

RACIAL NATIONALISM AND REPRESENTATIONS OF CITIZENSHIP: THE RECALCITRANT ALIEN, THE CITIZEN OF CONVENIENCE, AND THE FRAUDULENT CITIZEN

AUGUSTINE S.J. PARK

Abstract. This paper traces racial nationalism through three recent sites of controversy relating to citizenship: the banning of face coverings while swearing the citizenship oath, the evacuation of Canadians abroad, and the revocation of the citizenship of 1,800 alleged to have gained citizenship through fraudulent means. Racial nationalism is an architecture of race-thinking defined by (1) cultural racism, which operates as a strategy of “sorting out” outsiders from insiders and (2) expulsion or what Hage refers to as the logic of pure exclusion. Through an interrogation of online reader commentary responding to news reporting, this paper examines three allegorical figures at the core of public discourses representing citizenship: the recalcitrant alien, the citizen of convenience, and the fraudulent citizen.

Keywords: racial nationalism, cultural racism, citizenship of convenience, citizenship fraud

Résumé. Cet article analyse le nationalisme-racial à travers trois sites récents de controverses quant à la question de la citoyenneté : l’interdiction du port du voile lors du serment de la citoyenneté, l’extradition de canadiens, ainsi que la révocation de la citoyenneté de quelques 1800 personnes présumées l’avoir obtenue frauduleusement. Le nationalisme-racial est principe architectonique d’une pensée racialisante qui se caractérise par un racisme culturel, qui départage les étrangers des membres d’une communauté, voire les en expulse tout simplement, comme le suggère la notion d’exclusion pure de Hage. Sur la base d’une analyse des commentaires de lecteurs de médias d’information publiés sur le web, cet article identifie trois figures au cœur des représentations publiques de la citoyenneté : l’étranger récalcitrant, le citoyen-profiteur, et le citoyen-fraudeur.

Mots clés: nationalisme-racial, racisme culturel, citoyen-profiteur, citoyen-fraudeur

Sunera Thobani writes in her book *Exalted Subjects* that “Canadians routinely describe their citizenship, immigration and refugee policies as the most humanitarian and compassionate in the world. These claims,” Thobani explains, “shape their sense of collective pride and national identity” (Thobani 2007:69). Contemporary public discourses representing citizenship, however, bear a complex relationship to the myth of Canada as a multicultural sanctuary with doors invitingly open to the world. Indeed, public discourses constituting citizenship simultaneously take for granted and negate what I will term “the open society myth.” Specifically, in this paper, I argue that public discourses representing citizenship in Canada today are organized around a logic of racial nationalism, which I define as an architecture of race thinking characterized by, on the one hand, cultural racism and, on the other hand, expulsion or what Hage calls the logic of pure exclusion (Hage 2006). Cultural racism is a modality of racism in which static and caricatured concepts of ethnic culture — naturalized and essentialized — come to stand in for race, while cultural difference is cast as an intrinsic and inevitable source of conflict. Culture, I contend, is mobilized as a strategy of distinction or methodology of sorting to designate insiders and outsiders. Outsiders, in turn, to varying degrees, are subject to expulsion. I trace racial nationalism as a continuous logic running through three recent sites of controversy constituting citizenship in the public imaginary: the banning of face coverings while swearing the citizenship oath, the evacuation of Canadians abroad, and the revocation of the citizenship of 1,800 persons alleged to have gained citizenship through fraudulent means. In these sites of controversy racial nationalism operates through three distinct, but imbricated, discourses that manifest in three “allegorical figures” (Razack 2008:5). First, the *recalcitrant alien* is the obstinately cultural other whose refusal to assimilate bars her entry to the Canadian polity. She is the alien who makes claims on citizenship, while remaining culturally defiant and uncooperative. Second, the *citizen of convenience* is cast as the unassimilable alien who cynically exploits the open society both materially, in terms of social services, and politically, as a place of refuge from backward and conflictual “homelands.” Finally, the *fraudulent citizen* casts doubt on the legitimacy of the citizenship of all racialized others. While racial nationalism should not be mistaken as new, its contemporary prevalence in public discourse is striking as it advances normative claims about Canadian citizenship that both affirm and contest the desirability of the open society in favour of a parochial ideal of the good citizen, embodied in the culturally white (Hage 2011), neoliberal citizen (e.g., Kennelly and Llewellyn 2011). While there is now an established literature critiquing the racialization as well as the

exclusionary quality of citizenship (e.g., Abu-Laban 2004; Balibar n.d.; Stasiulis 2002; Stasiulis and Bakan 1997), this discussion focuses on popular representations of citizenship and how a racialized conception of culture serves as a strategy of sorting who is to be excluded. The article also contributes to debates on racialization and citizenship by drawing on a relatively novel source of data: online reader response to Internet news articles. My argument unfolds in three parts: First, I devote attention to methodological questions. Second, I elaborate my conceptual tools. Finally, emerging from my analysis of each site of recent controversy, I explore racial nationalism as a unifying structure of thinking constituting citizenship across the three allegorical figures.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this paper, I interrogate one dimension of public discourse, which I define as various (potentially competing) constructions and representations of social or political phenomena advanced by diverse publics. I distinguish public discourses from official state, expert, or media discourses with which public discourses intersect (i.e., public discourses may, for instance, overlap, be shaped by, draw upon, or contest official discourses). Specifically, I examine the comments section that follows online news stories, which consists of anonymous reader reaction to reporting that is publicly posted and constitutes a dialogue among readers. I refer to this phenomenon as online reader commentary (ORC). ORC represents a relatively new source of sociological data and thus presents a novel frontier for qualitative methods. Analysis of ORC raises methodological questions that merit critical attention, a fraction of which I can address here. My discussion of racial nationalism emerges from an analysis of ORC following three news articles on the CBC news website, a site which is likely to be read by a broad cross-section of the population since it is a source of national news and is free of charge to access. The three following articles were sampled to reflect the sites of controversy: The article “Face veils banned for citizenship oaths” (CBC 2011a) generated a staggering 2,111 comments. “Baird tells Canadians in Syria to ‘leave now,’” (CBC 2011b) relates to controversy on the evacuation of dual citizens overseas sparking debates on “citizenship of convenience.” This article resulted in 546 ORC. The article titled “Ottawa targets 1,800 in citizenship crackdown” (2011c) reports on the revocation of the citizenship of alleged fraudsters, resulting in 969 ORC. The sites of controversy were selected because each reflects an issue relating to citizenship that has been problematized in recent years. In turn, each site of controversy was searched in the CBC’s internal search engine using keywords

such as “citizen of convenience,” “citizenship and fraud,” or “citizenship and veil.” The stories were selected because they each report an announcement by the government that affects citizenship, and they each elicited over 500 ORC, ensuring a large sample pool.

ORC, a relatively recent phenomenon, introduces greater interactivity among newsreaders. I argue that the chief significance of studying ORC is that it represents distinctly public debate in which participants advance normative claims that are specifically intended to be read and responded to by others, often with an argumentative quality that suggests the goal of persuasion. The study of ORC does not allow researchers to engage in positivist exercises of measuring public opinion. Instead, its value is that it allows a discursive analysis of the quality of language in public debate — the grammar and vocabulary mobilized to represent and construct a public issue. To better theorize ORC and develop an appropriate toolkit of methods, researchers would profit from turning to two existing literatures: literature on ethnographic Internet-based research, such as on chatrooms, message boards, and other online communities (e.g., Garcia et al. 2009; Kozinets 2010; Langer and Beckman 2005) and literature on the study of opinion published in traditional media, such as letters to the editor, editorials, or op-eds (e.g., Kowalchuk and McLaughlin 2009; Morrison and Love 1996; Mummery and Rodan 2007).

Because the total number of ORC in relation to each article varies considerably, I selected a sample size of 100 comments per article, which represents approximately 5–18% of ORC per article. The samples were generated by selecting the 100 “highest rated” comments for each article.¹ The rating system on the CBC news website is calculated on the basis of the total number of positive votes (“thumbs up”) minus the total number of negative votes (“thumbs down”). The highest rated comments are those that both have been voted on the largest number of times and have received the highest balance of positive votes. There are drawbacks to using the highest rated comments as my samples. Specifically, this study can neither account for *why* the highest rated comments were so popular, nor identify the voters. The fact that a given comment is highly rated does not necessarily indicate that a high proportion of *readers* (or the population at large) would support the comment; it merely demonstrates that a large number of *readers who voted* support the comment. One of the principal limitations of this data source, therefore, is the extent to which highly rated ORC are reflective of a broader prevalence

1. In all three sets of ORC sampled, there are a small number of participants posting multiple comments. For the purposes of sampling, I have treated each of their comments individually because they were captured through the strategy of selecting the highest rated. However, for the purposes of in-text citation, multiple postings by one commentator are not distinguished because all comments belong to the same conversation.

of political views. To my knowledge, there are no studies that suggest whether certain populations are more likely to engage in activities such as voting on ORC. Is it possible, for example, that readers from certain social groups or who hold particular worldviews or political perspectives are more likely to vote on ORC, resulting in an overrepresentation of those perspectives among the highest rated comments? Since the CBC does not gather demographic information about reader commentators it is not possible to discern if readers from certain social groups are more likely to become reader commentators. Moreover, how should ORC and accompanying voting be interpreted? While some Internet scholars assert that online communicators “are more apt to talk freely” (Solomon cited in Langer and Beckman 2005:195), how does the culture of ORC shape the kinds of comments contributed, the tendency to vote, and the likelihood of participation?

Another problem with this sampling choice is that it does not permit an analysis of the variety of comments posted. Indeed, “unpopular” views are systematically excluded from analysis. As ORC is a relatively novel source of data that raises a range of methodological questions, I proceed with my analysis cautiously, but contend that strong claims are still possible if we understand ORC to be a site and practice of public debate. Before unpacking my analysis, however, I turn now to a discussion of my theoretical tools.

RACIAL NATIONALISM: CULTURAL RACISM AND THE LOGIC OF EXPULSION

The central argument of this paper is that contemporary public discourses representing citizenship in Canada are organized around a logic of racial nationalism. I use the term racial nationalism to signify the racialization of belonging (e.g., Razack 2002), as well as the intersections of race and nation, and racism and nationalism (e.g., Austin 2010; Balibar 1991; Dua 2007). While citizenship in Canada has been racialized from the outset (Thobani 2007), the “racial structure of citizenship” (Razack 2008) today is, at least in part, organized along cultural lines. Thus, I employ the concept of racial nationalism as distinct from (or perhaps building upon) the concept of ethnic nationalism (e.g., Brubaker 1999) to reflect the ascendance of a racialized concept of culture (Goldberg 1993:71) as a principle strategy of distinction designating insiders and outsiders. Racial nationalism, as an architecture of race thinking, comprises two constitutive dimensions: cultural racism and expulsion.

Cultural racism is a modality of racism in which “culture” “becomes an equivalent and a substitute for ‘race’” (Balibar 2005:27). The concept of culture in cultural racism is imaginary in that it is used to desig-

nate an imagined other, typically, referring to ethnic cultures reduced to orientalized caricatures, although other categories, such as religious groups, may also be racialized as cultural. Thus, cultural racism supplies a grammar for racial coding without ever referring to race. In the logic of cultural racism, culture is essentialized (e.g., Narayan 1998) and naturalized (Goldberg 2010; Balibar 2005); it consumes the entire identity of the other while overdetermining her actions and thoughts. While many forms of racism may coexist, cultural racism is distinct because it understands difference not principally through hierarchy (Goldberg 1993:71) but through incommensurability. Unlike biological racism that casts the other as inferior, cultural racism casts the other as intrinsically and inescapably irreconcilable (Duffield 2001:109). Cultural difference, in turn, is thought to be an inevitable source of conflict and antagonism (Duffield 2001:109), justifying xenophobic anxiety about migration into societies with fictive histories of racial homogeneity.

Culture, moreover, serves as a strategy of expulsion or “sorting out,” that is, a methodology of distinction to sort outsiders from insiders. Ghassan Hage (2006) conceptualizes insidership and outsidership in spatial terms. The dyad inside/outside refers to a space circumscribed by a border (space X = inside), beyond which is another space (space Y = outside). While the insider belongs to — and is situated in the first space X (inside), the outsider does not belong to — and is not situated in the second space Y (outside); were that the case, she would not be an outsider, but an insider to space Y. Following Simmel, Hage remarks that we do not visit other spaces and call their residents strangers or outsiders; only when they arrive in *our inside* do they become outsiders. Outsidership is a condition of being inside or a modality of being an insider as we see in the construction of racialized Canadians as “dangerous internal foreigners” (Dhamoon and Abu-Laban 2009). According to Hage, insider/outsider status is not a product of history because being inside for generations does not automatically transform the outsider into an insider. Similarly, Harder and Zhyznomirska (2012:296) point out that multiculturalism has always relied on a distinction between “authentic” Canadians and “both indigenous peoples and racialized ‘newcomers’,” where irrespective of how many generations “newcomers” have resided in Canada, they are defined always against authentic Canadianness as perennial outsiders. Indeed, outsider status is actively sustained through practices of exclusion (Hage, 2006). Exclusion, moreover, is qualitatively escalating as Hage points to an emerging logic of pushing outsiders absolutely *outside*; he refers to this rationality as “pure exclusion” — which Razack conceptualizes as “casting out” (2008).

In the following sections, I follow racial nationalism as an organizing logic structuring popular representations of citizenship through each of the three allegorical figures that emerge from recent citizenship controversies. The three figures are unified through the same discursive practices of pure exclusion, in which cultural racism serves as a methodology for sorting out. Specifically, the other is defined through cultural alterity and stereotyped traits, such as backwardness, dishonesty, and unscrupulousness that are presumed to emanate irresistibly from their culture. Canada is defined, in contrast to the cultural alien (i.e., selfhood/otherhood; Balibar 2005), through a script that takes for granted the open society myth, the ideological construction of Canada as a society of social justice and generosity and a haven of multiculturalism. However, ORC reveals the open society ideal as a source of vulnerability in the face of racial threat, advancing a competing parochial conception of Canadianness defined by two themes. First, commentators advocate a white Canada. Here, I follow Hage’s (2011) conception of whiteness neither to designate a skin colour nor a race, but to describe — in Anglophone Canada — a “mono-cultural Anglo-inspired cultural orientation.” Second, commentators idealize a racially coded neoliberal citizenship characterized by self-reliance. Neoliberal rationality has been theorized as the extension of “market values to all institutions and social action” (Brown cited in Kennelly and Llewellyn 2011:899), while neoliberal citizenship is characterized by “shifting the responsibility for social risks ... into the domain for which the individual is responsible and transforming it into a problem of ‘self-care’” (Lemke 2001:201). Authors of ORC deliver a blow to the ideal of the open society myth by vilifying dependence on handouts while insisting on self-sufficiency as a prerequisite for citizenship. Drawing on social services is distinctly racialized as something that newcomers do, while self-reliance is racialized as a dimension of cultural whiteness, making current the imagined values of our imagined forefathers of hard work and taking responsibility for oneself. In the construction of Canada’s identity, the simultaneous presumption and negation of the open society myth allows commentators to make a claim on an identity of generosity and justice, while advocating refusal of exactly those things to aliens. Ultimately, commentators call for the pure exclusion of the alien other who is unassimilable and undeserving of Canadian citizenship. Finally, as I turn now to my analysis, it is important to note that, as my discussion relies on close reading of ORC, considerable space is devoted to quoting ORC. Quotations are verbatim and all writing errors in the quoted texts are left uncorrected. All authors of ORC are

cited in-text using their avatars, italicized to ensure clarity when ideas are sourced from ORC.²

THE RECALCITRANT ALIEN

On 12 December 2011, Canada's Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, Jason Kenney, announced a new policy requiring the removal of all full or partial face coverings during the swearing of the Oath of Citizenship since, as outlined in Operational Bulletin 359 (CIC 2011), candidates must be "seen taking the Oath" (emphasis added). Failure to remove face coverings "will result in the candidate not becoming a Canadian citizen on that day and not receiving their citizenship certificate" (CIC 2011). Candidates who refuse to remove face coverings will be permitted to return for a second citizenship ceremony to be seen to take the oath; should the candidate refuse to remove face coverings at the second ceremony, she will be denied citizenship (CIC 2011). The CBC online news article reporting on the new policy, entitled "Face veil banned for citizenship oaths" (CBC 2011a) elicited enormous response, the highest rated of which are strikingly uniform. As I will argue in this section, the veiled Muslim woman represents the recalcitrant alien — the first of my three allegorical figures — defined as irredeemably cultural, where culture, through the symbol of the veil, is coded as backward, barbaric, and oppressive (for a critical discussion of the veil, see, e.g., Bilge 2010). That a woman might dare wear a veil at the citizenship ceremony signals the refractory character of the cultural other. She is constructed as rigidly resistant to assimilation and, thus, must be commanded to conform to Canadian norms and values. However, ultimately, her presumed cultural obstinacy bars her from membership in the Canadian polity, and thus she must be expelled. ORC take for granted that the new government policy is not only a good, but that it is necessary in the confrontation between the threatening alien culture and what it means to be Canadian. This confrontation between insider and outsider plays out discursively in the simultaneous construction of the Canadian host and the outsider alien seeking to enter our inside.

While commentators commonly take for granted that Canada is, indeed, the fabled open society (e.g., *TonyKeene*), they overwhelmingly reject this image of Canada, while tacitly advancing an alternative ideal

2. There is no convention for citing ORC. Since ORC are not titled and do not have distinctive locations separate from the article to which they respond, ORC are cited in-text using only the avatar of the author of each comment cited. To locate cited comments, readers should access the websites of each article, then click on "highest rated" on the "sort by" dropdown menu.

of Canadianness. *oilcountryguru* is fed up with the open society calling for an end to "pander[ing] to every other cultural sensitivity as if we don't have a culture of our own." Likewise, *BadTiger* urges that "[w]e need to as a country get back to being Canada" by eliminating multicultural accommodations, while *Canuckdriver* asserts that multiculturalism "can never work." The tacit alternative to the open society ideal is a culturally white Canada. Indeed, several commentators posted "merry Christmas" as their response to the December announcement of the new ban (e.g., *PM2010*). Similarly, *BravoSix* took the new policy as a gift from the Prime Minister, writing "[l]ooks like Christmas came early for Canadians." In advocating a white Canada, commentators define authentic Canadianness in a constellation of oppositions to the alien, positioning (implicitly western) reason and secularism against the religion, superstition, prejudices, and ancient tribal hatreds that burden the cultural other (e.g., *Handyman*; *SAHMWriter*; *spaceman*; *onehour30*). Similarly, Canada is constituted as enlightened in contrast to the alien culture of barbarism, backwardness, and oppression. *JSlicker* writes:

... Canadian culture means...:

[1] No male domination of women,

[2] No Sharia law,

[3] No honour killings, (we view these as particularly barbaric)

[4] No persecution of homosexuals.

As a metonym for the construction of the alien culture, the veiled Muslim woman is constructed paradoxically as both a threat and a victim at one and the same time. First, the veil is discursively recast as a "mask" signifying danger, criminality, and terrorism. *bill brown*, for example, draws a direct link between criminality and covering one's face, remarking that "in our country ... we do not cover our faces unless we are going to rob a gas station." The trope that face coverings serve to conceal criminals is exemplified in the cautionary tale that alleges a man wanted for murder escaped justice in Britain by donning his wife's burka (*kitchrat*). Face coverings are presumed to threaten public safety and compromise security, making "the country a haven for terrorists" (*kitchrat*). Cultural accommodations, such as allowing people to wear veils or carry a kirpan, moreover, exact a higher standard of security from authentic Canadians who are not afforded the same permissiveness, while allowing "culture" to "dictate security" (*Palaan, Guyute*). In addition to the anxiety that outsiders pose security risks, the veiled woman becomes a symbol for the endangerment of an imagined concept of Canada. Outsiders are alleged to "foist your norms on us" (*thunder42*), while "everyone but Canadians gets a say about our future" (*300WindBag*). Aliens are

attempting “to change Canadian values, morals and religious beliefs to suit their own agenda” (*geezergoat*). To combat this threat, *geezergoat* writes, that rather unsurprisingly, “the young want to join hate groups.” The new policy banning face coverings is cast as part of the struggle to “take our country back” (*my own boss*). Just as Dhamoon and Abu-Laban (2009) argue that foreignness is cast as a source of danger or menace, the figure of the veiled Muslim woman signifies threat to an imagined Canada. Thus the logic of cultural racism that casts cultures as irreconcilable pits imagined Canadianness against an imagined cultural threat.

Second, the same figure is rendered a victim of the barbarism and misogyny of her culture, characterized by “male domination, stoning, and ignorance masquerading as religious piety” (*JSlicker; canuck174*). Razack (2008) demonstrates that the “imperilled Muslim woman” has emerged as a defining site of racism in the name of feminism in the War on Terror. In dominant discourses, the Muslim-woman-as-victim is often conceptualized in a way similar to Mutua’s (2001) triad of the savage-victim-saviour in human rights discourses, wherein the victim must be rescued by the saviour from the savage and the savagery from which she originates. However, while the citizenship discourse of ORC constructs Muslim women as victimized, they are also tacitly represented as unsalvageable victims: brainwashed (*barcaed*) so that they do not recognize their victimhood, making them defiant, irrationally clinging to the very culture that oppresses them. Moreover, contrary to the image of the “imperilled Muslim woman,” the figure of the victim in ORC discourse does not inspire interest in promoting Canada as a saviour. Instead, their presumed victimization is taken as evidence of just how acutely they do not belong here. While the “niqab and burka” are cast as “walking prisons” and “affronts to human dignity” (*TonyKeene*), the solution presented as self-evident by many commentators is to strip these “victims” of further rights, denying them access to social services and the right to vote, and barring their access to justice, to the police and even to public transit (e.g., *TonyKeene; dupcess; QuebecAnglo*). Thus, while face coverings are constructed as subjugating and dehumanizing women as lesser persons (*the pags*), the best response is to deny them the rights and entitlements of full persons. Ultimately, however, if the victimized Muslim woman does not wish to be liberated by adapting to Canadian society, she should leave. *Omega9* writes: “I’m sure ... middle eastern countries would welcome you back where you can be yet another abused woman without a face.”

Not only the recalcitrant Muslim woman, but all obstinate cultural others for whom she stands in, are subject to a logic of expulsion. In approximately half of all ORC examined, commentators command out-

siders either to assimilate or to leave. The cultural other is enjoined to “[p]lay the game our way” (*bill brown*), to be “a cultural Canadian or go home” (*Palaan*) and to “adapt to Canadian culture and values ... [or] don’t come at all!” (*racecar*). The outsider is told to “adhere to our customs” or “go back where you came from” (*edcan*). Indeed, one commentator recommends simply deporting Muslim women (*Taxed enough!*), while others suggest barring their entry in the first place: “NO-SHOW-YOUR-FACE equals NO-ADMISSION” (*kitchrat*). Thus, outsiders sorted through the logic of cultural racism, are to be cast out, which is consistent with Hage’s (n.d.) insight that “assimilationists are the real exclusionists,” who in the moment of demanding assimilation of the outsider push the outsider outside of the polity.

THE CITIZEN OF CONVENIENCE

The notion of the citizen of convenience recently came to prominence in relation to the evacuation of 14,370 Canadians from Lebanon during the Israel-Hezbollah war in the summer of 2006. As Harder and Zhyznomirska (2012:300) recount, when the government announced that the evacuees would not be required to reimburse costs associated with the evacuation, controversy erupted that called into question the evacuees’ “Canadianness” and, therefore, their right to taxpayer money. Despite the long history of Lebanese settlement in Canada, a “common assumption” emerged in public discourse that “the majority of Canadians in Lebanon were recent immigrants to Canada who had returned to their country of birth after attaining Canadian passports” and who acquired citizenship “for the sake of rights and privileges rather than personal commitment and dedication to Canada” (Harder and Zhyznomirska 2012:300). The evacuees were condemned as “citizens of convenience” — the second allegorical figure through which citizenship is constituted in public discourse. Citizenship of convenience is a profoundly racialized category that casts legal citizens as absentee, disloyal, and unassimilable, exploiting the benefits of Canadian society both materially, in terms of social services such as healthcare, and politically, as a place of shelter from the barbarities of their “homelands” to which they are, nonetheless, principally loyal. Since the 2006 evacuation, there have been several other evacuations of Canadians overseas, including from Egypt and Libya in early 2011. Although none has matched the scale of the Lebanese evacuation, the accompanying public discourse has been likewise saturated with allegations of, and anxieties about, citizens of convenience.

The article “Baird tells Canadians in Syria to ‘leave now’” (CBC 2011c) reports on the most recent (at the time of this writing) govern-

ment pronouncement relating to overseas evacuations. In December 2011, Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird announced a voluntary evacuation of Canadians in Syria, urging the use of commercial flights and warning that no guarantee can be made in relation to the degree of consular support available to Canadians who do not evacuate early enough. No evacuation is planned for the moment, despite ongoing violence, although the Travel Report for Syria issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) continues to warn Canadians in Syria to “leave now by commercial means” (DFAIT 2012). ORC responding to Baird’s announcement is overwhelmingly preoccupied with the figure of the citizen of convenience who, with remarkable uniformity in the highest rated comments, is constructed through the logic of racial nationalism. As I will argue in this section, while the authentic Canadian is positioned as being taken advantage of, the construction of the other is founded on stereotypes that are presumed to be part and parcel of Arab “culture” and who Arabs “are” (e.g., Said 1978; Shaheen 2003). Moreover, if Canadians abroad wish to reenter Canada, the public discourse of ORC dictates that they must do so autonomously without assistance from the nation or from fellow citizens; in other words, their access to Canadian citizenship depends on becoming neoliberal citizens characterized by self-reliance. Here, both dependence on public support and self-reliance are racially coded. If Canadians abroad are unwilling or unable to return to Canada autonomously, the recurring normative claim among commentators is that they should be subject to the logic of expulsion by being denied reentry, or to use Hage’s terms, to be left outside.

The opposition between the authentic Canadian and the alien other is explicit in the discourse constituting the citizen of convenience. Pervasively, commentators negate the authenticity of the citizenship of Canadians abroad by placing the terms “Canadian” and “citizen” in quotes, along with words like “vacationer” or “traveller” to signal refusal of the possibility that “real” Canadians might travel overseas. Indeed, according to *phunner* Canadians in Syria are merely Syrians carrying Canadian passports, while *Sgt. Pepper* claims that most Canadians in Syria “have never been to Canada.” The “extra-territoriality” of Canadians abroad is problematized, as according to Harder and Zhyznomirska’s critical discussion, “[p]resence in Canada is seemingly fundamental to belonging” (2012:301). The citizen of convenience is constructed as being located spatially outside of Canada while making claims on Canada’s “inside.” A presumptively dual citizen — and thus presumptively a new immigrant — the citizen of convenience is assumed to use the Canadian passport as a “get out of [troubled] country free card” (*USGElasers*), only to abandon Canada and return “home” as soon as the trouble comes to an end.

The notion of the “real” Canadian (e.g., *John Shaft*) is defined negatively in contrast to the “fake” or “pseudo-” Canadian (e.g., *Tono-Fonseca*; *Cboo44*) through culture. A person who has “never watched a hockey game ... and [has] never set foot in Tim Horton’s” (*JohnQPublic*) and who cannot “even speak English” (*orafshin*) cannot make claims on Canadianness. The other, indeed, is too culturally alien: “How will we know who to bring home if half the evacuation line is wearing veils they won’t take off?” asks *RabidWombat*. The cultural difference of outsiders, moreover, is positioned as a threat to Canada’s identity. Syria is sarcastically dubbed Canada’s “11th province” (*Old340Pilot*), signalling anxiety of being overrun. The central motif in ORC relating to citizenship of convenience, however, is paying taxes in Canada. While Harder and Zhyznomirska explain the focus on paying taxes in relation to the Lebanese case as the *bona fide* citizen’s demonstration of “attachment to the country” (2012:302), I argue that the preoccupation with taxes racially codes identity. First, commentators tacitly assume that Canada indeed embodies the open society myth as they express exasperation with the feeling of being taken advantage of through the cynical squandering of their tax dollars. Allegations are pervasive that citizens of convenience do not pay taxes in Canada but luxuriate in the tax money of authentic Canadians not only at exceptional times such as evacuations, but routinely through the exploitation of healthcare, education, and other social welfare programs. Thus, *Pay tax to max* writes: “Does this mean I can pitch a tent in S. America pay no tax and come back when I get sick?... I [should] ask Syrians how it works.” Such unscrupulous exploitation of the open society represents a threat to Canada and Canadians. The complaint voiced by *Nibs* tellingly expresses anxiety about the future of the social welfare state in retreat, while implying the need for protection of what little remains: “government is slashing funding everywhere in the country why are we paying for those who chose to work and pay taxes in another country?” Second, the very idea of being exploited conjures orientalist imagery constituting the Arab other as greedy, ruthless, irrational, and stupid (Shaheen 2003). The Syrian-Canadian of convenience is portrayed as too cheap or too greedy to purchase his own airfare, irrationally and stupidly (e.g., *selenius*; *John Shaft*; *wanda white*; *dobe461*; *mouse-trap*; *Bumpy Road*) postponing departure in order to ensure the Canadian tax payer foots the bill (e.g., *justaviewer*; *dobe461*; *Bytown*). Consistent with cultural stereotypes of Arabs, citizens of convenience are portrayed as feeling hyper-entitled, unwilling to take responsibility for themselves, demanding, ungrateful, and hungry for luxury (e.g., *Bytown*; *dobe461*; *Nibs*; *daugy65*; *Pete Trudeau*).

The answer to the problem of citizenship of convenience, according to ORC, conforms to the logic of pure exclusion, which also articulates a parochial ideal of Canada to rout the open society. The parochial ideal of citizenship conforms to the neoliberal citizenry pictured by Wendy Brown which “would be the opposite of public-minded” and in which “the body politic ceases to be a body,” replaced by an aggregate of individuals (cited in Kennelly and Llewellyn 2011:899). According to ORC, Canadians abroad cannot make legitimate claims on the state. The state and society are relieved of responsibility, recasting the plight of Canadians who may wish to flee political violence as “their problem” (*itsajourney*); it is “their fault” (*Pete Trudeau*) and responsibility rests “on their own shoulders” (*wanda white*). Since these “dangerous external nationals” (Harder and Zhyznomirska 2012) are outside of the country, they should be barred from reentry and thus kept outside *unless* they can reenter autonomously, without the aid of the nation or their fellow citizens. In this sense, entitlement to reenter Canada is based on adhering to the ideal of self-reliance. Or, put another way, conforming to the racialized ideal of the neoliberal citizen makes reentry grudgingly permissible for Canadians abroad who, because of their self-sufficiency, would no longer qualify as citizens of convenience. Those unable or unwilling to reenter Canada without assistance remain citizens of convenience who are constructed as disentitled to aid and who should be left to their own devices to confront any fate (e.g., *CanadianBubba*). Some commentators, however, recommend more drastic measures for the pure exclusion of citizens of convenience: “Could we not find a mechanism whereby new Canadian citizens who immediately decamp back to their country of origin, could have their citizenship stripped from them?” (*TonyKeene*).

THE FRAUDULENT CITIZEN

Finally, I turn to the third constituting discourse organized around the allegorical figure of the fraudulent citizen. The article “Ottawa targets 1,800 in citizenship crackdown” (2011c) reports Minister Kenney’s plan to revoke citizenship of people believed to have gained citizenship through fraudulent means. The news of the revocations followed Minister Kenney’s June 2010 introduction of Bill C-37 entitled *Strengthening the Value of Canadian Citizenship*. The new legislation, among other things, aims to crack down on fraud by citizenship consultants, increase penalties, and “streamline the revocation and removal process” (CIC 2010). Thus, the revocations can be read as part of a larger program of renewing the “value” of Canadian citizenship by cracking down on fraud.

Racial nationalism is the operative logic constituting all three allegorical figures; however, the figure of the fraudulent citizen embodies dimensions of both the recalcitrant alien and the citizen of convenience. The fraudulent citizen is cast as recalcitrant — obstinately unassimilable; however, in this case, culture is recast as an irredeemable source of dishonesty and criminality. At the same time, the fraudulent citizen and the citizen of convenience are presumed to be one and the same. While the fraudulent citizen represents a distinct figure around which citizenship discourses are organized, allegations of fraudulence cast suspicion on all racialized others, which leads to a rationality rendering all racialized citizenship as fraudulent. As in the two preceding discourses, the fraudulent citizen is constructed in opposition to Canada. The open society ideal is, again, challenged as a source of vulnerability to racial threat as the parochial ideal of citizenship and pure exclusion of outsiders are advanced as a solution.

Perhaps what is most striking about the construction of the fraudulent citizen is the easy elision between the fraudster and all nonwhite citizens. Rather than being addressed to the 1,800 fraudsters in question, the commentary overwhelmingly represents a general airing of grievances about immigration and visible minorities with the effect of criminalizing all racialized citizens as potential fraudsters. More perniciously, several commentators explicitly charge that a large proportion of immigrants are illegitimate citizens, urging that the government not stop at 1,800 revocations, but “keep going” (*stewie’s mom*). *upanddown* remarks “I’m surprised that they’re after only 1,800 fraudsters. I don’t ‘know’ but intuition tells me that there’s a hell of a lot more of them,” perhaps 18,000 or 180,000 (*trucker75*, *Borneo Don*). The underlying assumption, of course, is that a large proportion of immigrants *must be* fraudsters and that the 1,800 revocations represent only the tip of the iceberg of what is surely a problem of epidemic proportions. Refugees, “boat people,” students, and visitors on other types of visas are similarly all cast as fraudsters (e.g., *Kowpow56*; *MissMontreal*). Likewise, ORC takes for granted that a huge number of people of colour obtained citizenship fraudulently, based on the unexamined assumption that racialized people cannot but be immigrants. The reading of racialized people as “foreign” irrespective of their lineage in Canada is based on acts of forgetting the presence of racialized populations over the *longue durée* (Harder and Zhyznomirska 2012:296). The construction of racialized people as fraudsters, irrespective of whether they are immigrants or not, is based on sight. By this I mean, in that act of seeing a racialized population, the commentator constructs and condemns them as fraudsters. *Ban 50 Centers* writes: “Only 1800? You can find that many on any street

corner in downtown Vancouver.” Similarly, *toddevans* remarks: “what about the other 3 million, 2mil of which are in vancouver alone.” If they did not enter fraudulently immigrants are constructed as prone to criminality, violence, and terrorism (e.g., *crcharley*). Thus, the commentary constructing the figure of the fraudulent citizen implicates all immigrants and all racialized people as criminal. The slippage, moreover, implies that the problem is not so much fraud as it is immigration in general.

The image of the fraudulent citizen is deeply marked by cultural racism, as recalcitrantly unassimilable cultural aliens refuse to “think of themselves as Canadians” but “are still [people] of that foreign cultural background who happen to live in Canada” (*KenPoole*). The obstinately cultural other establishes exclusionary ethnic ghettos (*KenPoole*) and makes it “painfully obvious” that they will never be “Canadian,” which is only legitimized by politicians “donning various cultural garb to get those votes” (*trucker75*). The fraudster is a specifically racialized alien, typically from the Middle East (*omar 222*; *toodles1*), although, generally, from “overpopulated countries” (*NonUnions*) or from the “overbreeding population of the third world” (*IQuitHumanit*). It is not, however, exceptional individuals who engage in fraudulent behaviour; rather, dishonesty is cast as a distinctly cultural trait that is assumed to be shared by all aliens. *AdjunctOne* makes the wild allegation that more than 90% of all citizenship candidates engage in fraud of some kind or another, which they justify through appeals to “tradition” and to cultural values: “their family values supersede laws of Canada and this attitude is common in their culture.” Similarly, “under the table business practices” are equated with “their ‘way of life’” (*MauiJack*). Thus, dishonesty is constructed as a cultural dimension of the fraudulent citizen who lies and cheats (e.g., *CalgaryFlamer*; *toodles1*). Lying and cheating, of course, are not so that they can conform to the parochial ideal of cultural whiteness and racialized neoliberal citizenship. Rather fraudsters are assumed to have obtained citizenship in order to become citizens of convenience (e.g., *impartial 1*) who cynically exploit Canada as a haven from political turmoil (e.g., *LarryO*) and “the ‘ticket’ to freedom” (*toodles1*).

More commonly, the fraudulent citizen of convenience drains the system of social services. *ElizabethJ* alleges to have “seen the abuse of our health care system for decades,” including pregnant women who check “in for free health care and citizenship for their child.” Fraudulent citizens of convenience, who are presumed to comprise the majority of immigrants, are cast as “parasites” (*georgeleslie*), who “go directly from the airport to free social services and ... a sense of entitlement” (*kmg708*). The supposed overdeveloped sense of entitlement of fraudulent citizens of convenience is one of the primary ways in which authen-

tic Canadians (and, to a lesser extent, “good” immigrants) are defined. In contrast to “our forefathers” who “built this country through hard work, blood and sweat,” immigrants today just “stick their hand out and ask for freebies” (*DonOtt*).

The presumed sense of entitlement of fraudulent citizens of convenience is such that they need to be reminded that “obtaining Canadian citizenship illegally doesn’t entitle you to keep it” (*T Lee Humphrey*). Consistent with the discourses constituting the other allegorical figures, this anxiety contradicts the open society. While commentators, again, take for granted that Canada indeed embodies the open society myth, they identify the open society as problematic because of the unscrupulous character of the racialized other who abuses Canada’s “goodwill” (*As I See It*) and “lax” immigration laws (*kamel toe*). According to *marlanto*, “our socialistic tendencies” meant that we have been a “dumping ground for all sorts of ‘aliens’.” However, it is “time to shut the doors” (*marlanto*) and stop being “‘nice guy’ to the world” (*General Martok*) since we have “been doormats for 60 yrs” (*KenGrierson*). While authentic Canadians “have sympathy for people trying desperately to escape oppressive situations, it is exactly our sympathy and good nature as Canadians that gets taken advantage of” (*rathric27*).

While the open society is represented as having made Canada vulnerable for many years, Canada is constructed as under siege facing escalating threats. The racially coded threats that Canada faces prompt calls for exclusion, both in terms of keeping out undesirables and removing those outsiders already in our midst. The constructed threats are at least twofold. First, while “dependence” is racialized, the viability of Canada’s social services are threatened. As in the construction of the citizen of convenience, a kind of protectionism is invoked for authentic Canadians to look out for ourselves: “Close the flood gates and stop the uncontrolled drain on our system” (*DonOtt*). Also consistent with the grammar employed in relation to the citizen of convenience, the representation of the cultural other to be excluded intersects with the racial coding of the neoliberal subject of self-reliance. Specifically, “hard working” immigrants who will “contribute” to society and “pull their own weight” (*Firsttimeposter*) and thus will not draw on the social safety net are welcome, whereas dependence on the open society’s welfare state is pervasively racialized, invoking imagery of family reunification: “older people who don’t speak English (or French) have no place here. We simply can’t afford to support them. They are non productive and are a drain on our medical facilities” (*marlanto*). Or, as *DonOtt* claims, “[y]ou, your mother, father, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts, cousins are free to come and sit with your hand out.”

Second, Canada's cultural identity is also purported to be under siege by "you and your kind" who are "coming to MY country and trying to change it. How long before Canada turns into a 3rd world country?" (*DonOtt*). As in discourses constituting the other allegorical figures, the cultural other is racially coded through language proficiency. Citizenship should be contingent on being "able to speak and understand [an] official language ... Chinese is not an official language here" (*marlanto*). Similarly, *Dude Man* writes: "How about requiring every new immigrant ... to speak understandable English?" In contrast, the revocation of citizenship of racialized fraudsters is celebrated as revaluing Canadian citizenship: Finally, "[b]eing a Canadian means something again" (*James in Kanata*).

In the face of fraudulence, Canada's identity must move away from the former open society. This is evident in calls for evermore sweeping measures to respond to the problem of immigrants and to open Canada only to those who embody the parochial ideal of cultural whiteness and the racialized neoliberal ideal of self-reliance. This logic of inclusion implies a logic of exclusion. Specifically, as in the discourses constructing the recalcitrant alien and citizen of convenience, the discourse constituting fraudulent citizenship operates through a logic of pure exclusion that is not limited to *keeping out* those cast as undesirable. Rather, racial nationalist discourse calls for the expulsion of racialized citizens already living in Canada. Thus, in relation to alleged fraudsters, commentators call for kicking "them out of the country and never let[ting] them in again" (*WPG Hater*) and placing them on a "BANNED from entering Canada list" (*S. Leblanc*). *DennisB.* calls not only for expulsion but the seizure of financial assets to cover the costs of eliminating "these roaches from our country." However, not only fraudsters should be stripped of their citizenship, but any citizen who does not "live in this country and pay taxes" along with anyone who has immigrated and subsequently "committed crimes" (*bostonbob*; also: *RedDogAB*; also, *bostonbob*; *Oilberta*; *BrianCyr*), in order to "toss the liars, criminals, drug dealers and terrorists" out of the country (*shakingquaker*). Even family members who attained citizenship through reunification "should be deported, banned for life and all assets seized" (*DennisB.*). The extension of the logic of expulsion to immigrants and citizens who are not accused of fraud is not only consistent with the logic that casts all immigrants and racialized citizens as potential fraudsters or criminals of some kind, but also seems to imply that in the parochial ideal of Canada, the citizenship of racialized others is itself rendered fraudulent.

CONCLUSION

This article has traced racial nationalism as a continuous logic animating three sites of controversy constituting citizenship in contemporary public debate, organized around three allegorical figures: the recalcitrant alien, the citizen of convenience, and the fraudulent citizen. This paper has aimed to add to existing debates on the racialization of citizenship by focusing on how a racialized concept of culture works as a methodology for "sorting out," and by focusing specifically on public representations through analysis of ORC responding to news reports.

However, this article points to other key areas for further investigation. First, a relatively novel source of data, ORC represents a discursive "black box"; thus, ORC urgently calls for further study to understand cultures that emerge among participants, who participants are, why certain perspectives dominate this space and to what extent ORC reflects the prevalence of racial nationalism as a defining perspective among various Canadian publics offline. Second, while this article traces racial nationalism through ORC, how do racial nationalism and its logic of exclusion fit within a larger architecture of racisms in Canada? Perhaps racial nationalism is best conceptualized as one modality of racism, among a plethora of complementary and competing racisms.

Third, my analysis does not include the counter-narratives of racialized citizens. While it is possible that some ORC commentators were racialized Canadians, there was a striking dearth of critical interventions. Indeed, my samples were startlingly homogeneous, offering no alternatives to racial nationalism. The absence of counter-narratives suggests that any further study of the three allegorical figures I have presented needs to take seriously Stasiulis and Bakan's (1997) critical insight that racialized others are agents in an active negotiation of citizenship, and thus highlight how racialized others in Canada advance competing conceptions of citizenship and what it means to be Canadian. Moreover, how might racialized others articulate a concept of citizenship that exceeds the relationship between the state and passive individuals (Stasiulis 2002), to advance inclusionary transnational concepts of citizenship attentive to inequalities (Abu-Laban 2000)? Finally, the focus on how citizenship is represented does not permit a discussion of practices of citizenship and resistance. Thus, further study could focus on activism responding to the banning of face coverings, resistance to the label of citizenship of convenience and action taken in relation to the revocation of citizenship.

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Augustine S.J. Park is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton University. Her areas of specialization are critical studies of liberal interventionism, transitional justice, global Southern/othered childhoods and race/racism. Her current SSHRC funded research examines the meanings invested in the missing remains of dead victims of state violence.

Augustine.Park@carleton.ca