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**BIOMETRICS: CONSTRUCTING 'IDEAL' SUBJECTS AND 'ALIENS' AT THE CANADA-
U.S. BORDER**

by

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BIOMETRICS: CONSTRUCTING 'IDEAL' SUBJECTS AND 'ALIENS' AT THE CANADA-U.S. BORDER

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Master of Arts
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ABSTRACT

Employing critical social research in combination with critical discourse analysis, this paper examines the use of biometrics technology in the citizenship and immigration context with particular emphasis on its application at the Canada-U.S. border. The central argument of this paper is that through the use of biometrics technology at the Canada-U.S. crossing, the border has become a social filter that separates welcome from unwelcome migrants depending on strategic objectives to include and exclude population groups, which makes them part of a social and economic strategy in the post-September 11 securitized environment. Moreover, the paper takes the position that through the use of biometrics technology at the Canada-U.S. border, the notion of citizenship is being reconstructed whereby racialized migrants and vulnerable populations will be tremendously affected: most notably, poor migrants from the South as well as refugees and asylum seekers from elsewhere.

Key words: biometrics, immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, racialized and vulnerable populations, securitization, criminalization, Canada, the U.S., border, racism, discrimination, post-September 11, national sovereignty, US/Western identity, border control

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Introduction

This paper deals with the development and implementation of biometrics technology in North American contexts. More precisely, the paper examines the use of technology in the citizenship and immigration context with particular emphasis on its application at the Canada-U.S. border. In fact, given the current literature on biometrics technology, it is important to underline that biometrics technologies “have found some of their earliest applications in the immigration area” wherein the technology has been used to “quickly and efficiently process large numbers of travellers – separating the law-abiding travellers from lawbreakers” (Cavoukian 1999, p. 8).

Hence, it is in this notion of ‘good’ versus ‘bad’ traveller that will allow me to situate the use of biometrics in citizenship and immigration contexts. Ultimately, my concern is the way these identities and binaries are constructed at the border and the implications this process has for international migrants arriving at and trying to cross the Canada-U.S. border.

Therefore, the central argument of this paper is that through the use of biometrics technology at the Canada-U.S crossing, the border has become a social filter that separates welcome from unwelcome migrants depending on strategic objectives to include and exclude population groups, which makes them part of a social and economic strategy in the post-September 11 securitized environment. This social filtering enables open borders for tourists, business class travellers, and for capital flows, while closing borders for racialized and vulnerable immigrant populations who have no economic potential or are seen as a security threat. Moreover, I also argue that through the use of biometrics technology at the Canada-U.S. border, the notion of citizenship is being reconstructed whereby racialized migrants and

vulnerable populations will be tremendously affected: most notably, poor migrants from the South as well as refugees and asylum seekers from elsewhere. As a result, the use of biometrics technology is deeply embedded in the notion of racism and securitization, which will also be addressed in the paper. In order to deal with the proposed subject, this paper will explain why this happens to be the case and what, if any, policy objectives are served through the use of biometrics technology at the Canada-U.S. border.

Moreover, this paper will examine the ways Canada has adopted the regime of biometrics through examination of securitization discourse in the U.S. post-September 11, which has enabled this country to reassert its national sovereignty and identity, thereby pushing Canada to reorient itself to this new regime. So too I will raise the concern over a new idea of border that has come about through the use of biometrics technology. In this sense, the meaning of border as primarily a geographical term, denoting physical boundaries of a nation-state constantly evolves and changes. That is, the border can be anywhere; it is virtual and arbitrary drawn for the purpose of excluding population groups. Or as Wiebe argues, “[b]order is a flexible sociological construct that plays a crucial role in the continuous regulation of the identities of citizens, immigrants, refugees, criminals and the list goes on” (2008, p. 129).

For the purpose of this paper, no primary research has been conducted. Rather, in pursuing my research topic, reliance has been on the vast literature – both critical and supportive of the field of biometrics. The literature I have examined is quite extensive; it includes books, scholarly journals, government, policy and think-tank reports, newspaper articles as well as publications and texts found on Canadian and U.S. government websites. I will address a number of themes in this paper to help me deal with the proposed subject and make it accessible to my reader. To address the different themes of this paper, I will begin by explaining its methodology.

Secondly, I will undertake a literature review and will show how the literature has helped me understand the triggers for the rapid adoption of the biometrics technology, and how my analysis has shaped the critical approach of this paper. Thirdly, I will focus on the securitization discourse in the U.S. to provide a context within which biometrics technology has been thrust into national spotlight and intertwined with national security issues. Here, I will discuss the question of the U.S. national sovereignty and identity reassertion that was enabled through the U.S. 'war on terror,' driving the securitization discourse, which in turn has driven the further development and implementation of biometrics technology at the Canada-U.S border. Fourthly, I will focus on the development of biometrics technology in Canada that was pushed to reorient itself to the regime of biometrics or risk compromising itself, its economic security, and its high dependency on the U.S. Here, I will examine the issue of Canadian identity construction in reference to the U.S. and the effect this has had on Canada's immigration policy realignment in accordance to the pressuring from the U.S. in the post-September 11 securitized environment. These explorations will conclude with the final section that is devoted to a discourse on race in order to emphasize the implications that biometrics technology has for racialized and immigrants in both Canada and the U.S. – reinforcing historically inherent discriminatory immigration policy and practices.

Given the literature used in this research study, there is a strong indication that in citizenship and immigration contexts, biometrics technology represents an extremely invasive form of social control and oppression. Furthermore, the use of technology is not limited to citizenship and immigration contexts, but also has a potential to penetrate all levels of society, which bears wider social implications for a society as a whole. Moreover, combining biometrics with other data collection and information sharing technologies can be used to assemble a new picture of the individual, which is irreversible because the technology appears as neutral and

objective. Also, the data can be further shared, bought and/or sold, which will bear wider implications for the individuals whose identities have been altered and/or reconfigured.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to increase awareness about the issue of biometrics to unearth the insidiousness and dangers of this technology, which is the contribution of this research.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this research paper has a textual/analytical focus with an empirical attentiveness, rather than a theoretical one. My research subject is pursued by relying on qualitative research methods, and on literature such as, texts, scholarly journals, government documents and policy, think-tank reports, newspaper articles as well as publications and texts found on Canadian and U.S. government websites.

The research methodology consists of two components. First, there is an analysis of joint Canada-U.S. border arrangements that rely on the biometrics technology: the proliferation of joint customs and immigration programs, travel arrangements, legislations, trade and border security initiatives in and between the two countries. The analysis of the literature will also examine the implications that these developments have for racialized populations and immigrants. Second, a great deal of this literature will be integrated within the paper to examine the topic in depth and develop a set of arguments exposing what is really going on at the societal level and, thus, increase awareness of the new developments brought about with the use of biometrics technology at the Canada-U.S. border. This will include the examination of securitization discourse in the U.S. that affected Canada's immigration policy and pushed the country to reorient itself to the regime of biometrics.

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To accomplish the above, the paper employs critical social research method in combination with discourse analysis. My own position regarding the use of biometrics technology at the Canada-U.S. border is that there is more to it than just an innovative and more secure way of processing a large number of travellers arriving at the border – a claim popularly cited, for instance, by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2008). In my research inquiry, I am

led by the belief that social reality produced by dominant discourses influences at multiple layers and is governed by hidden, underlying structures, that are essentially oppressive structures. Hence, critical social research and discourse analysis are suitable for the examination of the proposed research topic, because they both “do not take the apparent social structure, social processes and accepted history for granted” (Harvey 2011). Rather, they try to dig beneath the surface to uncover hidden structures then, deconstruct them to inquire into how social systems and processes work to oppress and control people, and finally, reconstruct them with respect to socio-historical context that informs them (Harvey 2011).

Critical social research also has a history linked to class- and race-based analysis of oppression (Harvey 2011), which is of particular importance to this research study since biometrics technology is conceptualized as a social filter separating economically prosperous from economically disadvantaged populations, which affects racialized migrants in citizenship and immigration contexts. Moreover, since the goal of every research study is to acquire knowledge on a specific topic, it is important to highlight that in critical social science, “*knowledge is critique*” (Harvey 2011, author’s emphasis). Hence, by criticizing the use of biometrics technology in citizenship and immigration contexts, I will also produce the knowledge on the topic, which can be used to further raise the awareness about the implications that the technology has for racialized populations and immigrants. In addition, future readers of this paper need to be aware that the knowledge produced here through critical social research “has to be located in its social milieu” (Harvey 2011) to preserve its reliability and validity because, critical social research “asks substantive questions about existent social process” and thus, the research inquiry can appear to be superficial if the current socio-historic context is not taken into consideration or is being neglected (Harvey 2011).

Since critical social research allows for the empirical evidence to be interpreted and approached in a number of ways (Harvey 2011), I am also employing critical discourse analysis to capture the way that the language is used in the securitized environment, driving the development of biometrics technology. This will also enable me to deconstruct apparent social structures and processes and hence, expose hidden, underlying and oppressive structures, thereby generating new knowledge. Discourse analysis can be applied to any text (in this case, empirical data), which is described as a discourse (system of power/knowledge, situated in a specific time and space) for deconstructive reading (Salkie 1995) and essentially represents a type of language associated with “interconnected networks of social practices of diverse sorts (economic, political, cultural, family, etc)” (Malic & Iqbal 2011, p. 50). Since immigration is shaped by a number of economic, political and cultural practices and forces, it will be useful to employ discourse analysis to examine how a type of language is associated with the construction of racialized populations and immigrants in the post-September 11 securitized environment that was used to thrust biometrics technology into national spotlight on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border.

Literature Review

In the course of the past year, my examination of the literature on biometrics has been quite extensive – involving scholarly articles, books and news reports. Among other issues, the literature covers the attitude of Canadian and the U.S. governments on who is desired and undesired among perspective immigrants and within the immigrant population that mimic the historically exclusionary and discriminatory practices in both countries. The literature also examines security-migration nexus brought about in the post-September 11 climate to discuss how international migration has become an issue of national security and Western sovereignty. My review of the literature will also show how the development and applications of biometrics technology along the Canada-U.S. border has proceeded. This is done by analyzing the proliferation of joint customs and immigration programs, travel arrangements, trade and border security initiatives in and between the two countries that rely on and/or promote the use of biometrics technology. Finally, the review exposes implications that the above developments have for racialized populations and immigrants.

Given the literature examined for this research study, biometrics technology can be defined as consisting of methods for authentication and/or verification of a person's identity based on one or more intrinsic physical and/or behavioural traits. The physical traits can include facial appearance, fingerprints, iris patterns, hand/shape geometry, voice inflections in speech, ear shape or even body odour. The behavioural traits can include the way somebody walks, signs their name or uses a computer keyboard wherein the keystroke is taken as a measurement for authentication and/or verification purposes. In practice, one or more physical or behavioural traits are scanned and imported into the computer system to create a digital map based on

scanned bodily measurements. This translates into mathematical algorithms stored in national databases or on a chip that can be further embedded in a passport, national identification and driver's licence cards or any other documents used to access specific services and rights (the right to travel or enter the country, for instance). These algorithms are also called biometrics templates against which 'live' samples (e.g. person's fingerprint at the time of authentication/verification process) can be compared to authenticate an individual, that is, check whether a person is who they claim to be or to verify an individual – the identification of one person among many. Thus far, biometrics technology has found its applications in many areas including, for instance, law enforcement, banking, government benefits systems (e.g. social assistance and welfare), computer and network access, physical access to personal and other premises (e.g. person's house or place of work) as well as immigration and border security screening – the focal point in this research study (Alys Lowri Thomas 2005; Das 2006; Acharya & Kasprzycki 2010; Rygiel 2010, Cavoukian 1999).

Desirable and undesirable immigrants

Although it is popularly cited that under the guidance of the United States the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 have led to an increased interest into the potential use and development of biometrics technology in citizenship and immigration contexts throughout the West, including North America, (Acharya & Kasprzyncki 2010; Redpath 2007; NSTC 2008; Alys Lowri Thomas 2005), it is important to underline that the picture is much more complex. First of all, the literature consulted for this paper indicates that in the North American context, biometrics technology has been around for quite some time and the use of biometrics data (e.g. fingerprints, photographic images, facial appearance, etc) is not new.

For instance, “photographs and sketches à la the ‘wanted’ posters of the [American] old West” have been used to identify and catch criminals ever since (Cavoukian 1999, p. 1). Also, in the United States, the interest into the technology goes back to as early as 1967 when the FBI began research into “technologies for the automated matching of fingerprints” (NSTC 2008, p. 8). As well, biometrics data such as “fingerprints, photographic images and DNA” has been used by forensics, police, criminologists and other professionals alike to identify, detain and/or prosecute individuals suspected of committing a crime (Alys Lowri Thomas 20005, p. 2). So too in 1993 the United States’ Department of Defence launched the “FacE REcognition Technology (FERET) Program” while, at the same time, the then Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS)¹ initiated INSPASS (INS Passenger Accelerated Service System)² – a program that used “hand geometry at ports of entry to *facilitate the inspection* of business travellers to the US” (NSTC 2008, p. 8, emphasis mine). Similarly, in 1998 the United States’ Department of State initiated the collection of biometrics data from all Mexican nationals seeking entry as visitors, which has led to the creation of a Border Crossing Card – a biometrics identification card that functioned as an entry visa denoting the purpose of visit (NSTC 2008, p. 8). In fact, Cavoukian claims that one of the technology’s earliest applications was in the immigration area to process a large number of passengers at countries’ borders as a means to filter law-abiding populations from those perceived as law-breaking (1999).

Hence, the above literature findings are important on two accounts. Firstly, the literature reveals that from the first appearance the use of biometrics data was intertwined within

¹ INS ceased to exist under this name and was replaced with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) presently belonging to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) (GlobalSecurity.org 2011, Homeland Security)

² Currently known as USPASS (GlobalSecurity.org 2011, Homeland Security)

a wider “criminalization process” (Wilson & Weber 2008). Secondly, it was also used to include desirable populations (e.g. facilitate inspection of business travellers) and control (e.g. Mexican migrants) as well as exclude and monitor the entry of those perceived as undesirable or even criminal and illegal. As a consequence, migrants were assigned different identities, statuses and rights, which enabled a social construction of citizenship at the border and further led to internal rights stratification according to the type of migrant once he or she crosses the border.

However, these practices of migrants’ criminalization, inclusion, exclusion and rights stratification are well known to both Canadian and the U.S. immigration contexts. In examining Canada’s immigration policy from the time the first colonizers settled in the country, Kelley and Trebilcock argue that Canadian immigration policy was historically discriminatory, racist and exclusionary (2000). It had preferred and non-preferred immigrants, based on economics, race, religious, cultural and political considerations. Such considerations were also taken into account when it came to citizenship rights and the access to them. The preferred class or stock of immigrants was white, Christian, British, Northern European or American. The undesirable ones were Blacks, Jews, Asians, Eastern Slavs, Southern Europeans, who were ‘coloured’ (e.g. Italians), refugees in general, and all those considered to be a security threat during certain historic periods (e.g. Soviets during the Cold War). More important, the policies adopted in Canada at times mirrored those in the U.S. and more than often ran along the same lines, resulting in some of the most racist and discriminatory treatments of immigrants known to both countries. They include the internment and expulsion of Japanese immigrants during WWII, the refusal of Jewish refugees during the same period, as well as the draconian continuous journey provision targeting immigrants from India and those coming from the countries under the former British colonies (Kelley & Trebilcock 2000). Hence, both Canada and the U.S. are

known to have had desirable and undesirable immigrant populations that were racialized, often subjected to justice-like procedures or were criminalized and under a watchful eye of scrutiny and suspicion. Moreover, such practices of exclusion and inclusion are deeply embedded in the notion of racism and securitization.

Security-migration nexus

Furthermore, given the reviewed literature thus far, it is also important to highlight that in contrast to popular beliefs, the development of biometrics technology in citizenship and immigration contexts in the West was well under way before the September 11 events – this observation is also made by Rygiel in her *Globalizing Citizenship* (2010). However, Pallito & Heyman (2008) as well as Ibrahim (2005) point out that the event itself was used to thrust international migration into national spotlight, thereby redefining and reconfiguring it as a threat to the West, Western territoriality and way of life through the “process of securitization.” Hence, it is in this context that biometrics was thrust into national spotlight too, because it was conceptualized as a border technology that can protect the West from the ‘immigrant’ threat. More important, border security was seen at the last bastion of the Western national sovereignty in the post-September 11 climate, which was perceived as seriously compromised by international migration (Munck 2008) and thus required the protection from those who violated it. In Huntingtonian terms, this also meant that ‘the West’ was declining and was threatened by other less developed civilizations, namely ‘Islamic’ ones and the global South (1997). Arat-Koc asserts that, in the post-September 11 U.S. and Canada, Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” discourse supported by dominant discourses at the time served to justify the ill-defined ‘war on terror,’ followed by racial profiling, rendition, social exclusion and discrimination of immigrants

as well as increased distrust and criminalization of racialized populations and those labelled as 'Muslim' and 'Arab' (2006). The construction of a collective and homogenous identity, known as 'Islam' was also soon to be followed by the U.S. led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to prosecute and punish the 'Islamic other'.

Consequently, international migration became an issue of national security in contrast to primarily being an issue of societal security, as Munck carefully observes (2008). Hence, racialized populations and immigrants who, in both Canada and the U.S., have historically been under suspicion became subjected to even greater scrutiny. This has produced the images of the Other: the 'immigrant,' the 'global terrorist,' the 'Muslim other,' as well as reinforced binaries: the 'bogus' refugee versus the 'legitimate' refugee, the 'illegal' migrant versus the 'legal' migrant and so on. However, Pieterse argues that these and similar images of the Other are as old as the West itself (2002), which according to Munck further reinforces the pre-existing "fear (in the West) over people coming from [non-Western] parts of the world (in the South) where there is violence" and whose culture is "unfamiliar (to the West) [thus] giving rise to unease and uncertainty" (2008, p. 1231). Similarly, Mazrui notes that the current process of Western securitization is also driven by the older fear of Islam well established in the West, which has been intentionally revived after the September 11 attacks (2007). Hence, in the post-September 11 climate, exploiting the pre-existing fears over racialized and immigrant populations, thereby reinforcing their further discrimination, criminalization and exclusion, both in Canada and the U.S., international migration was constructed as a national security threat, which pushed for the proliferation of border security programs relying on and supporting the adoption of biometrics technology. This development is discussed in the section below.

The proliferation of border management technologies along the Canada-U.S. border

Ever since the September 11 events, under the guidance of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)³, “leading the setting of standards for the use of biometrics in passports,” (Redpath 2007, p. 28), biometrics technology has undergone a process of implementation across Western nation-states, including Canada and the U.S. (Acharya & Kasprzynski 2010; Alys Lowri Thomas 2005; Brown & Brook 2004). The underlying logic behind such development is the proliferation of border management technologies that would successfully authenticate and/or verify an individual’s identity, because in the post-September 11 climate, not knowing or not being able to determine an individual’s identity becomes an issue of national security (Hasini 2006; Cavoukian 2003). Hence, in the Canada-U.S. context, such preoccupation with identity has led to the creation of a number of joint customs and immigration initiatives encouraging the use of travel documents featuring biometrics and border crossing points equipped with biometrics authentication/verification systems in order to monitor, scrutinize, filter and manage migrants and their identities (Rygiel 2010).

The examined literature has many examples of biometrics authentication/verification systems, such as the US Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act (EBSERVA) and the US Visitor and Immigration Status Indication Technology (US-VISIT) that as of 2004 require all foreign nationals, seeking the entry into the United States, to travel on documents with biometrics data (e.g. photographs, fingerprints). As well, both programs require fingerprinting and photographing all migrants visiting the country on a visa (Rygiel 2010). The development of other programs was also encouraged under the Canada-U.S.

³ A specialized agency of the United Nations that aims to “develop the principles and techniques of international air navigation and to foster the planning and development of international air transport” (International Civil Aviation Organization, retrieved 7/12, 2011)

Smart Border Declaration in 2001, the Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement in 2004, and the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP) among Canada, the U.S. and Mexico in 2005. They include NEXUS, CANPASS and FAST border travelling programs that, in a nutshell, represent a cost-effective and efficient border management solution expediting “low-risk” passengers and “frequent travellers,” ensuring the secure flow of capital flows and commercial goods on the one hand, and thorough screening of refugee and asylum claimants for “security risks” on the other while, at the same time, pursuing international cooperation and intelligence-sharing on immigration, customs data and international terrorism (Rygiel 2010, p. 55; Walia 2010, p. 78; Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada 2003, The Canada-U.S. Smart Border Declaration 2003; Government of Canada 2009, The Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America). In addition, refugee advocates have also raised the concern that the Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement would put Canada in position to “turn back” potential refugees at the Canada-U.S. border on the basis they must pursue their claims in the United States, the country where they first arrived” (Canadian Press 2007). Advocates further argue that the U.S. is not the safest country for refugees and asylum seekers fleeing prosecution, which would further affect their chances of survival (Canadian Press 2007).

Furthermore, Walia claims that, for instance, the SPP “has [also] further entrenched Canada’s reliance on migrant workers programmes” that deliver a pool of easily disposable, bonded and cheap labour from the South (e.g. Live-in Caregiver Program and Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program) (2010, p. 77). Therefore, it can be anticipated that under the current development of biometrics pre-clearance programs, the above group of international migrants could be labelled as ‘low-risk’ and ‘frequent travellers’ because they “are important to the societies and economies of the global North as excluded noncitizens and

exploitable migrant labor” (Bauder 2008, p. 327).

In addition, the literature also identifies another important program in question. It includes the 2009 Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), formulated solely by the U.S. The WHTI followed the enactment of the 2004 Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act based on the 9/11 Commission Report and in a matter of five years underwent full implementation as a U.S law legislating a state of the art border surveillance and management program. In sum, the WHTI “facilitate[s] entry for U.S. citizens and *legitimate* foreign visitors, while strengthening U.S. border security” (CBSA 2009, Documents for entry into the United States: Timeline; Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative 2011, Home, emphasis mine). It also stipulates that Canadians “for the first time” must hold a valid passport when entering the U.S. by air and one of the following when travelling by land or sea: “a passport, a NEXUS card, a Free and Secure Trade (FAST) card or an enhanced driver's licence/enhanced identification card or a Secure Certificate of Indian Status (when this certificate is available and approved by the United States)” (Passport Canada 2010c, Background; CBSA 2010, Documents for entry into the United States). To clarify, NEXUS and FAST cards used at the Canada-U.S. border represent biometrics identification cards and are counterparts to SENTRI biometrics cards used at the U.S.-Mexico border. Combined together these documents are part of the *Global Entry*, “a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) program that allows *expedited* clearance for pre-approved, *low-risk* travellers upon arrival in the United States” (CBP 2011, Trusted Traveler Programs; Global Entry 2011, Home, emphasis mine).

Hence, given the above literature findings, it is important to emphasize that Canada was not left with much of a choice when it came to adopting the technology. The U.S. made it clear that if Canada did not comply with its enhanced security agenda, Canada would

face negative perceptions from the U.S., which “can translate into security policies affecting Canada-U.S. trade” (Goldfarb 2004, p. 7). Also, Canada would be viewed as the one not supporting the ‘war on terror’ brought about through the process of securitization. This would affect Canada’s image internationally, and, specifically, in the West that generously supported the U.S. in its ‘war on terror’ and military invasions in the Middle East in the immediate post-September 11 aftermath. However, and perhaps, more importantly for Canada, the U.S. could have closed its borders, which would affect Canada’s economic security, highly dependent on the U.S. (Goldfarb 2004). The above was indicated during a confidential meeting of policy makers and experts on Canada-U.S. economic and security relations in September 2003, which was followed by Citizenship and Immigration Canada’s Forum on Biometrics convened in Ottawa in October 2003 (Goldfarb 2004; Brown and Brook 2004). Therefore, given these findings, the September 11 was used as a momentum to push Canada to reorient itself to the regime of biometrics.

Others also identify that the WHTI appears to be the closest step towards what has been speculated for some time in the media and academic circles – a bilateral security harmonization between the U.S. and Canada, also known as a North American security perimeter “around Canada, the USA and Mexico” that “has been conjoined with common entry regulations for immigrants and refugees and not just security procedures” (Adelman 2005, p. 2). The central idea of the perimeter is to increase security and enhance prosperity through increased law and intelligence co-operation and information sharing. This would be accomplished through further implementation of biometrics systems, creation of border documents, developing compatible immigration measures and sharing information on ‘high-risk’ travellers (Canadian Press 2007). Furthermore, the concern is that the common security perimeter “might also allow the U.S. to

execute control of Canada in the advent of a terrorist attack or any other perceived threat to North America” (Gabriel 2010).

Regulation of mobility and the implications for racialized and immigrant populations

Ultimately, the concern is that all the above-described border control programs are making the Canada-U.S. border “more user-friendly to friendly users” (Boehm 2002 in Rygiel 2010, p. 55). Business class travellers and those identified as “frequent” or “low-risk” travellers are sure to fit into the ‘friendly user’ category and thus, enjoy the convenience of the newest travel arrangements at a low annual fee required to obtain one of the biometrics cross border cards (e.g. NEXUS card costs \$50 (CND) or \$50 (US) for a five-year membership period (CBSA 2011, Nexus)). Also, those travelling from the countries enjoying visa-free regimes with the United State are not the subject of criminalization, policing, surveillance and public scrutiny unlike those who require visas or claim the asylum and refugee status. The latter are fingerprinted and photographed at the border (Rygiel 2010), which represents a collection of biometrics data on vulnerable populations such as, refugees and asylum seekers, which enmeshes then with the wider “process of criminalization” because these migrants are subjected to “criminal-justice-like procedures” (Wilson & Weber 2008, p. 132).

Given that under the newest travel arrangements and border control initiatives, Canada and the U.S. are pursuing further development of biometrics programs and databases as well as sharing of immigration data on international migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, the concern is also how this data is used and for what purposes. In fact, some warn of the possibility of ‘function creep,’ the expansion of biometrics systems in which the data collected for one purpose can be used for another unintended or unauthorized purpose (Rygiel 2010; Acharya &

Kasprzyzyncki 2010; Redpath 2007; Alys Lowri Thomas 2005). This also raises the concern over the U.S. No Fly List where individuals whose names are put on it are restricted from boarding a commercial aircraft for travel in or out the U.S. To date, it is not clear what kind of information is used to create such a list, where is the information coming from and how one gets on as well as off of the list (Rygiel 2010). For vulnerable populations to be put on such list, the practice represents an extremely discriminatory and exclusionary form of social control and tremendously affects their chances of survival.

Moreover, if the identities of those labelled as 'low-risk' and 'frequent' travellers stay fixed and unchanged, then these international migrants can escape being subjected to dehumanizing processes, such as fingerprinting, photographing, surveillance and public scrutiny. After all, Wiebe claims that "[e]stablishing stable identities of its citizens, or *subjects* is of central concern to the modern nation-state" (2008, p. 337, author's emphasis). Ultimately, these identities are constructed at the border and read as desirable and trusted. They constitute a pool of global citizens who essentially are a modern-day commodity along with capital flows and commercial goods exchanged via the 'biometrics highway' between two states for the purpose of enhancing the North America's competitive position in a world economy (Walia 2010; Government of Canada 2009, The Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America). Additionally, the implementation and widespread use of biometrics in this context enables a commodification of everything, even immigrants and refugees, which is the ultimate goal of capitalist economy.

In contrast to the 'friendly user' category, the literature indicates that those migrants who do not fit into such categories are also those who are not regarded as valuable to both the Canadian and the U.S. nation-states (Rygiel 2010). They lack skills and/or experience;

(unlike temporary migrant workers), human and financial capital attributes (unlike business class travellers, tourists or international students) that the state can capitalize on. After all, they are not desirable because in the Canadian immigration contexts, they do not fit into the 'best and brightest' category of immigrants and international migrants who meet the conditions of Canada's immigration points system. Ultimately, they represent a "security risk" in both Canadian and the U.S. immigration contexts (The Canada-U.S. Smart Border Declaration 2003) that has to be managed effectively without any consequences for the global economy already in recession. They are asylum seekers, refugees and poor migrants coming from some of the most impoverished parts of the world; they are from the South, and their culture is different and thus potentially dangerous for the 'civilized' and modern North (Munck 2008). For the most part, Razack claims that they are also migrants of colour and therefore, the security risk they pose "is read on the body" (2008, p. 31).

As a result, according to 2005 CIC's statistics cited in Walia, these newest travel arrangements rely on or support the use of biometrics technology, and end up "disallowing up to 40% of potential asylum seekers to Canada" (2010, p. 78). Also, the literature indicates that there has been "an increase in deportations from approximately 9,000 in 2001 [at the time of introducing the newest travel arrangements] to 12,517 in 2006" (Walia 2010, p. 79). As well, between 2006 and 2007, calls for detainments and deportations were reported to have increased (Walia 2010, p. 79).

On the other hand, Richmond's article written in 2002 indicates that, at the time, Canada received close to 50 million international travellers annually (p. 711). Of these, only about 4 million were not from the U.S. and included "tourists, business travellers, those on Minister's Permits, and temporary employment visas, students, asylum applicants, as well as

landed immigrants” (Richmond 2002, p. 711, emphasis mine). “[Landed immigrants], it is further indicated, “constituted only 200,000 of the approximately 50 million entrants” (Richmond 2002, p. 711). Likewise, at the time, the USA received close to “97 million international travellers annually, by air alone” (Richmond 2002, p. 711). This excluded all those travelling by land and sea, “particularly the vast number of trucks and cars crossing the Canadian and Mexican borders every day” (Richmond 2002, p. 712).

X The reviewed literature also warns that the newest travel arrangements and border control initiatives employing biometrics “are designed to divide [migrant] populations into desirable and undesirable groups and then to regulate their movement accordingly” (Rygiel 2010, p. 46). This form of border management practices conceptualizes what Lyon calls “surveillance as social sorting” for it “sorts people into categories, assigning worth or risk, in ways that have real effects on their life-chances” (2003, p. 1). Once employed, such border management practices become “immigration and citizenship technologies” that “separate qualified and worthy citizens from unqualified, unworthy lives” (Wiebe 2008, p. 130) to ensure optimum functioning of capitalist markets in the global North. Hence, Bauder’s notion of “citizenship as capital” truly conceptualizes biometrics as an immigration and citizenship technology because, according to the author, “[i]n the context of the regulation of labor markets, citizenship is a strategy for the accumulation of monetary capital” (2008, p. 327).

Therefore, in light of the current literature, there is a strong indication that the newest travel arrangements and border control initiatives between Canada and the U.S. could be leading to the possible creation of a “mega-North America” economic union (Mazrui 2007, p. 100). As a consequence, it is also reasonable to conclude that the border management technologies will become more and more draconian and ‘unfriendly’ towards those who are

labelled as 'security risk' or bring no economic benefit to ensure a more secure flow of those who can enhance economic prosperity. Hence, the affected populations are racialized: refugees, asylum seekers and poor migrants of colour whose chances of survival have further deteriorated.

Biometrics: Securitization Discourse

This section will examine how the development of biometrics technology in citizenship and immigration contexts is driven by the securitization discourse, following the September 11 attacks. Here, relying on empirical evidence collected for this research study and discussed in the literature review section, I have chosen to employ the critical social research method because the implementation of biometrics in citizenship and immigration contexts has to be interpreted within a wider socio-political context relying on history to expose the implication of the technology on racialized and immigrant populations. The socio-political context in question is the securitization discourse that in order to be closely examined cannot be regarded as independent of the history that has informed it. The proposed discussion is presented below.

According to Pallito & Heyman, the “process of securitization” means “the spreading of national security techniques across a wide variety of issue domains” (2008, p. 317). However, it is important first to emphasize that the issue of national security has long permeated the U.S. political discourse. Mazrui argues that this has been since the Cold War era (2007). During this period, the ultimate enemy in the West both internally and externally was communism and the USSR. It was after the declining political and economic power of the Soviet Union that the fear of this Other started to decline too. Hence, the West needed a new Other in order to conceptualize itself as “the West.” This was Islam, “the *older* Western fear” (Mazrui 2007, p. 100) that was revived after the disintegration of the USSR and further redefined as the ultimate Other in the post-September 11 environment.

Hence, following the September 11 attacks, the U.S. projected itself as a victimized nation-state attacked by the enemy “from within” (Former U.S. President Bush on the

5th Anniversary of DHS in NSTC 2008, p. 27) who can be anyone, anywhere and strike anytime that is, occupy “every ‘place’ as well as every ‘in-between’” space (Neveh in Bociurkiw 2010, p. 118). In other words, the new Other was again conceptualized as both an internal and external threat. Additionally, official discourses and key political figures supporting the “clash of civilizations” discourse (Arat-Koc 2006) exploited the pre-existing fear of people coming from other cultures viewed as different and hence dangerous to the West (Munck 2008), which caused anti-immigrant backlash, Islamophobia and xenophobia to spread widely throughout the West. In fact, “[t]he level of public hostility in recent years in the European Union towards ‘foreigners’, ‘outsiders’, ‘immigrants’, ‘third country nationals’, ‘Muslims’, ‘gypsies’ and ‘those from the Third World’ (the labels and targets fluctuate) is now all too evident” (Cohen 2006, p. 89). So too in the U.S., racial profiling, violence, discrimination and racism towards those of ‘Middle Eastern’ appearance became justified on national security grounds, thereby fuelling hate towards and fear of this ‘Muslim Other’ (Razack 2008). Parallel to these developments, the U.S. was portrayed as a victim by other Western nation-states that supported the U.S. in its soon-to-be-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to prosecute the ‘Muslim terrorist’ and the supposedly homogenous entity called ‘Islam.’

Consequently, the discourse changed to ‘war on terror,’ which allowed for a “wide variety of issue domains” to become reconceptualized and redefined as issues of national security (Pallito & Heyman 2008, p. 317). During this process, reviving the historically discriminative and exclusionary treatment of racialized and immigrant populations (Kelley & Trebilcock 2000), international migration became the focus of national security in Western countries “heightening the concern that weak migration management systems can pose to the security and safety of the destination country and its population” (Redpath 2007, p. 27). In other

words, international migration was redefined and reconfigured as a threat to the West as well as a threat to Western territoriality and way of life through the process of securitization. Therefore, “[w]hile migration had previously been an issue of societal security, it [is] now squarely a key priority for state security along with drugs and weapons” (Munck 2008, p. 1231). This reconfiguring and criminalization of migration is reinforced every time migration ‘issues’ are raised within a securitization context (Pallitto & Heyman 2008, p. 317).

In order to deal with these ‘issues’ and to cater to the current anti-immigrant backlash, immigrant-receiving countries began actively researching new technologies for an effective protection of borders through “control of movement of people between nation-states, arriving and departing through geographical spaces as well as the surveillance of ‘migrant populations’, groups of people defined by their extraterritoriality” (Weber & Bowling 2005, p. 199). Hence, biometrics technology was thrust into national spotlight as an effective border management technology in immigration and citizenship contexts, and its development has been driven by securitization discourse ever since.

In practice, this is what happens at the borders that rely on the use of biometrics technology in immigration and citizenship contexts: passengers’ scanned physical traits (e.g. fingerprint, facial appearance) are used to link his/her passport, permanent resident card or visa to the right to travel, cross the border or enter the destination country. Therefore, when a passenger provides a travel document of some sort, the authentication and/or verification system activates and screens the passenger for security risks, assigns him/her a value number which is then used to determine the level of risk according to which the passenger is either granted the right of entry, screened further for security checks or denied the right of entry altogether. More important, the security assessments cannot be reversed since they are done through an integrated

computer system, accessed internationally. As well, security risk assessments if questioned can provoke further suspicion or result in greater subjection to surveillance and inspection (e.g. the passenger's name can be put on the U.S. No Fly List and restrict him further from flying in and out of the U.S.) (Redpath 2007; Rygiel 2010).

As Razack suggests, security delayed individuals are "from conflict ridden parts of the Third World, ironically the very conflicts that have resulted in their seeking asylum, and in most cases being granted it, in the first place" (2006, p. 49-50). Also, given the current securitized environment, other vulnerable and racialized populations such as, refugees and 'Muslims' will be particularly affected by the technology as they are already targets of racial profiling and criminalization. Furthermore, given that the passengers' body is used as a source of information (Rygiel 2010), the use of biometrics technology is closely associated with the issue of eugenics, which begs the question of how security assessments are actually done through biometrics systems that is, which algorithms and which information are used to assign the level of security risk: e.g. facial appearance and fingerprints embedded in the travel document of some sort or even combined together with the country of birth recorded in the document and then translated into mathematical formulae used to assess the level of risk and determine whether the individual can be granted a state membership. Therefore, this is also why the use of technology is deeply embedded in the notion of racism and securitization. Moreover, it could potentially be one of the most draconian and exclusionary citizenship and immigration technologies yet to come and we would not even know how it operate exactly given that whoever raises the concern over enhanced security measures post-September 11 can become a potential target.

Moreover, the technology is also being promoted by politicians who need the votes to rise to or stay in power and be seen "as doing something" (Stalder & Lyon 2003, p. 86)

to cope with this 'immigrant problem' in the post-September 11 securitized environment. More important, biometrics "symbolize, for everyone to see, a new resolve to get tough – on 'terrorists,' illegal immigrants, welfare offenders, or whoever is the villain of the moment" (Stalder & Lyon 2003, p. 86). Such politics not only cater to the current revival of the far-right throughout Europe fuelling the anti-immigrant backlash (Briggs 2009; France 24 2010; Hallam 2010; Nyberg 2010; theTrumpet.com 2010) but rather encourage and justify nationalist sentiments in the West as 'the right thing to do' in order to protect the nation from 'the aliens.'

On the other hand, it is also important to recognize that while national security objectives seem to be driving the development of technology, we should not underestimate the reverse scenario: the objectives could also be driven by the development of technology (Brown & Brook 2004) and the high-tech industry's demands for its adoption and implementation (Stalder & Lyon 2003). For instance, Stalder and Lyon (2003) identify that for the high-tech industry, the technology "represent[s] very significant procurement opportunities" while the high cost of its implementation is "one of its most attractive features" (p. 86). Given such findings, the above certainly merits further inquiry. However, this is unfortunately beyond the scope of this research paper.

In addition, the conflation of capitalist interests with national security objectives has also dominated the securitized environment post-September 11. For instance, consider the following statement in the Smart Border Declaration, signed between Canada and the United States on December 11, 2001: "Public security and economic security are mutually reinforcing" (Foreign Affairs and National Trade Canada 2003, The Canada –U.S. Smart Border Declaration). It follows, then that security concerns are becoming business concerns and vice versa. As a result, national security objective is becoming the development and research of biometrics and

vice versa. In conclusion, then it is the current securitization discourse that has been driving the development of biometrics technology at a rapid rate.

And as the environment is becoming more securitized that is, more “issue domains” are being identified as a threat to national security, the technology has a potential to develop through a wide range of social contexts and, eventually, penetrate all levels of society. Ceyhan asserts that “[t]he biometrization of identification documents does not stop at the level of asylum seekers, migrants and tourists but has been extended to *the whole population*, especially in Europe since identification and surveillance have been erected as crucial security issues. The securitization of identity documents is justified by the increase on identity theft and more intensely as a necessity to fight against terrorism” (2008, p. 115, emphasis mine). Therefore, it is apparent again that the current securitization discourse is driving the development of biometrics technology.

Biometrics: Symbolizing the Reassertion of National Sovereignty and US/Western Identity

In this section, critical discourse analysis will be used to interpret the language generated by the securitized environment to focus on the ways social and political practices are produced and reinforced by text and talk. In combination with critical social science, it is through this type of interpretation that the full impact of the post-September 11 securitized environment on the reconceptualization of the U.S. national sovereignty and identity can be realized. In fact, given that in the post-September 11 climate, migration is an issue of national security that has to be “managed,” it is in this context that the border is reconceptualized as the last bastion of national sovereignty and identity “because controlling who enters the state and who does not is one of the few remaining powerful attributes of national sovereignty” (Munck 2008, p. 1238). Therefore, protecting the border means protecting national sovereignty and identity. As a result, this has encouraged the use of biometrics technology in immigration and citizenship contexts because of its potential to make the border more secure against the perceived threat from the ‘Other’ and further help reassert national sovereignty and identity. In the U.S., the September 11 was interpreted as an attack on this country’s national sovereignty and identity. As a result, the proclamation of an ill-defined ‘war on terror’ under the guidance of the Department of *Homeland Security*, established as “a direct response to the attacks,” (NSTC 2008, p. 28) called for the protection of the “*homeland* that is safe, secure, and resilient against terrorism and *other hazards*” (U.S. Department of Homeland Security Missions and Responsibilities 2011, emphasis mine). Or as argued brilliantly in *Feeling Canadian*:

September 11 has violated and shattered the confidence of the United States in the total security of its territorial body. The sense of being violated has permeated U.S. domestic space by and large – every “place” as well as every “in-between” has become suspect of infection: the work space,

the leisure space, the home space... Yet the ultimate and illuminating transformation, which conceptualized America's new sensitivity, is the creation of a federal agency for "Homeland Security" (Neveh in Bociurkiw 2010, p. 118).

In this instance, the word "homeland" is of particular interest. By looking up the word in English dictionary, "homeland" is described as an autonomous state occupied by a particular people. Hence, the message conveyed with the creation of the Department of *Homeland Security* automatically sets up a boundary between this particular group of people and others. These others are not even personified or given a human form, but rather referred to within the context of "terrorism" and "other hazards." Altogether this reinforces the creation of well-established binaries, such as "us" and "them" that produces the language of exclusion known to have always permeated the U.S. immigration and citizenship discourses.

Homeland can also mean one or all of the following: native land, country of origin, home, birthplace, hometown, roots, fatherland, motherland, mother country, land of one's fathers or the old country. Hence, homeland can be conceptualized as a very subjective, abstract, and imaginary concept that constantly evolves. However, it always requires one to identify him/herself with a particular group of people and thus needs the assertion of boundary to define that group as distinct from the other groups. In sum, by its very definition, it has to be exclusionary. It follows then, that the exclusion of the other is essential in the creation of the "the self." Therefore, "Homeland Security" can be understood as the U.S.'s reconceptualization of "the self" that was compromised by the 'Other' – which implies that the 'immigrant', the 'bogus' refugee, the 'Muslim other,' the 'global terrorist' need to be reaffirmed as such. Ultimately, it is through these exclusionary practices that the U.S. national sovereignty and identity were reconceptualized and reasserted in the post-September 11 climate or in other words, this was done at the expense of the 'Other.' Moreover, this allows for the U.S. 'war on terror' to continue

unchecked because the perceived loss of national sovereignty and identity justifies and requires their very reassertion. This objective is achieved through “security programs concentrated on immigrants, [asylum seekers and refugees,] utilizing those places of exception long existing in immigration law, as well as new powers to arrest, detain, and deport without due process” (Razack 2008, p. 29).

These new powers of exclusion and discrimination are also utilized and reinforced at the border through the implementation of travel arrangements and border control initiatives relying on or supporting the use of biometrics technology in immigration and citizenship contexts. At the Canada-U.S. border they include NEXUS, CANPASS and FAST border travelling programs that, in a nutshell, represent a cost-effective and efficient border management solution expediting “low-risk” passengers and “frequent travellers,” ensuring the secure flow of capital flows and commercial goods on the one hand, and thorough screening of refugee and asylum claimants for “security risks” on the other - while, at the same time, pursuing international cooperation and intelligence-sharing on immigration, customs data and international terrorism (Rygiel 2010, p. 55; Walia 2010, p. 78; Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada 2003, The Canada-U.S. Smart Border Declaration 2003; Government of Canada 2009, The Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America).

Moreover, new powers of exclusion and discrimination also include the use of biometrics technology at the Canada-U.S. border to regulate the mobility of immigrant populations through further monitoring, criminalizing and targeting those under suspicion such as, racialized and vulnerable immigrant populations including ‘Arabs,’ refugees and asylum seekers perceived as a ‘threat’ to national sovereignty and identity. Such exclusionary and discriminatory practices are further reinforced through “arming of border guards,”

“[coordinating] border surveillance technologies,” and “tracking of foreign nationals” (Walia 2010, p. 78) through intelligence-sharing and the expansion of searchable biometrics databases and their integration with other countries border management technologies (Wilson & Weber 2008). The latter means that the security screening of migrant populations can happen before they actually reach the physical border of the nation-state (Wilson & Weber 2008). Hence, due to the implementation of biometrics technology, the border has “delocalized” and “off-shored” to further enforce and fortify the immobility of those who are not desirable (Wilson & Weber 2008) and perceived as criminal, illegal, unlawful and a ‘threat’ to national sovereignty and identity. As a result, in the post-September 11 climate, the process of migration criminalization and securitization is reinforced through the use of biometrics technology at the border.

Reasserting national sovereignty and identity through the above identified extremely intrusive and exclusionary citizenship and immigration technologies conceptualizes the notion of “pre-emptive punishment [that] argues that if there is a possibility that a crime might be committed, it ought to be pre-empted by government action” (Razack 2008, p. 29). Racialized and vulnerable immigrant populations continue to be victims of this principle both in Canada and the U.S. More important, given the current scope and consequences of the U.S. ‘war on terror,’ it can be argued that the principle of pre-emptive punishment goes beyond the domestic scope of affairs or more precisely, beyond the nation-state’s border to encompass on the one hand, Western populations perceived of being ‘terrorist’ targets or invaded by ‘bogus’ refugees and ‘undocumented,’ ‘illegal’ migrants; and on the other hand, non-Western populations perceived of violating Western national sovereignty and undermining Western national identity as a whole. Recent U.S. led wars in the Middle East supported by Western nation-states, ‘humanitarian’ interventions in a number of other countries as well as the U.S. led

military expansion for the purpose of sustaining Western economies and way of life both dependent on oil reserves “disproportionately [located] in Muslim lands” (Mazrui 2007, p. 100) are altogether the examples of the U.S. national sovereignty and identity reconceptualization at the expense of racialized and immigrant populations. Finally, this process of exclusion is crucial in understanding how Western nations set up boundaries, construct social identities and ultimately, reassert their own national sovereignty and identity, which is now facilitated and further encouraged through the use of biometrics at the border.

Reconceptualizing the notion of border

Under the notion of “Homeland Security” the issue of boundary reinforcement dominated the move to establish a securitized environment in the U.S. The following excerpt from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s mission statement exemplifies this process:

Secure and manage our borders

The Department secures the nation's *air, land and sea borders to prevent illegal activity while facilitating lawful travel and trade*. The Department's border security and management efforts focus on three interrelated goals:

1. *effectively secure U.S. air, land, and sea points of entry;*
2. *safeguard and streamline lawful trade and travel; and*
3. *disrupt and dismantle transnational criminal and terrorist organizations.*

Enforce and administer our immigration laws

The Department is focused on *smart and effective enforcement of U.S. immigration laws while streamlining and facilitating the legal immigration process*.

The Department has fundamentally reformed immigration enforcement, *prioritizing the identification and removal of criminal aliens who pose a threat to public safety and targeting employers who knowingly and repeatedly break the law* (U.S. Department of Homeland Security Mission and Responsibilities 2011, emphasis mine).

Considering the above examples, it is apparent that the “homeland” would be secured through the establishment of boundaries between what is considered as ‘legal’ versus

'illegal' and 'lawful' versus 'criminal' elements/migrants coming into the U.S. Therefore, trade and travel are raised within the context of legality and thus would be encouraged and protected, that is "safeguarded" and "streamlined," because both are important for the economy. On the other hand, immigration is strictly raised as an issue of illegality and criminality. The text also suggests how this issue should be dealt with – through "removal" that is, through expulsion and exclusion from the "homeland" membership. Hence, "homeland" belonging is strictly reserved for those who can enhance economic prosperity. Moreover, "the identification and removal of criminal aliens" in the immigration context legitimizes and justifies citizenship apartheid to be used against those defined by their extraterritoriality. More important, "removal of criminal aliens who pose a threat to public safety" also reinforces the notion of the "enemy from within" whose exclusion and expulsion is a priority. Hence, the "homeland" border can be inside and outside of the "home space" thereby, constantly redefining and reconfiguring who belongs to the nation and who does not. Also, the "homeland" borders have been identified as "sea" and "air" borders to indicate their fluidity since in the post-September 11 securitized environment the border cannot be conceptualized as a static concept but rather, can be anywhere and anything.

As a result, such processes produce a highly securitized environment on both sides of the nation-state's border that is, internally and externally. More important, the line between the two borders is blurred and the border can be deemed to be anywhere. This leads to the conclusion that the meaning of border as primarily a geographical term constantly evolves. In other words, borders have to be conceptualized as a product of a complex and ever changing set of cultural, economic and political forces. Therefore, borders are markers that divide, such as "history, language, economic considerations or symbolic identification of one kind of another" (Cohen 2006, p. 98). They are asserted by key political and social actors, thus making them

“legitimated not legitimate” (Cohen 2006, p. 99).

Finally, “[border] is a flexible sociological construct that plays a crucial role in the continuous regulation of the identities of citizens, immigrants, refugees, criminals and the list goes on” (Wiebe 2008, p. 129). Therefore, all borders are virtual and arbitrary drawn for the purpose of excluding the ‘other’ and thereby, asserting national sovereignty and identity. During this process, international migration was defined as a threat to both, which naturally called for a tighter border management at the expense of refugees, asylum seekers and poor migrants who “[lack] social worth” (Wiebe 2008, p. 130). For instance, Dauvergne observes that the concept of refugee both serves to assemble a “picture of national identity and as the effective boundary of the nation” (2005, p. 81). Because refugees are not accepted based on their “family ties” and “economic potential,” they are “the most unknown of migrant categories” and hence, represent “the sharpest contrast with existing national values” (Dauvergne 2005, p. 81). Therefore, during the construction of national identity, refugees are defined as “the ultimate other to the nation in order to be permitted entry” (Dauvergne 2005, p. 81).

Therefore, it is in this context that biometrics technology has to be conceptualized as a border management technology because it is used to “(de)classify, separate, organize, control and regulate life” (Wiebe 2008, p. 337). The technology facilitates filtering desirable (skilled, educated and/or with the capital to invest) from unwelcome strangers (lacking social worth and economic potential) and ultimately, constitutes a new form of immigration and citizenship technologies. Simultaneously, it enables the assertion of nation-state as a political concept in an increasingly globalizing economy and constructs ‘ideal’ subjects and ‘aliens’ through assessments and categorization of human life into worthy/unworthy, low-risk/high-risk, legal/illegal and so on. These processes of constant inclusion and exclusion are reinforcing

binaries that remind of historically discriminatory immigration policies known to both Canadian and the U.S. contexts (Kelley & Trebilcock 2000) and being “integral to forming the Canadian [and American] nation[s]” (Wiebe 2008, p. 131) and identities. Accordingly and “in the stunning neo-liberal hypocrisy” (Cohen 2006, p. 100) biometrics technology, on the one hand, promotes ‘open’ borders to facilitate the flow of global capital and on the other, ‘close’ borders to “regulat[e] the movement of those considered to be high-risk populations (e.g. terrorists, refugees, and undocumented migrants)” (Rygiel 2010, p. 46). The upshot of all this is that the nation-state is *not* eroding and is certainly *not* at the mercy of international migrants as it has been popularly suggested (see Biles, Burstein & Frideres 2008, p. 14) but, it is rather strengthening and reasserting itself.

In this section, employing the critical social research method in combination with critical discourse analysis, I will focus on the development of biometrics technology in Canada, and its applications and implications in citizenship and immigration contexts. Analyzing the U.S. portrayal of Canada in the post-September 11 securitized environment and the issue of Canadian identity construction in reference to the U.S., the implication is that Canada was pushed to reorient itself to the regime of biometrics or risk compromising its economic security.

Canada in the post-September 11 securitized environment

Ever since the “biometrics train has left the station,”⁴ (Brown & Brook 2004, p. 11) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has “adopt[ed] [a] machine-readable travel document (MRTD) specifications that require a passport to include an embedded chip containing the bearer's personal identification data and photo,” i.e. a biometric passport (Passport Canada 2010, Background), Canada felt the need to jump on that train and “meet emerging international requirements” (Brown & Brook 2004, p. 11). While the alternative to non-compliance was the risk of exclusion and negative perceptions from the international community, most notably from the U.S. (Canada's major trading partner) – Canada has adopted the regime of biometrics willingly.

The consequences of Canada's non-compliance were well-articulated *one month before* the 2003 Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Forum on Biometrics during a

⁴ This statement was made by former CIC Minister Denise Coderre while promoting the technology at the Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Forum on Biometrics in 2003 to signal that the time has come for Canada to follow international trends with respect to the use of biometrics in citizenship and immigration contexts. For more details see Brown & Brook 2004.

confidential seminar in September 2003, featuring an elite group of “decision makers and experts” on “Canada-U.S. economic and security relations” (Goldfarb 2004, p. 1, emphasis mine). The participants discussed security concerns post-September 11 while “reflect[ing] on longer-term implications of various threats for Canada, and what the country’s medium- and longer-term strategies ought to be” (Goldfarb 2004, p. 1). Therefore, the seminar included the discussion of the following two scenarios: (1) biological and radiological attacks in the U.S. and (2) attack on the U.S. infrastructure as well as “the actual case of Ahmed Ressam, who, traveling on a fake Canadian passport, was prevented from entering the U.S. from Canada with explosive materials intended to bomb the Los Angeles airport” (Goldfarb 2004, p. 1). After the discussion, the group concluded that Canada was weak and vulnerable as a nation on multiple levels and thus posed danger to itself, its citizens and its southern neighbour (Goldfarb 2004, p. 1).

The details of the report said:

The scenarios revealed *critical Canadian vulnerabilities*, including infrastructure *at risk*, as well as communication and information-sharing *gaps* in the country’s national, cross-border and other international networks (Goldfarb 2004, p. 1, emphasis mine).

[...]The discussions revealed that Canadians are potentially *vulnerable* to direct attacks within the country. They are also *susceptible* to the outcome of attacks in the U.S. and to negative U.S. perceptions that may lead to the *closure of the Canada-U.S. border* or otherwise *harm their ability to do business with, travel to, or get help from the United States* (Goldfarb 2004, p. 5, emphasis mine).

[...Participants] also mentioned the *presence of organized crime* in Canadian sea ports and, increasingly, at airports (Goldfarb 2004, p. 6, emphasis mine).

[...]Many commentators in the counter-terrorism field, both in the U.S. and outside, *criticize Canada’s refugee determination policy*, one participant said. Others noted that until Canada addresses that process, it will be open to the perception that *Ottawa fails to take security seriously* and U.S. policies will reflect this (Goldfarb 2004, p. 7, emphasis mine).

[...]One participant argued that the 2003 arrest in Canada of 19 men under Canada's new immigration laws, which allow detention on the grounds of threats to national security — for which there was inadequate evidence in this case (Jimenez et al, 2003) — also *reflects badly on Canada* (in Goldfarb 2004, p 7, emphasis mine). These arrests reinforce, through coverage in the New York Times (Krauss, 2003) and other leading U.S. publications, *a commonly held U.S. view that Canada is a haven for terrorists* (in Goldfarb 2004, p. 7, emphasis mine).

[...]Following discussion of the scenarios, many participants expressed the view that Canada is *exposed to risks* because of *critical gaps* in both national and international cooperation that make it *difficult to respond* quickly and effectively (Goldfarb 2004, p. 8, emphasis mine).

Given the above examples, it is all too evident that Canada was constructed by the U.S. firstly, as reckless, incompetent, naïve, inefficient, unsophisticated, sloppy and needy; secondly, as lacking expertise, initiative, knowledge and strategy, crying out for and depending on the U.S. help and thirdly, as being a place where terrorists can feel safe and a weak chain in the current North American integration process driven by securitization discourse. Moreover, this report also indicates that Canada is in danger of becoming the next 'Other' to the U.S. because the "closure of the Canada-U.S. border" is identified as possible and thus could be under consideration if Canada does not "take security seriously." Hence, the message conveyed to Canada was simple: reorient to the U.S. security agenda or face economic consequences. More important, Canada did not really try to fight this characterization but rather decided to acquiesce and became willing participant to the proposed security changes.

However, it is important to understand that because Canada has historically acquiesced to U.S.'s dictates, the current move to embrace biometrics technology is not a new development in the Canada-U.S. relations but rather an old story of a gendered, master-servant relationship and infantile Canadian identity. In fact, examining Canadian nationalism through television and entertainment industry, Bociurkiw concludes that Canada's marginality to the U.S.

is what makes Canadian identity to appear as “un-masculine” (2010, p. 106). “From comedic references on *The Simpsons* and *The West Wing* to George W. Bush’s significant omissions, Canada’s subservient relationship to the US is legendary,” claims Bociurkiw (2010, p. 105, emphasis author’s).

So too is Canada’s subservience to the U.S. important to Canadian national identity and multiculturalism ideology for the latter constructing an imaginary nation of immigrants built on benevolence and humanitarianism, *because*, in addition to the immigrant, the U.S. is also Canada’s ‘other’. Therefore, “[c]ertain notions of Canadian nationalism, heard frequently on Canadian television – that we are better than the US, that we are a peacekeeping nation, that we value ethnic and racial diversity – have gained the status of truth, making nationalist sentiment an acceptable practice” (Bociurkiw 2010, p. 12). In other words, reinforcing and reinventing the above Canadian stereotypes and myths (this is what constitutes the notion of state nationalism in the first place), Canadian identity becomes a construct against the U.S. identity characterized by aggressiveness, decisiveness and paternalism, which allows Canadians to construct themselves differently. Therefore, being perceived by this close ‘other’ as different, unprotected, weak, vulnerable, dependent, lacking guidance, tolerant, welcoming immigrants etc in fact becomes an ideological pursuit through which Canada defines itself as a nation, similar but yet “better than the US” (Bociurkiw 2010, p. 12). It follows, then that “Canada’s subservient relationship to the U.S.” (Bociurkiw 2010, p. 105) either acknowledged or denied by Canadians or produced primarily through the U.S.’s discursive practices is a venue for Canadian national identity construction and essentially constitutes Canadian citizenship and immigration politics.

When comparing immigration practices in both countries through different historical periods, it is clear that racist and exclusionary measures adopted in Canada, at times

mirrored those in the U.S., more than often ran along the same lines as in the U.S. (Kelley & Trebilcock 2000). Similarly, Canada's competition for immigrants is not just an imaginary preoccupation in the minds of Canadian politicians but occupies an important place in the nation's psyche generating feelings of inferiority and marginality when an immigrant chooses the U.S. over Canada because the U.S. is 'better.'

Ultimately, paying close attention to the origins of Canada's most recent national security framework, there is also a clear pattern of imitating and mirroring the U.S. foreign policy post-September 11, which again reveals Canada's subservient relationship to its southern neighbour. This includes the enactment of the 2001 Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), a Canadian counterpart to the US Patriot Act, preceded by the 2001 Canada-U.S. Smart Border Declaration, firstly followed by the draconian 2002 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) and secondly, by the 2002 Public Safety Act (PSA), a Canadian counterpart to the U.S. Homeland Security Act as well as the 2005 Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP). More important, ATA, IRPA and PSA dramatically expended police and surveillance powers of the Canadian state, while both ATA and IRPA also conflate terrorists and immigrants, which further reinforces exclusion and discrimination of racialized and vulnerable immigrant populations in Canada (Kruger, Mulder & Korenic 2004, p. 7). Similarly, both the 2001 Canada-U.S. Smart Border Declaration and the 2005 Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America talk about international migration, crime, and terrorism in one breath, which further encourages securitization and criminalization of international migration.

Furthermore, civil liberties and immigration advocacy groups argue that altogether this development "forms the statutory basis for the various elements of the national security state" (Whitaker 2004 in FIPA 2005, p. 19) infringing on democratic principles and

human rights nationwide. It also reveals that “Canada’s already close ties with the United States – in terms of investment, trade, culture, tourism and so on – have not only solidified, but also reconfigured and redefined, a number of other areas, such as national identity and the harmonization and integration of military policy, security legislation, and immigration and border controls” (Arat-Koc 2006, p. 227).

In fact, immigration and border control initiatives relying specifically on the use of biometrics technology proliferated along the Canada-U.S. border through Canada’s identifying with the U.S. in the post-September 11 securitized environment based on “common commitment to *democracy, the rule of law* and a free and open economy” on the one hand, and screening for “security risks” of racialized and vulnerable immigrant populations on the other (Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada 2001, The Canada-U.S. Smart Border Declaration, emphasis mine). Moreover, given that in the current securitization discourse international migration reads as a ‘threat’ and an issue of national security, it is also coupled with the issue of migrants’ identity verification (Häsini 2006; Cavoukian 2003). Hence, at the Canada-U.S. border the proliferation of joint customs and immigration initiatives encouraging the use of travel documents featuring biometrics and border crossing points equipped with biometrics authentication/verification systems in order to monitor, scrutinize, filter through and manage migrants’ identities (Rygiel 2010) became a state priority that Canada was pushed to adopt given its portrayal as a “haven for terrorists” (Goldfarb 2004; p. 7) that constructed Canada as threatening and dangerous to its southern neighbour – its most important economic partner. It follows, then, that in the post-September 11 securitized environment, Canada reoriented itself to the regime of biometrics or risked compromising itself and its economic security, and its high dependency on the U.S.

Biometrics: applications and implications in Canada

Following the confidential seminar on Canada-U.S. economic and security relations, in October 2003, the then Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), Denise Coderre, in an effort to promote the potential use of biometrics technology in a citizenship and immigration context, convened a Forum on Biometrics in Ottawa, thereby opening a national debate on the implementation of identity documents with biometrics not only for landed immigrants and permanent residents but rather for all Canadian citizens (Brown & Brook 2004). Forum participants and presenters coming from a wide range of professional backgrounds, establishments and countries, examined and discussed biometrics from multiple perspectives including opinions and positions on international security concerns post-September 11, identity theft, border and airport passenger screening, fraud and misinterpretation in immigration as well as global terrorism (Brown & Brook 2004). Although a consensus was not reached, the benefits of implementing biometrics systems were described as real and tangible and therefore, Mr. Coderre asserted, “biometrics are in use now and they are here to stay” (Brown & Brook 2004, p. 37). However, the key question was, “whether we as Canadians want a ‘made in Canada’ solution to these challenges, or one that is *imposed* from the outside” (Brown & Brook 2004, p. 11, emphasis mine). In the post-September 11 climate and its ‘war on terror,’ reinforcing both criminalization and securitization of migration, the latter referred to the G-8 countries that have already experimented with or implemented biometrics technology to control international migration and refugee flows to their respective nations (Brown & Brook 2004). Moreover, given the above, it is apparent that during this public debate involving the discussion on the use of biometrics technology in immigration and citizenship contexts, the issue of

immigration was raised strictly within a wider context of criminality and security thereby, mirroring the U.S.'s drive for migration securitization.

Then in 2007, CIC tested the technology during a field trial “at two visa offices abroad, at two land ports of entry, at one airport, and at one refugee intake” (CIC 2008, p. 1). “[A]ll clients who appeared at the participating offices to apply for a temporary resident visa, a study or work permit, or to claim refugee protection were required to provide biometric data” such as, photos and fingerprints (CIC 2008, p. 6). In the report following the trial, CIC indicated that out of 12 refugee claims at the time only *one* case was detected to be an immigration fraud (CIC 2008, p. 64). In addition, “[t]wo cases involved applicants who had been refused visas and who later reappeared as refugee protection claimants” and “[i]n nine cases, the clients were issued visas and later claimed refugee protection” (CIC 2008, p. 12). The report further said that biometrics technology was “not a 100% solution” and “[v]erifying biometrics at the border may have deterred the entry of some clients at ports of entry participating in the field trial” (2008, p. 66, 64). Nevertheless, the conclusion was that the technology can be an effective tool for “increase[ing] CIC’s confidence in client’s identity” because “it can reliably link each client to an immigration decision,” it can be used both to detect cases of misinterpretation and abuse of programs for refugees and asylum seekers and to find links to previous immigration and criminal records (CIC 2008, p. 64).

Given the above, although the level of ‘immigration fraud’ was very low despite the current securitization discourse around international migration representing it as potentially high, the intent to criminalize, monitor and further scrutinize vulnerable and racialized immigrant populations is more than obvious and this is where the potential of the technology is fully realized. So too the technology successfully identified and ‘captured’ those who changed their

identity – from a visa holder to a refugee claimant as well as those who after being declined entry visas tried claiming refugee status. However, changing the identity in this context should not be raised as an issue of criminality and security. Rather, it begs the question whether the current definition of a refugee⁵ can truly include all those who need the protection in the first place. Numerous refugee advocacy groups have been raising this concern for the longest time because the definition is narrow and open for interpretation and thus can be a subject of abuse by some governments (Amnesty International 2011, Refugees in Canada). Nevertheless, given that “the current focus of many governments is a tighter control of migration,” (Amnesty International 2011, Refugees in Canada) it can be anticipated that the use of biometrics technology at the Canada-U.S. border will continue to be aimed at regulating the mobility of those who have been discriminated against historically in both the Canadian and the U.S. citizenship and immigration contexts that is, racialized and vulnerable immigrant populations. As a result, national borders will continue to be places where the “the writ of human rights barely applies” (Munck 2008 p. 1234).

Furthermore, in the 2008 budget, the Canadian government made the following announcement:

...border security remains a priority for Canadians. Criminals are increasingly more sophisticated and well funded, including those who engage in *document fraud* to illegally move people or goods across borders. Further to biometric field trials in Canada that were successfully completed in 2007, the Government will introduce the use of biometric data, such as fingerprints and live photographs, in its visa-issuing process to accurately *verify identity and travel documents of foreign nationals who enter Canada.*

⁵ A person who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country" (The 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugee available at <http://www.amnesty.ca/Refugee/who.php>)

This initiative will enhance the integrity and efficiency of the border by *preventing criminals* from entering Canada, and *facilitating the processing of legitimate applicants*. Canada will join other countries such as Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom, which have recognized the value of using biometrics in their immigration and border processes (CIC 2011, Biometrics, emphasis mine).

Considering the above, it is obvious that in immigration and citizenship contexts, the use of biometrics technology is associated with the criminal and justice-related procedures for an effective management of migrants' identity, the primary concern in the post-September 11 securitized environment. Moreover, the fact that refugee and asylum applicants could have multiple identities, identification and travel documents, or apply to different immigration categories or even pay money to human smugglers to escape prosecution and death does not make them criminals, illegal or illegitimate for protection. Being a refugee is not a choice and being 'illegal' that is, not going through 'legitimate channels' and 'playing by the rules' is a necessity for these vulnerable immigrant populations! In fact, many of them would have multiple passports and claims in order to double their chances of survival. More important, securing the border with biometrics technology will only encourage desperate migrants to look into extraordinary measures (e.g. deal with smugglers, which can lead to death, the risk of the entire family being blackmailed and other consequences) to cross the border and earn the right of stay. Hence, it is also in this context that the use of biometrics technology at the Canada-U.S. border is a draconian security measure because it can fortify the immobility of those who desperately need open and welcoming borders to save their bare lives.

Furthermore, the development of biometrics technology in Canada is also ensured through Canada being subjected to the provisions of the U.S. Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). At the moment, the WHTI appears to be the closest step towards what has been speculated for some time in the media and academic circles – a bilateral security

harmonization between the U.S. and Canada, also known as a North American security perimeter “around Canada, the USA and Mexico” that “has been conjoined with common entry regulations for immigrants and refugees and not just security procedures” (Adelman 2005, p. 2). The central idea of the perimeter is to increase security and enhance prosperity through increased law enforcement, intelligence co-operation and information sharing. This would be accomplished through further implementation of biometrics systems, creation of border documents, developing compatible immigration measures and sharing information on ‘high-risk’ travellers (Canadian Press 2007). Furthermore, the concern is that the common security perimeter “might also allow the U.S. to execute control of Canada in the advent of a terrorist attack or any other perceived threat to North America” (Gabriel 2010). Therefore, in the future, we can expect an even greater push towards the economic and security union with the U.S. However, “[t]he political construct that is developing here isn’t a comparable North American union. It’s just an American union” (Gwyn 2001b in Arat-Koc 2006, p. 23) “*in which Canada is erased*” (Arat-Koc 2006, p. 230, emphasis mine). Consequently, this begs the question: who is actually undermining Canadian national sovereignty? Is it the international migration (popularly cited these days) or the U.S.?

As well in 2009, parallel to the full implementation of the U.S. Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), the Canadian government began developing another biometrics project. The then Deputy Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the current Director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) Richard Fadden made the announcement that Canada would start collecting such biometrics as photos and fingerprints of every visitor from every country between 2011 and 2013. “The intention is to capture everybody. The idea is to increase our capacity to know who is in Canada at a particular point of time,” he commented (UPI.com 2009). The project announced that year, the Temporary Resident

Biometrics Project, would be led by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) in partnership with the Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and is scheduled to launch in 2013 (CIC 2009, Backgrounder: Temporary Resident Biometrics Project; Green and Spiegel 2011). Briefly, with this project the Government of Canada's goal is "to eventually use biometrics for all non-Canadians entering the country" in the future (CIC 2009, Backgrounder: Temporary Resident Biometrics Project). Therefore, considering the current securitization and criminalization discourses around international migration, it can be anticipated that the further development and implementation of biometrics technology at the Canada-U.S. border will be aimed at constructing the immigrant as a 'threat,' which will have further implications for racialized and vulnerable immigrant populations.

So too in Canada the discussion on biometrics was dominated by a possible introduction of a single national identity card (featuring biometrics) nationwide, which would meet two clear objectives: (1) to prevent identity fraud and (2) to protect Canadian borders and nation from 'external threats' (Brown 2004, Hasini 2006). Although, officially⁶ Canada does not have such a card at the time of writing this paper, there has been a concern that the most recent policy initiatives led by the United States have paved the way for a biometric card of some sort to be fully implemented in the future (The Ottawa Citizen Online 2007). They include the 2001 Canada-U.S. Smart Border Declaration, the 2005 Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP) between Canada, the U.S. and Mexico and the 2009 Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). All three initiatives support the use of biometrics technology and promote the obtainment of biometrics cards for expedited border crossing. It is the position of critics and citizen advocates that the cards would become "'internal passports' which would be required to

⁶ The newest provincial driver's licences with enhanced security features (digital photos and bar codes, into which biometrics data could be easily imported) made mandatory across the country could be conceptualized as a future national identity card.

access almost all government or business services” (Hasini 2006, p. 5) and therefore, lead to the erosion of civil liberties guaranteed under The Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Coupling national identity cards with the recent Anti-Terrorism and Public Safety Acts, both infringing democratic principles and human rights, supposedly highly espoused by our politicians, could there be a different future for Canada, I wonder?

Biometrics: Discourse on Race

In this section, the critical social research method is employed to uncover the use of biometrics technology at the Canada-U.S. border, and to show how it is deeply embedded in policy to institutionalize racism within the ambit of securitization.

Munck emphasizes that “[s]ecurity has become the main modality of governance, thus creating a generalisation of insecurity for the population at large” (2008, p. 1231). As a result, the Western security state model is maintained through constant generation of new ‘threats’ to national security; through identification and measurement/assessment of perceived ‘risks’; through constant inducing of fear of ‘the Other’ or the ‘enemy within’ a given territory. However, it is important to recognize that the notion of ‘the Other’ has a long history in the West and the process of “othering” continues to evolve in the present. In his *Europe and its Others*, Pieterse traces the existence of “otherness” within and in relation to Europe from medieval to present times:

[...]Throughout, designing others and emphasizing their “otherness” have been fundamental to the construction of boundaries of identity and community, between and within societies. Over time, otherness has had many different meanings, as many as identity. It has referred to cultural differences along the lines of language, religion, civilization, “race,” ethnicity, region, nationality, gender, age and to class, development, ideology, and so forth (2002, p. 17).

It follows, then that the West needs ‘the Other’ in order to conceptualize itself (Cohen 2006). That is, Western nations project themselves against ‘the Other’ (asylum seekers, immigrants, refugees, ‘terrorists’, ‘illegal’ migrants and so on) in order to construct themselves, set up boundaries, borders and call themselves ‘modern,’ ‘civilized,’ ‘democratic,’ ‘humanitarian,’ ‘liberal’ and the list goes on. Moreover, “[a]s the ‘asylum-seeker’, ‘foreigner’,

‘stranger’ or ‘alien’ is silhouetted and identified” through constant redefinition and refinement of ‘the Other’, the West reconfigures and reinvents “processes of exclusion and rejections” and they eventually “become constitutive of the national identity itself” (Cohen 2006, p. 97).

Ironically, ‘the undesirable Other’ becomes internalized as an inevitable part of the Western identity formation.

However, these “processes of exclusion and rejection” (Cohen 2006, p. 97) have to be studied within a wider context of racialization and discrimination practices, because presently, “[i]n the context of globalization, with increasing communications, migration, and travel, and as societies become increasingly mixed, the older ideas of race and civilizations become increasingly quaint” (Pieterse 2002, p. 22). Therefore, instead of race, culture and cultural differences are becoming the new markers of social membership and a criterion for classification (Ibrahim 2005, p. 165). The literature on racism and discrimination identifies this as a new phenomenon of culturalism that is on the rise, where prejudice and exclusionary measures are aimed at those who are coming from another culture, which is often described as ‘backward’ and more important, incompatible with the dominant Western culture (Marger 1985; Blaut 1992; Skenderovic 2007; Phillips 2010; Gunduz 2010).

Hence, the term “cultural racism,” “new racism” or “xenophobia” is used to designate the phenomenon. In a nutshell, “[c]ultural racism rests on the notion that discrepancies in social achievement among ethnic groups are the result of cultural differences rather than biogenetic ones” (Marger 1985, p. 25). This is supported by “explanations based on ethnicity and cultural difference at the expense of racialised inequalities in power and status” (Phillips 2010, p. 209). Therefore, the “frustration and fury are centred on those who do not belong to ‘us’, that is Muslims, immigrants, asylum seekers or all those who look, live, and believe differently from

'us'. These 'others' are seen and shown as scapegoats for all problems found on the belief that differences represent 'threats'" (Gunduz 2010, p. 40).

It follows, then that the framing of "cultural difference" as a security threat to Western nation-state should be conceptualized as a "racist discourse" (Ibrahim 2005, p. 165) through which migration becomes subjected to scrutiny and further undergoes the process of securitization and criminalization. So too reproducing and reinforcing the fear from people coming from another culture and "presum[ing] incommensurability of different cultural identities" (Blaut 1992, p. 293) once these 'other' people mix with 'indigenous' and dominant groups of people, calls for the regulation of different cultural identities.

At the Canada-U.S. border, the regulation of cultural identities is achieved through public safety acts, anti-terrorism and immigration laws (Bill C-17, Bill C-36 and IRPA⁷ in Canada; Homeland Security Act and US Patriot Act in the U.S.) and joint travel arrangements and border control initiatives (SPP, WHTI, The Canada-U.S. Smart Border Declaration) relying on the use of biometrics technology that altogether institutionalize the selection and rejection of targeted population groups depending on their socially constructed identities and economic potential. This process is further reinforced within wider criminalization and policing contexts produced by surveillance techniques (passenger data collection and sharing, customs and immigration data sharing, biometrics data collection, fingerprinting and photographing, intelligence sharing, risk profiling, deportations, detainments and so on) for the purpose of maintaining the *status quo* that is constructed as being threatened by other 'alien' cultures, which will eventually lead to dominant culture becoming extinct and 'us' becoming 'them.' Rather, we

⁷ "Although both Acts address security, the *Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act* [IRPA] focuses on the 'foreign national' and the *Anti-Terrorism Act* [Bill C-36] focuses on the 'terrorist' thus causing the 'foreign national' and the 'terrorist' to be understood as one and the same in governmental discourse" (Kruger, Mulder & Korenic, 2004, p. 7).

want 'them' to become 'us' that is, to assimilate and absorb them into 'our' understanding and way of life.

Ultimately, biometrics technology is making the Canada-U.S. border "more user-friendly to friendly users" (Boehm 2002 in Rygiel 2010, p. 55) because 'friendly user' identities are constructed based on economic and social considerations and thus read as 'frequent' and 'low-risk' travellers. Briefly, these are business class travellers and tourists who can enjoy the convenience of the newest travel arrangements at a low annual fee required to obtain one of the biometrics cross border cards for expedited mobility between the two states. However, in contrast to the 'friendly user' category, the Canada-U.S. border is becoming very 'unfriendly' to those migrants who are not regarded as valuable and desirable to both the Canadian and the U.S. nation-states. They lack skills and/or experience (unlike temporary migrant workers), human and financial capital attributes (unlike business class travellers, tourists or international students) that the state can capitalize on. They represent a 'security risk' in both Canadian and the U.S. immigration contexts that has to be managed effectively without any consequences for the global economy already in recession. They are asylum seekers, refugees and poor migrants coming from some of the most impoverished parts of the world; they are from the South, and their culture is different and thus potentially dangerous for the 'civilized' and modern North (Munck 2008). For the most part, Razack claims that they are also migrants of colour and therefore, the security risk they pose "is read on the body" (2008, p. 31).

Therefore, at the Canada-U.S. border biometrics "are designed to divide [migrant] populations into desirable and undesirable groups and then to regulate their movement accordingly" (Rygiel 2010, p. 46). This form of border management practices conceptualizes what Lyon calls "surveillance as social sorting" for it "sorts people into categories, assigning

worth or risk, in ways that have real effects on their life-chances” (2003, p. 1). Once employed, such border management practices become “immigration and citizenship technologies” that “separate qualified and worthy citizens from unqualified, unworthy lives” (Wiebe 2008, p. 130) to ensure optimum functioning of capitalist markets in the global North. Hence, it is in this context that, through the use of biometrics technology at the Canada-U.S border crossings, the border has become a social filter that separates welcome from unwelcome migrants depending on strategic objectives to include and exclude population groups. This turns out to be an economic strategy in the post-September 11 securitized environment that, on the one hand, is opening borders to tourists, business class travellers, and capital flows and, on the other hand, is closing borders to racialized migrants and vulnerable populations who have no economic potential. Therefore, through the use of biometrics technology at the Canada-U.S. border the notion of citizenship is being reconstructed whereby racialized and vulnerable immigrant populations such as, ‘Muslims,’ refugees, asylum seekers and poor migrant from the South are redefined as a ‘threat’ based on economic and cultural considerations – the notion of new racism whereby instead of race, culture functions to denote citizenship entitlement and belonging. Moreover, this is how modern-day ‘aliens’ are constructed in contrast to ‘ideal’ subjects because the latter have a potential to enhance economic prosperity of a “mega-North America” economic union that in the years to come can “produce a human race more than ever divided between prosperous white races [in the global North] and poverty-stricken Blacks [and Browns in the global South] (Mazrui 2007, p. 100).

In conclusion, given the current discourse on race in post-September 11 securitized environment wherein culture and cultural differences are becoming the new markers of social membership and a criterion for classification (Ibrahim 2005, p. 165), the use of

biometrics technology at the Canada-U.S. border is then deeply embedded in the notion of race coupled with the securitization discourse. Therefore, the technology also reinforces historically inherent discriminatory practices both known to Canada and the U.S. immigration contexts wherein immigration selection was based on race, culture and economic considerations (Kelley and Trebilcock 2000). It also follows then, that the current discourse on race is encouraging the concurrent development of the securitization discourse, and together they are driving the development of biometrics technology at a rapid rate.

Conclusion

In the post-September 11 climate with the U.S. 'war on terror,' international migration has been constructed as a 'threat' to national security, sovereignty and identity through the process of securitization. Following the progression of the U.S. 'war on terror,' the securitized environment permeated the entire Western world and pushed Canada to reorient itself to the new security agenda led by the U.S. and characterized by the implementation of biometrics technology in citizenship and immigration contexts. As a consequence, relying on those places of exclusion and discrimination, which have been in existence since a very long time in both the Canadian and the U.S. immigration and citizenship policies, the use of biometrics technology at the Canada-U.S. border reinforced and reinvented the pre-existing processes of exclusion, racism and rejection in order to regulate the mobility of and further criminalize racialized and vulnerable immigrant populations perceived as a 'threat' in the current securitized environment. Ultimately, through the use of biometrics technology, the border has become a social filter separating desirable population groups from undesirable ones and attaching to them different statuses, identities and rights that are used to further discriminate against those groups who are constructed as 'aliens,' 'bogus' refugees, 'Muslim,' 'global terrorists,' 'illegal' migrants and so on. These undesirable groups of migrants are also people of colour coming from some of the most impoverished and conflict-ridden parts of the global South who have had their hopes for change and betterment evaporated. Exploiting the pre-existing fears (in the West) over groups of people from other cultures, these migrants' identities are constructed as dangerous, lacking social, economic and cultural worth, which calls for tighter border controls to immobilize them. As a result, this also serves as a justification for their continued exclusion from both Canada and

the U.S. that through the implementation of biometrics technology in immigration and citizenship contexts, on the one hand, continue to reject racialized and vulnerable immigrant populations and, on the other, continue to welcome those who can enhance prosperity in the current North American economic integration process.

Moreover, through the use of biometrics technology at the Canada-U.S. border the two states sort migrants into different categories such as, low-risk/high risk, legal/illegal, legitimate/illegitimate, lawful/criminal based on economic and cultural considerations, thereby constructing 'ideal' subjects and 'aliens' whose mobility is regulated accordingly or halted altogether. In the years to come, this can only deteriorate the chances of survival of racialized and vulnerable immigrant population groups whose identities continue to be read as high-risk, illegal, illegitimate and criminal. Hence, they continue to be subjects of discrimination, exclusion and criminalization, which has to be understood as a wider racialization process that the use of biometrics technology has brought about.

Therefore, in light of the presented findings, biometrics technology can only be conceptualized as a draconian new citizenship and immigration technology that undermines fundamental human rights and principles. One of them is the right to mobility in the pursuance of better livelihoods. Additionally, the use of biometrics technology is deeply embedded in the notion of racism and securitization, which is not apparent at first glance and thus its covertness makes it even more dangerous for the society as a whole that has seen its recent developments in many areas of social life. Moreover, coupling biometrics with other data sharing and collection technologies can lead to the creation of new patterns of the person that can be further exchanged among and bought and/or sold by private companies, governments and other stakeholders involved without the affected individuals' awareness and authorization. Finally, because

biometrics technology employs scientific methods to assess the level of risk, the technology appears as neutral and objective and, therefore, it is difficult to refute and reverse the assessment results, which represents the greatest danger of all.

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