migration, the duality of host and guest or the externalized category of foreigner/stranger becomes irrelevant due to the shifting boundaries of identity and power. Instead of promoting integration from a nation-state model of membership that separates hosts from guests, hospitality requires a rethinking of existence as “being in the world prior to any cause” (Kristeva 2001: 42, cited in Amin 2004: 14). Even if citizenship, as a category of legal status, remains within the scope of national membership, its moral interpretation must be broadened to include the interdependency of rights and responsibilities that transcend national boundaries. By referring to natural justice rather than established law, the contradictions of citizenship that are hidden within a legal framework of status become apparent. Integration, therefore, becomes an issue of mutual obligation as the realization of the interconnections between advantage and disadvantage engenders responsibility on the part of all citizens.

Although the concept of hospitality implies a reciprocal process of understanding and acceptance, its connotation remains limited to the unequal dichotomy of host and guest (Dikeç 2002: 229). Whether it is an implied relationship that positions the host in a place of rightful dominance and membership or frames the guest as a vulnerable and foreign subject, the term ‘hospitality’ is limiting despite the assumption of reciprocity and fluid identities. To avoid any misunderstanding, mutual responsibility is a more accurate description of the concept of hospitality proposed by Kristeva (1998). However, to further elaborate on the specific

conditions that promote mutual responsibility, the analysis of hospitality put forth by Derrida (1999a, cited in Dikeç 2002: 229-231) provides a clearer conceptualization that reconciles the dichotomous definition with the ambiguous practice.

The type of hospitality proposed by Derrida (1999a, cited in Dikeç 2002: 231) is an indefinable act of mutual engagement that is free of legal stipulations and social expectations. To begin, hospitality requires a rejection of objectivity that involves “thinking beyond knowing in order not to be confined to the limits posed by hitherto assumed conditionalities and conceptualizations” (Dikeç 2002: 230). The act of mutual responsibility must not be based on preconceived notions of adaptation or cultural understanding as experiences and identities are inherently subjective. Additionally, the particular socio-economic position as well as cultural identity of the newcomer or the established citizen affects the perspective from which they assess an experience due to differing expectations. For instance, immigration is often perceived as a choice; however, such an assumption not only overlooks the specific constraining conditions of the pre-migration context, but also generalizes the voluntary nature of migration without considering the reluctance of spouses or children. Maintaining an openness to difference is, thus, a necessary component of hospitality as needs and interests are contingent upon a multiplicity of factors that defy categorization.

Since it is common for host societies to perceive immigration as a change, if not a threat, hospitality must include an understanding of the consequences of integration for both the host and the guest when such a relationship is interchangeable depending on the context. Due to the anxiety towards potential domination on the part of the host and the fear of exclusion on the part of the guest, the only way to prevent any form of subjugation is to recognize the vulnerability of both positions in all forms of interaction (Dikeç 2002: 239). Therefore, mutual responsibility

also involves reciprocal respect of the risks, whether simply perceived or real, that are involved in the process of integration.

Even though the perception of threat stems from a nationalistic bias, dismissing such a concern as unworthy of consideration only serves to break down any type of meaningful exchange between newcomers and established citizens. Concern over the tendency to fuel hostility is often outweighed by the need to challenge the existing hierarchy that perpetuates exclusion and inequality. However, without overcoming the urge to lay blame, integration will simply remain one-sided as defensiveness and denial become obstacles to mutual responsibility. An example demonstrating the possible counter-productivity of an accusatory approach is the dynamics of national pride in Britain following the release of the Parekh Report, which examined the state of ethno-cultural diversity and the issue of exclusion (Fortier 2005). Despite the misinterpretation of an assumed white 'Britishness' as racist Britain, the emotional sensitivity generated by the issue of race relations indicates the need to develop strategic ways of addressing discrimination without neglecting the national ego. Just as successful psychoanalysis requires prior attention to the ego in order to dissolve barriers, Kristeva (1998: 326) argues that social anxiety associated with increasing ethnic diversity cannot be effectively managed without first instilling a sense of national pride among citizens. Furthermore, studies on intercultural relations have revealed that the acceptance of difference is dependent on a strong sense of identity (Berry 2001: 623); nevertheless, it is necessary to assert that the promotion of national pride must avoid the essentialization of multiculturalism by emphasizing the interdependency of citizens.

Finally, the notion of mutuality between the host and the guest has been criticized for its omission of racial hierarchy whereas the concept of abjection understood as the foreigner within may serve to perpetuate disadvantage by undermining the politicization of identity (Marcano

2003). As race most certainly plays a major role in shaping the experience of citizenship, the dichotomy of host and guest is an oversimplification of the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion; however, supplemented with the concept of abjection, mutuality maintains its relevance as the internal contradictions within those binary categories are taken into consideration. With respect to the limitations of abjection, the idea of foreigners among foreigners weakens the validity of group rights. (Marcano 2003: 165). In fact, a common fear generated by the increased transfer of administrative responsibility to Aboriginal communities has been the replacement of traditional forms of leadership with European models of bureaucratic control over collective interests, and thus, the emergence of internal forms of tutelage (Smith 1993). Despite the possible tension between abjection and politicization, the tendency to homogenize racial or ethnic groups is also problematic as internal hierarchies may be just as oppressive as external forms of domination. Moreover, the reluctance to address intra-group manifestations of differential membership contributes to larger structures of inequality by sabotaging solidarity. As such, integration as mutual responsibility is only possible when all citizens are implicated as interdependent subjects and agents of oppression.

## **RECONCEPTUALIZED CITIZENSHIP IN PRACTICE**

### ***Principles and Recommendations***

Citizenship as interdependency transforms integration into a process of mutual responsibility grounded in the notion of hospitality; however, such an approach requires a set of guiding principles to advance from philosophical abstraction to a clear sense of direction. Starting from the concept of hospitality as subjective experience rather than objective knowledge (Derrida 1999a, cited in Dikeç 2002: 230), mutual responsibility based on such an indeterminate



state is neither constrained by law nor limited by categorizations. Therefore, the promotion of active community engagement on the part of all citizens is the most effective means of establishing connections that defy legal and theoretical boundaries that currently define citizenship. Grassroots participation enables communities to develop their own sense of belonging through interaction, which provides the necessary freedom for continual negotiation.

Engagement of this nature must also involve a democratic process that emphasizes inclusion. According to Dikeç (2002: 229), hospitality is about opening up spaces for difference and perhaps the most accurate way of articulating such a practice is “democracy without enemies” (Beck 1998, cited in Dikeç 2002: 228). To facilitate the creation of an inclusive system of democratic participation, the issue of equal access and public space must be carefully considered. As access entails the capacity to be an active citizen within the community, a holistic approach that addresses economic, political, social, and cultural participation is needed. Instead of facilitating intercultural exchange among immigrants, policies, therefore, need to promote interaction between native and foreign-born Canadians through the development of internship programs in the public and private sector and the creation of volunteer opportunities in the community. With regards to space, democratic interaction is only possible when regular public forums are arranged within communities. Unless opportunities exist for grassroots engagement, democracy becomes nothing more than a procedure dictated by electoral politics.

Besides engagement and democracy, reconceptualized citizenship in practice must also incorporate the principle of empathy, which is the recognition of mutual risk in integration. Due to the real or perceived impact of diversity, the host and the guest both share the anxiety that stems from the threat of change (Dikeç 2002: 239). Although such negative perceptions imply a nationalistic and culturalist attitude, rejecting the validity of such concerns denies the reality of

interdependency. By encouraging dialogue between established citizens and new immigrants, assumptions that perpetuate fear and animosity can be challenged. For instance, community-level engagement must take place to promote a better understanding of the migration experience and raise awareness about the contradictions of citizenship among native-born Canadians. National campaigns that inform the general public about the contributions of immigrants to the economic success and cultural richness of Canada would be another way to challenge negative perceptions. Furthermore, as integration debates tend to focus primarily on immigrant adaptation, public education must not only address the responsibility of the host society, but also the rights of newcomers in order to foster mutual responsibility. By engaging governments, businesses, service organizations, and citizens in the process of integration, the concept of citizenship shifts from a legal definition to community-based interaction.

As research is often influential in shaping public attitudes and policies, the focus and scope of future academic investigation also requires re-evaluation. Most studies in the area of migration tend to concentrate on the conflicts and problems faced by migrants (Berry 2001: 626), which results in a circular dynamic that nurtures negative associations through the perpetual analysis of the obstacles to integration. Although the importance of understanding the various factors that create barriers to integration is undeniable, more research examining the specific conditions that have created positive outcomes for immigrants must also be conducted if effective strategies are to be found. In addition to expanding the focus of migration research, the scope of future studies would be greatly enhanced by multi-group and multi-dimensional analysis (Berry 2001). To gain a more comprehensive outlook that promotes two-way integration, research must examine immigrant and native-born perceptions, as well as the

different aspects of integration, which include economic, social, political, and cultural participation.

Since attending a public lecture on multiculturalism, a comment made by an audience member has lingered in my mind as a source of great inspiration. Although I apologize for failing to remember the name of the speaker, and thus, am unable to provide an appropriate reference, the gist of her statement was that the discussion should be about integration ‘with’ rather than integration ‘into’ Canadian society. To overcome the ideological boundaries erected by the state and internalized by many, there needs to be a new approach that unites the multiple struggles against all forms of oppression (Bannerji 2000: 174). Therefore, the combination of interdependency and mutual responsibility offers an alternative to a nationalistic framework of citizenship and a culturalist approach to integration that denies the presence of the foreigner within.

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