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# Canadian citizenship in the imagined future

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# **CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP IN THE IMAGINED FUTURE**

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**The Major Research Paper is submitted  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Master of Arts degree  
in  
Immigration and Settlement Studies**

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Farishta Murzban Dinshaw

## CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP IN THE IMAGINED FUTURE

A major research paper presented to Ryerson University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Immigration and Settlement Studies, 2006.

By Farishta Murzban Dinshaw

### ABSTRACT

Citizenship, encompassing the related issues of identity and equality, is impacted by multiple factors and is constantly transforming. It follows then that what we define as citizenship today will be different in the future. Working on the principle of Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1997) that language precedes reality, this study uses a unique combination of personal, academic and professional knowledge and experience of the 2004 cohort of the part-time graduate students enrolled in the *Immigration and Settlement Studies* program at Ryerson University, Toronto to construct a vision of Canadian citizenship in the imagined future, and recommend ways of achieving it. The participants highlighted political participation and education as the two key strategies to attain a vision of an inclusive Canada.

Key words: citizenship, equality, identity, Appreciative Inquiry, political participation, education

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In loving memory of my mother Arnavaz Murzban Dinshaw  
May 18, 1936 – September 21, 2006.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>REVIEW OF LITERATURE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>RESEARCH DESIGN</b>	<b>12</b>
The Subjective Context of the Research	12
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>14</b>
Appreciative Inquiry	14
The Participants	16
<i>Relationship of the researcher</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Expressed non-confidentiality policy</i>	<i>19</i>
Data Collection	21
Data Analysis	22
Presentation of Data	23
Role of the Researcher	24
<b>ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS</b>	<b>26</b>
What is Citizenship?	26
What Should Canadian Citizenship Look Like in the Imagined Future?	37
What Can We Do Today to Make This Vision a Reality Tomorrow?	41
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>49</b>

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

<b>I</b>	<b>Guideline for Discussion</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>II</b>	<b>Consent Form</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>III</b>	<b>Canadian Citizenship in the Imagined Future: Voices of Individuals</b>	<b>54</b>

## INTRODUCTION

*This City is what it is because our citizens are what they are.*

Plato

The term 'citizenship' evokes differing degrees of intensity of emotions and reactions among those who use this word. Citizenship is often defined in legal terms, but the meaning lacks substance unless we also see it within the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion that shape our everyday lives. History, race, class, gender, and religion, and the related issues of identity and equality add another dimension to the age old question of membership, "Who belongs?"

Citizenship is neither static nor one-dimensional. From a historic perspective, notions of citizenship have changed since the Athenian polis excluded women's participation in governance. France, which is one of Canada's charter nations, was instrumental in proclaiming the revolutionary notion that power rested with the people, not the monarchy. Citizenship, encompassing both its formal and substantive aspects, is constantly being transformed. It evolves through interaction between political institutions and ordinary citizens. It morphs under the influence of the media, religious factions, and financial and educational institutions. It follows then that how we define citizenship today will be different in the future.

The purpose of this paper is to construct a description of Canadian citizenship in the imagined future, focussing on two components of citizenship, equality and identity, and to recommend strategies for attaining this vision. This paper:

- defines "What is citizenship?"
- describes "What should Canadian citizenship look like in the imagined future?"
- recommends "What can we do today to make this vision a reality tomorrow?"

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

*New Canadians, no less than other Canadians*

Canadian Heritage website

Canada proudly calls itself 'a nation of immigrants'. In this context, deliberation on citizenship theory and practice takes on a significant link in the immigration-integration nexus because it steers the state's, and by extension, the host society's commitment to equality of all citizens. The reality is that there is an asymmetry between two groups, birth-right citizens have more social power than naturalized new Canadians. Mingione (1995, cited in Vertovec, 1997) describes the large number of immigrants and visible minorities who lose their voice because of economic and social marginalization as being in a state of 'subcitizenship'.

Citizenship is also inextricably tied to the concept of identity and the question "Who belongs?" especially in the case of naturalized citizens. In pre-World War II years, 'traditional' Canada was a European, Caucasian, and Christian society. Non-Europeans who came to Canada were 'allowed in' for temporary and economic reasons, and lived in certain geographic areas. They experienced considerable and pervasive discrimination, but rarely organized themselves against intolerance; they were resigned to pay a price for economic advantage. Thus, Canada was able to maintain its self-image as a homogenous country. However, after World War II, Canada's role in the UN, its increasing links with developing nations, and human and group rights movements that challenged established acceptance of intolerance influenced Canadian ideology. Additionally, slower population growth, shifting gender ratios, and longer life expectancy changed the demographics of Canada making a more open immigration policy necessary to meet economic needs (Kelley & Trebilcock; 2000, Li, 2003). The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982), the *Employment Equity Act* (1986), and the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (1988) recognized the reality of diversity leading to Canada's modern self-image as a 'civic'

nation unified by common values like individual dignity, respect, and fairness promoting the equal participation of all citizens, whatever their ancestry. These policies enhanced citizenship as more than legal and political rights, they encompassed promotion and full enjoyment of social, economic and even heritage rights. The visibility and accountability of social and political institutions was further spotlighted by the global communication explosion of the 1990s, changing local matters into global matters and making response times immediate. As a result, the 'new Canada' is multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, superficially secular and democratic. And, yet, there are ripples beneath the surface as new citizens adjust to this mantle. This review of literature explores two fundamental issues within the existing body of literature on citizenship – equality and identity — and the future direction of citizenship.

### Equality of All Citizens

According to the *Citizen Act*, 1977, there are three primary means of acquiring Canadian citizenship<sup>1</sup>. Birth-right citizenship is automatically extended to anyone born within Canada's geographical borders (*jus soli*)<sup>2</sup> or born to parents who are citizens even if they do not reside in Canada (*jus sanguinis*). Birth-right citizens do not have to fulfill certain criteria and prove their capacity to be 'good' citizens. On the other hand, naturalized citizens are eligible for citizenship only if they meet certain criteria and they also have to prove citizenship competencies<sup>3</sup> before they can be granted the right to vote or carry a passport. The accuracy of citizenship tests in measuring competencies required for citizenship has not been proved. Similar to students taking any school exam, immigrants may fail the test for a variety of reasons such as anxiety, illness, or

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<sup>1</sup> Citizenship may also be obtained through marriage, adoption or other specialized circumstances.

<sup>2</sup> Children of diplomats are an exception.

<sup>3</sup> A naturalized citizen must be 18 years of age or older; be a permanent resident of Canada; have lived in Canada for at least three of the four years before applying; be able to communicate in either English or French; know about Canada; know about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Children under 18 years have different naturalization requirements: they must be permanent residents and have one parent who is a Canadian citizen or in the process of applying for citizenship.

lack of preparation unrelated to their ability to be responsible citizens. Carens (n.d.) writes that knowledge required for wise political decisions is often intuitive, certainly complex and multifaceted, and cannot be assessed through citizenship tests. However, he concedes that studying for the test may help in the socialization process. All citizenship applicants over the age of 14 years are required to take the Oath of Citizenship. Carens (n.d.) thinks loyalty oaths are counterproductive and “an unreasonable demand” (p7). According to Kostakopoulou (2003) naturalization laws overlook the fact that a sense of belonging develops with inclusion in society rather than by declarations of loyalty or by passing language ability or citizenship tests.

The issue of equality related to Canadian citizenship has been at the centre of debate because of conflicting ideologies promoted and supported by different political theorists, analysts and researchers: whereas multicultural citizenship *in theory* has focused on minority rights, group-differentiated rights or “polyethnic rights” (Kymlicka, 1995, p30) and the ensuing need for equity instead of equality, democratic citizenship *in practice* has been framed in terms of liberal values favouring ‘equality for all’.

The book *Citizenship in Diverse Societies* (edited by Will Kymlicka & Wayne Norman, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) covers this debate in extensive detail, as do other books<sup>4</sup>. In summary, nationalists feel that citizenship should include bonds of loyalty and attachment to the political project (the nation) as well as fellow citizens (co-nationals). The argument for liberal nationalist citizenship that is ‘ethnocultural neutral’ and ‘difference blind’ is that if groups of citizens are given dispensations or allowances, it will corrode the unifying experience of citizenship. “Citizenship should be a forum where people transcend their

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<sup>4</sup> Aleinkoff, T. A., & Klusmeyer, D. (Eds.). (2000) *From Migrants to Citizens: Membership in a Changing World*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Beiner, R., & Norman, W. (Eds.). (2001). *Canadian Political Philosophy: Contemporary Reflections* Toronto: Oxford University Press; Castles, S. & Davidson, A. (2001). *Citizenship and Migration: Globalization and the Politics of Belonging*. New York: Routledge.

differences and think about the common good of all citizens.” (Cairns, 1993, cited in Kymlicka, 1995, p175). Ward (1991, p598) suggests that a multiculturalism policy which actively promotes minority rights<sup>5</sup> is “like a corrosive on metal, eating away at the ties of connectedness that bind us together as a nation”. Miller (1995) adds that a shared national identity is important for empathetic redistributive practices, particularly in welfare states, otherwise those who are taxed to pay for others’ benefits may feel coerced and resentful.

Theorists in favour of minority rights such as Iris Marion Young, Will Kymlicka and Jane Jenson, contend that mainstream institutions which advance homogeneity are intrinsically unjust because they are biased in favour of the privileged dominant society, thereby excluding minorities, and that these groups can only become full participants in democracy if they are included and engaged by allowing them special consideration. Many of these theorists build on Iris Marion Young’s influential work on “differentiated citizenship” (1989, p257) which requires that oppressed or disadvantaged groups,<sup>6</sup> rather than individuals, be represented in public deliberation. According to Young, this should even extend to the institutionalized right to veto policy proposals that directly affect them.

The critics of minority rights theory (Miller, 2000; Bissoondath, 1994; Kallen, 1982) maintain that focusing on the rights of ‘disadvantaged’ groups leads to ethnic separation (“balkanization”), tokenism, and folklorisation of cultural attributes. Kymlicka (1995, 2000, 2001) believes that the debate is the result of not understanding the philosophy behind “differentiated citizenship”. According to him, the theory is integrationist rather than isolationist, and the standard to making changes in existing laws and regulations to accommodate certain

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<sup>5</sup> As opposed to a multiculturalism policy which recognizes diversity of citizens, but expects it to be a personal rather than a state matter.

<sup>6</sup> The groups Young (1989) identified included “women, blacks, Native Americans, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans and other Spanish-speaking Americans, Asian Americans, gay men, lesbians, working-class people, poor people, old people, and mentally and physically disabled people”.

groups should be whether it allows groups to participate more fully in social institutions. By this reasoning, exempting Sikhs from RCMP uniform regulations is appropriate; allocating public funds for faith-based schools is not.

It is impossible to make an argument for 'equality for all' without reference to the double standard which gives special rights to Mennonites, Hutterites and Doukhobours, allowing them to remove children from school before the age of 16, or allocates public funding for Catholic schools. Kymlicka makes the point that it is only when accommodations are made for non-White or non-Christian groups that complaints of loss of common identity emerge. "It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that much of the backlash against 'multiculturalism' arises from a racist or xenophobic fear of these new immigrant groups." (1995, p179).

The Canadian government's approach to inequality among its citizenry does not help to clear the muddy water because it does not acknowledge that merely decreeing rights does not automatically lead to *meaningful access* to rights. Bottomore (1992, cited in Stewart, 1995) distinguishes between "formal citizenship", which refers to the legal status, and "substantive citizenship" which refers to a person's ability to access and enjoy the rights guaranteed a citizen. He qualifies that formal citizenship status may not guarantee a person's ability to enjoy their substantive citizenship rights if there is racism and xenophobia in a country. To be a truly inclusive society in which individuals can fully practice democratic citizenship they must have access to opportunities and rewards in all aspects of social life including the labour market. Sandercock (2005) suggests that discounting foreign credentials and the expertise associated with them, denies more than a person's human capital, "...it denies a person's value as a citizen, and helps to reproduce the notion of immigrants of color as cheap labor, as body parts" (p6).

## Identity

The equality/inequality issue is entwined with the issue of identity and the related discussion around 'belonging' and 'membership' because, as Baubok (1994) notes, the primary question in citizenship theory about who belongs to the polity automatically necessitates a discussion of exclusion. Some people who are hopeful of acquiring Canadian citizenship through immigration have difficulty in meeting educational, professional and age requirements, and even those who qualify under humanitarian or family categories may not be regarded by the host society as fully deserving it. One of the prominent contemporary theorists on citizenship, John Rawls<sup>7</sup>, talks about the double identity of individuals – one, a personal identity, and the other a citizen identity, as members of a larger group who acknowledge that society must be governed by principles that diverse members can potentially accept. Soutphommasane (2005) advocates a “deliberative democracy” which provides a new basis for political belonging based on an ‘open’ political culture in which institutions and practices are exposed to scrutiny and re-interpretation, and promotes a sense of belonging based on common membership in public debate. In both these theories, political engagement is a prerequisite, which inevitably leads to a discussion of access and political representation, once again demonstrating the intertwining of the two aspects of citizenship under discussion. Some authors (Galloway, 2000; Kymlicka, 1995) observe that the question of identity and belonging is inextricably tied to the state’s particular history, which, in Canada’s case, is replete with instances of exclusionary policies regarding citizenship.

Dual/plural citizenship is another intersecting factor in the inequality-identity issue although much of the available research is set in the US or Europe. Holders of dual/plural citizenship have the option of leaving the country of residence at times of crisis, which may add

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<sup>7</sup> John Rawls’ influential book *A Theory of Justice* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971) is discussed in depth in Kymlicka, W. & Norman, W. (1994), Return of the citizen: A survey of recent work on citizenship theory. *Ethics*, 104(2), 352-381.

to the host society's (and by extension birth-right citizens') mistrust of their loyalty and patriotism.<sup>8</sup> Mainstream concern about divided loyalties or "portable patriotism" (Fritz, 1998, p2), particularly in the case of military conflict, is refuted by Aleinikoff & Klusmeyer (2000) because it requires an analytical leap to move from legal status to conclusions about an individual's personal allegiances. Another identity related issue with dual nationality is determining which country individuals will choose to represent at sports events or on diplomatic or trade missions. For instance, the Italian men's hockey team that competed in the 2006 Winter Olympics included 11 *Italos* (Italians with dual nationality) of which nine were Canadian,<sup>9</sup> thus leading the team to be nicknamed "Team Canada II" much to the irritation of the Italians.<sup>10</sup>

Global mobility has also given rise to another class of residents or 'quasi-citizens' who have rights to permanent residence status, the right to work and to some social benefits. Another expansion of the boundaries of citizenship is 'supranational citizenship' in which an individual has membership to a collective of nations, such as the British Commonwealth or more recently the European Union.

Citizenship literature, particularly nationalist theories, also discusses 'shared identity'. According to Delanty (1996), identity implies the recognition of common ties based on history, language, and religion. Kymlicka (2001) asserts that this may be the case in states where a strong sense of historical achievement is constantly reinforced in school curricula and citizenship literature, but within the context of multinational states like Canada or Belgium, history, in fact, may be a divisive force and a source of resentment. Taylor (1991, cited in Kymlicka, 1995) suggests that multicultural states can develop a shared identity if citizens are willing to work

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<sup>8</sup> It is important to distinguish that it is not only naturalized citizens who may have dual citizenship. Many Canadians born in Canada may have citizenship of another country through the *jus sanguinis* statute.

<sup>9</sup> All nine Italo-Canadians are Canadian-born but, as per regulations, have resided in Italy for at least two years to be able to represent Italy.

<sup>10</sup> Italians shun 'Canada II' label. (2006 February 15). *Metro News*. Retrieved February 17, 2006 from <[http://www.metronews.ca/sports\\_news\\_fullstory.asp?id=14061](http://www.metronews.ca/sports_news_fullstory.asp?id=14061)>

together to build a nation of their choice and make sacrifices to keep it together, but Miller (1993) refutes this on the grounds that although common vision can sustain a level of solidarity it is impossible to create unity from scratch. Wilcox (2004) believes that the answer to shared identity lies in interpersonal encounters and “mutual participation in neighborhood associations, school boards, and local and national public decision-making processes [which] can lead newcomers and established residents to discover that they have common interests that cut across ethnic and cultural divisions” (p578).

### **Future Direction of Canadian Citizenship**

The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Confederation is in 2017 and is a milestone in projections for the future. The outcomes of interconnected policies of immigration and multiculturalism have propelled Statistics Canada to produce *Population Projections of Visible Minority Groups in Canada, Provinces and Regions 2001-2017* (Belanger, & Caron Malenfant, 2005) which projects that by 2017 about one-fifth of Canada’s population will be visible minorities<sup>11</sup>, predominantly settled in urban areas and dominated by two major ethnic groups, South Asians and Chinese. The increase in the visible minority population is expected because they comprise a disproportionate share of immigrants and because many of them are of child-rearing age.

Kymlicka (1995, 2000, 2001) writes that identifying sources of unity in a democratic multicultural state is the challenge of the future. Although there is no doubt that legislation like the *Multiculturalism Act* is an invaluable component in the growth of inclusive citizenship based on Canadian diversity, it is patently obvious that legislation alone cannot resolve prevailing differences and tensions. *Canada 2017-Serving Canada’s Multicultural Population for the*

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<sup>11</sup> The term visible minority is defined in *Employment Equity Act* 1995, guideline 4 as “persons who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour” and refers to Blacks, South Asians, Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, Southeast Asians, Filipinos, Arabs and West Asians, Latin Americans, and Pacific Islanders.

*Future-Policy Forum* (Canadian Heritage, 2005) identifies several policy recommendations concerning the issues of identity and equality of citizens: a need to restructure the credential recognition process, reduce workplace discrimination against visible minorities, provide better access to culturally-appropriate healthcare and social services, provide equitable representation in the federal public service, and develop integrated neighbourhoods.

Promoting a common sense of belonging and ownership requires that both naturalized citizens and birth-right citizens be given significant roles in deciding policy. Rummens (2003, 2004) refers to “shared citizenship” as a common civic identity, and states that the solution is “...to simply decouple culture and nation, and to subsequently redefine nation in terms of common citizenship” (2004, p42). She emphasises collective decision-making and describes the process as “...shared, inclusive, engaged” (p42). Saloojee (2003) suggests that Canada, to be truly multicultural, needs to produce “conditions for the emergence of a new sense of social inclusion that recognizes differences, respects differences, and argues for substantive equality and not just formal equality” (p14).

Parekh (2005) highlights five ways of enhancing “common belonging” (p13) among immigrants and the receiving society: appropriate sanctions against formal and informal discrimination, equitable access to education, employment, housing and healthcare; cultivation of inter-ethnic bonds at a local level; use of education institutions, particularly schools, as locations of interaction; a transparent immigration policy; and an emotional bonding over symbols of national identity like the flag, anthem, and heroes. Tolley (2004) lists shared values and connections, which includes points of commonality and space for understanding, and culture defined as “our collective sense of who we are” (p13) as key components of a unified identity.

The Citizen's Forum on Canada's Future (1991) listed seven 'shared values' of Canadians of different ethnic backgrounds: a belief in equality and fairness, a belief in consultation and dialogue, the importance of accommodation and tolerance, support for diversity, compassion and generosity, attachment to the natural environment, and commitment to freedom, peace, and nonviolent change. Some authors (Boyd, 1996; Tolley, 2004) question this theory. According to Boyd, "The list really consists of *names* of values. How they are interpreted to *be* values according to the complex, dynamic web of meaning and justification that constitute different cultures cannot be accommodated by the list itself" (p20). The authors explain that such lists put a premium on values associated with dominant Judeo-Christian Western societies which are not necessarily universal or collated through consensus. Kymlicka (2001) points out that in spite of theories that shared values, shared history, shared experiences, and shared conversations are ways to enhance universality in diverse societies, there is little evidence to support them.

Several writers see education as a valuable tool. Jones (2000) states that it is self-evident that the future lies in "...identifying these sources [of unity] in the multicultural state and then consolidating them, using education as one vehicle" (p7). Gutmann (1996, cited in Jones, 2000) writes about a humanitarian approach to the education of children. "Democratic education should try to teach all students not only about their shared citizenship but also about their shared humanity with all individuals regardless of their citizenship. ... [O]nly when children are educated for a deliberative citizenship that is informed by multiculturalism and committed to treating all individuals as equals, regardless of their nationality, can we begin to reconcile civic education with cultural diversity."

## RESEARCH DESIGN

*Belonging has many sources and many roots and it is a much more demanding and rich concept, I think, than perhaps we should understand citizenship to be. Nevertheless, citizenship has been, politically, a lever to belonging. A way, a structure, if you like, of a particular kind of belonging.*

Mark Kingwell <sup>12</sup>

### The Subjective Context of the Research

A research project is influenced by many external factors and constraints such as funders' policies, but it is also affected by internal factors such as the researcher's desires, interests, and even personal history. This project is personal and 'speaks' to me on multiple levels so I have chosen to write it in the first person. The use of the neutral, anonymous third person is deceptive when applied to social research because it masks the personal elements of the research (Webb, 1992). Long (1999) writes that women in academia are often forced by formulaic impersonal styles to censor narratives in the first-person and become 'invisible', and she argues for empathetic, involved narration. Marshall (2004) suggests that the use of the first person is required in the pursuit of reflexivity<sup>13</sup>.

The initial idea for the research paper was conceived in September 2005 when I started the citizenship application process. I became a citizen of Canada on 30 May 2006. During the interim period, I reflected on issues related to 'becoming Canadian' including membership, responsibilities, entitlements, and above all, belonging. These issues are not new to me. I have struggled with them since I was in Grade Four when a teacher told our class that only Muslims can enter heaven. I am a Parsi-Zoroastrian<sup>14</sup>. In Pakistan, where I lived until I came to Canada in

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<sup>12</sup> Cited in Bell, D. & Panasiuk, E. (2004). The world we want: A community dialogue on citizenship, belonging and contribution *Abilities*, 58, 38–39

<sup>13</sup> The issue of reflexivity is part of the larger vision for this research project beyond the scope of this research paper. I plan to write an introspective feature on my role in this project.

<sup>14</sup> A Parsi-Zoroastrian is a member of the close-knit Zoroastrian community from Pakistan and India. Parsi-Zoroastrians are descendants of people from Pars (the middle-Persian word for Fars), a region now within the geographical boundaries of Iran, who, in the 8th century, immigrated to India to escape religious persecution after the Arab conquest.

2001, non-Muslims are constitutionally, institutionally and socially treated as 'lesser' citizens. A 'double disadvantage' was being a woman in an essentially and aggressively patriarchal society. These exclusions are instrumental in wanting to imagine a different future for Canada.

Another aspect of my personal connection to this research topic is the sense of my family's history, of continuity that is inherent in 'belonging'. When the British army annexed Karachi in 1843, many Parsi-Zoroastrians from Bombay took the opportunities to trade in the new army cantonment and settled there. The 1881 Census records 937 Parsis in Karachi (Patel, n.d.), and my father's grandfather Maneckji Dinshaw and his brother Dadabhai were among the early settlers. Since I am unable to transfer my connection to the past to Canada, my focus now is on investing in the future.

Additionally, as a Parsi-Zoroastrian, one of my fundamental spiritual beliefs is the concept of *humata*, meaning good thoughts, which, in essence, suggests that intention creates reality. This ingrained value is what motivated me to choose to base my research on the Appreciative Inquiry framework developed in 1987 by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva.

Palmer (1999) proposed that autobiographies propel the curiosity and passion that inspire research and learning. "All worthwhile and memorable activity grows from the self's making sense of the world within which the self develops" (p202).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

*[Appreciative Inquiry] is based on principles of equality of voice – everyone is asked to speak about their vision of the true, the good, and the possible.*

Cooperrider, D.L. et. al. (2001)<sup>15</sup>

### Appreciative Inquiry Framework

Appreciative Inquiry theory is typically used for organizational and community development, and deliberately does not attempt to analyse shortcomings, but rather systematically learn from even the smallest victories. It works “...on the assumption that whatever you want more of, already exists” (Hall & Hammond, 2004, p1). Appreciative Inquiry’s basic principles are that inquiry and change are simultaneous and that the seeds of the future are discovered through conversations and stories. We can learn as much about society from focusing on its triumphs as we can from asking about its failures.

These principles are the underlying philosophy of the design of this project. Appreciative Inquiry is based on the premise that organizations (and by extension communities and societies) move in the direction of the questions that they repeatedly ask and focus on. Appreciative Inquiry treats social and psychological reality as a product of the moment, open to continuous reconstruction (Bushe, 1995). It is a collaborative process, inviting stakeholders to engage in building the kinds of environments they want to live in.

The framework of this research is “...an application of the theory of Appreciative Inquiry” rather than “true Appreciative Inquiry” (Hall & Hammond, 2004, p2). Hall and Hammond (2004) indicate that for systemic change, the full process should be followed. However, time constraints and logistical implications did not allow for the research process to

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<sup>15</sup> Cooperrider, D.L. et. al. (eds.). (2001). *Lessons from the Field: Applying Appreciative Inquiry*. Thin Book Publishing Co.

follow its 'true' form, it is rather the 'inspired by' version. The original process of Appreciative Inquiry involves a bottom-up interview process where all organizational members are interviewed to identify the positive "life-giving forces" of the organization. The interview data is then analysed on the basis of themes which are presented to the whole group, who then collectively develop "provocative propositions". These are affirmative statements, stated in the present tense that stretch the organization toward its dream. These statements are not meant to be plans of specific actions to be taken, but represent the organization's direction for the future. John Carter, one of the early implementers of the Appreciative Inquiry approach, discouraged using the propositions as problem-solving statements, but as the gestaltian "ground" (Carter, 1989 cited in Bushe, 1995, para 13). Carter suggested that most research inquiry methods focus on the figure in the foreground while provocative propositions create the background, and influence individuals to change their attitude and behaviour without an action plan by aligning the larger vision with that of individuals' own internal hopes and dreams.

The process of Appreciative Inquiry uses the "4-D Cycle" to generate opportunities for recording the collective wisdom of the people. It starts with Affirmative Topic Choice or identification of what is to be studied, in this case Canadian citizenship in the imagined future. Once the topic is selected, the 4-D Cycle of Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny is used to guide the process.

1. The Discovery phase is when the interview questions are written as affirmative probes to generate stories, and encourage dialogue. Usually, the questions are crafted collaboratively, but in this case I developed them, using the stages of Appreciative Inquiry as a guide.

2. The Dream phase identifies positive and hopeful images of the future and typically this is done in large group forums.
3. The Design stage involves articulating 'what should be' within an organization or system grounded in its positive past.
4. The Destiny phase focuses on paths forward, "...of action planning, developing, implementation strategies, and dealing with conventional challenges of sustainability" (Hall & Hammond, 2004, p11).

### **The Participants**

This paper is based on the vision of ten part-time graduate students from the 2004 cohort of the *Immigration and Settlement Studies* program at Ryerson University, Toronto. They have a unique combination of lived experience, academic grounding, and professional experience related to immigration and settlement. This cohort was chosen to elicit the views of persons who have specialized knowledge and experience, so representation was not the primary concern. It was understood that complexities associated with social and economic diversity of a heterogeneous population cannot be explained with generalisations (Taueber, 1990). Also, given that it is through language that meanings of everyday life are interpreted, there was an assumption that having gone through the *Immigration and Settlement Studies* program together, this cohort would have some sense of 'shared meaning' of the issues related to immigration and citizenship.

The description of the group is provided to set their responses into context. As the eleventh member of the cohort, my role was that of a participant-observer, but I have included my demographic details in the group profile.

The eleven members of the 2004 cohort of part-time students were:

- |                                      |                              |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Abdulhamid Hathiyan               | 7. Fatima Saliu-Ediagbonya   |
| 2. Aldith Phillips                   | 8. Nalini Mohabir            |
| 3. Andre Goh                         | 9. Parminder Singh           |
| 4. Deborah (Debbie) Starzynski       | 10. Xiaofeng (Maggie) Ma     |
| 5. Masomeh (Effat) Ghassemi-Gonabadi | 11. Yuan Mai (Elaine) Cheong |
| 6. Farishta Murzban Dinshaw          |                              |

There were eight women and three men in the group. Of the eleven, two are birthright citizens, eight are naturalised citizens, and one has retained permanent resident status although she has been in Canada for the past 27 years. Of the nine foreign-born participants, three came during the 1970s, three during the 1980s, one in 1997 and two after 2000. Two naturalized Canadians came under the age of 16 years and went through the school system in Canada.

The foreign countries of birth are China, India, Iran, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore and the United States of America. Of the eight naturalized citizens, three have dual citizenships. Three participants attained their citizenship status in 2006.

Nine participants are multilingual, with six speaking three or more languages. Two participants speak more than five languages. Interestingly, one is a birthright citizen and the languages she speaks are not related to her heritage, and the other is a foreign-born Canadian and speaks seven languages related to his South Asian-Kenyan roots. Three participants, of whom two are foreign-born, speak both official languages of Canada. Both monolingual participants speak English; one is a birth-right citizen and the other is a permanent resident originally from the United States. The various languages spoken by the participants include Cantonese, Cutchi,

Ebirra, English, Farsi, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Hokkien, Italian, Malay, Mandarin, Portuguese, Punjabi, Sindhi, Spanish, Swahili, Urdu and Yoruba.

Although all participants have some professional contact with immigrant and visible minority populations, nine of the eleven participants work directly with newcomers (defined as residing in Canada for 3 years), immigrants (first generation residents), and ethnoracial communities. Of the nine, six also work with refugees. Three participants work with undocumented residents, of which one is a government officer who administers and enforces immigration regulations, and two are community service providers.

### *Relationship of the Researcher with the Participants*

As a member of the research sample, I have a relationship ranging from cordial acquaintanceship to close friendship with the other members of the group. Considering the fact that the participants have interacted with each other for the past two years resulting in classroom camaraderie, and in some cases personal friendships, I was concerned about the possibility of members discussing the focal issues of the research outside a controlled environment, thus 'contaminating' ideas. Throughout the preliminary process of planning the research project, I maintained secrecy about the sample group, to the extent that I omitted this topic from my informal and formal presentations on the proposed Major Research Paper (MRP) to the *IS8904: Research Methods in Immigration and Settlement Studies* class as many of the part-time students took the course. I also refrained from informally sharing information about the review of literature or research process with other students during breaks or outside of class.

In the MRP proposal (April 2006), I had noted:

Although I am unable to predict the reaction of individuals in the group once I disclose their involvement in my research, I am certain that there will be some

comment about it. This has raised several questions for me: do I record the reactions in my diary to use for insights into the process or will that dehumanize them by “putting them under the microscope”? Do I record the reactions and use them only to understand the process? Will their reaction to the withholding affect the way they respond to the invitation to participate?

None of the group questioned my earlier reticence, and responded with “I will be delighted to take part...” and “I would love to be a part of...” However, once the focus group discussion was cancelled after being scheduled twice, I wondered if the response to attend the focus group would have been more positive if they had been involved at all stages of the design and felt ownership of the project.

One advantage of my relationship with the members of the group was that in many cases I had insights into their communication styles and personal histories, which were useful to elicit response and guide conversation. I had thought about whether this could be considered ‘insider information’ and may be seen as manipulative or coercive, but concluded that my behaviour was not any more or any less than how a researcher would ordinarily use the knowledge to build rapport.

### *Expressed Non-Confidentiality Policy*

The nature and dynamic of the group precluded the issue of anonymity or confidentiality as the list of part-time students enrolled in the program is public knowledge and also because many of us have relationships beyond the University. Additionally, there may be certain identifying markers that are inherent to their experiences and, therefore, their viewpoints, which may be obvious in the discussion. The study, therefore, had an expressed non-confidentiality policy.

Ryerson University's Research Ethics Board (REB) highlighted the issue of non-confidentiality in their review of the research proposal.

Due to the non-confidential nature of the study, the Board requests clarification on whether participants will have the option to suggest changes to information concerning their remarks prior to the preparation of the final report. In the application, you indicate that there may be a follow-up interview but do not clearly state if that is the case. If not, please justify. The Board understands the time constraints involved to complete your Master's thesis.

The concern was addressed by emphasising the nature of the group.

I have not put in a formal option to suggest changes to information concerning their remarks prior to the preparation of the final report because time constraints will not allow for me to share the report and receive signed releases from the respondents before the oral defense in early September 2006. However, I do not foresee that this will become a major issue in spite of the non-confidentiality nature of the study. The issue of non-confidentiality is explicit in the consent form and will be addressed at the beginning of the focus group discussion. The respondents are not from a vulnerable population. Also, they are all researchers in their own right. As such, they are familiar with the voluntary nature of the process. They are aware that they can self-censor their remarks, withdraw at any given point, or ask for discretion. Additionally, one of the options in the consent form is to use a pseudonym. I have a two-year relationship with the respondents that is built on mutual respect that will facilitate confidence if they have any concerns about what will be quoted in the final report. If a case arises, I will do my best (in consultation with my research supervisor) to resolve individual concerns without compromising academic integrity.

Initially, the informants were invited to choose how they wish to be referred to in the text, such as by full name, first name, initials, or pseudonym, but in the later stages of writing the paper it was decided to use first names to add uniformity as well as an open participatory style to the text. All participants gave their permission to use their names.

Additionally, in the interest of giving participants a sense of agency, they were given the option of providing a biographical profile to self-identify themselves. However, none of the participants utilized this option.

## **Data Collection**

Qualitative research “calls for the investigator to enter into the lives of the persons being studied as fully and naturally as possible” (Stainback & Stainback, 1988, p1). In this research, “fully and naturally” may not be an entirely accurate description as most of the preliminary interaction was of an ‘introduction to the research study’ nature, focussing on logistics and consent, and the data for review was mainly collected in a one-off interaction, although follow up clarification was sought of some of the interactions that occurred via email.

A guideline of open-ended questions provided an overarching focus to the study. The questions represented the four stages of the Appreciative Inquiry process and were used to guide the participant from ‘what is’ to ‘what will be’ and ‘how to achieve it’. There were specific sub-questions in order to elicit more rounded responses. (Appendix I).

Participants’ perspectives on citizenship were collected through individual interactions — four were done through email, three interviews were conducted via phone and three were conducted face-to-face. Information about gender, age, job sector description and country of birth, number of years of residence in Canada, status in Canada was used to collate a profile of the group.

Face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews were semi-structured “guided conversations” as described by Rubin & Rubin (1995).

As in ordinary conversations, only a few topics are covered in depth, and there are smooth transitions between the subjects. People take turns speaking and acknowledge what the other has said. People give off recognizable cues when they don't understand and clarify ambiguities upon request. (p122)

The email interactions were more structured as the medium does not allow for immediate response or “floating prompts” (McCracken, 1988, p35) such as “And then...?” or non-verbal cues like nodding the head.

The post-interview focus group to present identified themes and develop a “provocative proposition” had to be cancelled because of lack of response from the participants. The reasons for not being able to attend the focus group included family commitments, work engagements and participants’ involvement in their own research projects. The change in methodology certainly influenced the outcome of this research. This is not necessarily detrimental, just different. There may be a trade-off between collective wisdom and individual voice. Where a focus group would have provided an opportunity for stimulating discussion with the group dynamics generating a wider scope to the outcome, the individual interviews encouraged more in-depth responses as each interview typically ran between 45 – 60 minutes.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

Detailed notes were taken during the telephone interviews; the face-to-face interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim, and the email responses were collated. The data was analysed using Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) “open coding” process, referring to the process of initially reviewing the data and noting evident themes. Mello (2002) questions the practice of dividing data into small bits because of the “...danger of diminishing or misinterpreting the nature of the narrative as a whole” (p235), but time constraints and the limited scope of a Master’s program Major Research Paper were not conducive to a wider range of analytic processes. However, as expressed in the informed consent form, the raw data will be kept for a minimum of five years to provide sufficient time for further analytic work to be completed.

Another possibility for future analysis is to share the transcripts with other participants to record their insights and perspectives, using the feminist qualitative research philosophy of empowering participants to become co-researchers. This is concurrent with Bushe's commentary on Appreciative Inquiry (1995) in which he suggested that instead of the interview data being "analysed" it should be "synergised" (para 21) which includes getting as many people as possible to read the most important interviews and stories to stimulate their thinking about the appreciative topic and to offer their insights.

After five years, the data may be shared with other researchers who wish to do a comparative or longitudinal study, perhaps as a retrospective review on the eve of Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017. This information was also a part of the consent form.

### **Presentation of Data**

The discussion liberally uses direct quotes from participant interviews to concur with Appreciative Inquiry philosophy that everyone "...speak about their vision of the true, the good, and the possible" (Cooperrider et al, 2001, p12). Patton (1987) notes that the use of quotations helps reveal participants' emotions and experiences, their world view, and their perceptions about what is happening around them without researcher bias. However, it is necessary to acknowledge that researcher subjectivity affects the *selection* of quotations, especially in a single-researcher, personally-oriented project like this one. Ideally, participants would be involved in examining interview transcripts and providing more faceted insights.

One of the challenges of presenting the data was keeping a meaningful balance between a participant's voice and my interpretation of what was said based on my own academic and experiential background.

As Hoskins and Stoltz (2005) put it:

...if we remain true to the voices of our participants (in that we rely mainly on verbatim accounts), we may relinquish depth of meaning in the final report. Yet, when we decide to engage in theoretical analysis, we risk impinging on the very principles that attracted us to this kind of research. (p98).

They also articulate another dilemma that I faced.

The question that arises is at what point does narrative research shift from the desire to keep participants' stories intact to self-protection because we do not want to offend? ...Too often, researchers who have a prior relationship with participants hold back for fear of jeopardizing the relationship. (p103).

Ironically, considering the subject of this paper is equal representation, my predicament was the inability to do so because some participants said more than others on the themes relevant to the discussion. Ultimately, I used quotes that were significant to the identified themes of identity and equality.

### **Researcher's Role**

Key (1997) describes "balanced participation" as when the researcher maintains a balance between being an insider and being an outsider, and observes and participates in some activities, but does not participate fully in all activities. Drapeau (2002) suggests that avoiding the question of subjectivity of the researcher only invites it to have a subtle yet important impact on the design and analysis of findings. Considering my personal investment in the research, my role as a member of the cohort, and as a participant-observer, I kept a diary about the decision making processes, motivations, and experiences. Prior to interviewing others, I did a 'mock-interview' with myself and recorded my responses to the questions I would be asking others. Initially, these writings were to provide reflexive insights for analysis and possible conclusions,

but subsequently I decided to focus on analysing the group's responses without using those notes because by incorporating my responses as a researcher and participant, the focus of the paper would have digressed to research methodology rather than specifically answering the questions about Canadian citizenship. In future, I will use these notes for a critical self-reflection on my role in the collection and interpretation of participants' responses and the research process.

## ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

*The personal is political.*<sup>16</sup>

### What is Citizenship?

This question was aimed at developing an understanding of citizenship from the perspective of the participants rather than starting with a pre-determined definition of citizenship. The responses encompassed different facets of citizenship, reasons for acquiring Canadian citizenship, access, responsibilities and entitlements, testifying to the complexity of this term. However, as the primary focus of this paper is identity and equality, only related themes have been covered in this section.

### *Identity*

Tajifel (1981, cited in Gonzales and Cauce, 1995) describes identity as "...that part of the individual's self-concept which derives from his or her knowledge of membership in a social group (or groups), together with the value of emotional significance attached to that membership" (p225). Identity is a complex and multi-layered issue often regulated by the state (Bannerji, 2002). One of the common experiences that the participants shared about their identity as Canadians was personal experiences of social inclusion/exclusion.

The volume entitled *Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups* in the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, (1969, cited in Goyder, 1990) stated that inevitably, immigrants take on many aspects of the host society such as language, dress, work ethics (acculturation), but may not show an "almost total absorption into another linguistic and

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<sup>16</sup> Both aspects of the statement are valid: that the experiences and choices of our personal lives are not just a matter of personal preferences but are defined by the broader political and social environment, and that political agendas arise from collective personal choices.

cultural group” (assimilation). This idea of acculturation over assimilation became the founding stone of the Canadian idea of a ‘mosaic’, instead of the American ideology of ‘melting pot’; immigrants could retain their ethno-cultural identity along with their Canadian identity leading to hyphenated identities such as Italian-Canadian or Vietnamese-Canadian.

Dual citizenship, and by extension dual identity, was one of the recurring themes in the interviews. Parminder’s family immigrated to Canada from India in 1974 when he was a toddler. Canada did not recognize dual citizenship at that time. His adolescent experiences with his identity echoes what Bannerji (2002) calls “...the paradox of both belonging and non-belonging simultaneously...” (p65).

I was stripped of my nationality at a very young age so how can I say I am Indo-Canadian. I was too young to hurt at that time, but when I was in high school and they would say, ‘Hey you, go back to where you came from’, it would really burn. If I am not Canadian, then what am I?...With respect to a hyphenated identity, I would use my religion, I would say I am Sikh-Canadian, not Indo-Canadian. But I would prefer to say just Canadian. This is a choice, not an obligation, but hopefully people will choose to be Canadian.

Gonzales and Cauce (1995) identify four types of adaptation – assimilation, biculturalism, rejection and marginalization. Yuan Mai/Elaine, who was born in Singapore and came to Canada as a teenager, talks about the challenges of adjusting to biculturalism defined as a relationship with the dominant culture where one “...take[s] on its characteristics and identity while at the same time retaining own culture and identity” (p143).

I have it easier than others because I went through the school system here. Much as I am visible minority, there is more access here than Singapore because of the size [of the country] especially in post-secondary....I actually went from being [part of the] dominant culture in Singapore to being visible minority. If I could assimilate into the dominant culture here, I would.... Who am I kidding? I will never look White. I will always have an accent. People see me as Chinese, they make assumptions about me, where I come from....sometimes I pretend and let it go because it is easier to be like them [mainland Chinese].

I have different behaviours with different groups, where I work, my family. It's a performance. I am more conscious of trying to fit in. Won't say can't be myself, but it's like putting on a mask.

Xiaofeng talked about the issue of conflicting loyalty between the country of origin and Canada.

If Canada has a war with China I cannot join the army of Canada. It's like mom and stepmom. Maybe I will be neutral....Sports is different. I would support China and Canada. I have two cheeks; on one I would have the flag of China and Canada on the other.

The issue of questioning one's own identity is not restricted to those who are foreign-born. Nalini, who is a birthright Canadian citizen of Trinidadian-Guyanese ancestry, shared her story about her visit to South Africa on a youth internship.<sup>17</sup>

Our place of residence was broken into and we were robbed and the Canadian Consulate sprung into action just like totally took care of us. They bought us all cell phones in case we got attacked again and so we could call our parents. You know it felt like there were certain privileges that came with being a Canadian citizen and expectations because they would take care of us - be a father I guess or a mother away from home....It was in a different time. I don't think it would happen today given what's happening in the media and Harper's musings. I think I would be seen as somebody that is, I don't know, transient or not worthy of my citizenship, or not worthy of being rescued...a lot of those Lebanese children are Canadian-born but their citizenship is called into question<sup>18</sup>.

Again, it goes back to borders, like when I went to Guyana last year and I came back, it is not like anybody said, "Welcome home." It is like you are aware of your colour. I mean we are living in a white supremacist society so you are always aware of that....It was interesting because unlike the Canadian customs, in Guyana they asked me who I was, like was I Guyanese and I paused because I'm so used to identifying myself as Guyanese when I'm in Canada even though I was born in Canada so I didn't know what to say. I said, 'No- I'm Canadian', so he asked me, 'Are your parents from Guyana?' and I said 'yes' and he's like 'welcome, welcome home' so I just thought that was neat that that the first time I got the feeling of belonging was when I went to Guyana

*You don't have a dual nationality?*

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<sup>17</sup> This conversation is shared in more detail to illustrate her experience. My responses are italicized.

<sup>18</sup> Nalini is referring to the evacuation of Lebanese-Canadians from Lebanon during the Israel-Hezbollah conflict in Lebanon in July 2006.

No I don't. I want it, but I haven't gotten around to it.

*But you would like to have dual nationality?*

I did until recently. But conversations make me worried that I would be stranded somewhere if I had more than one passport.

*The political implications would stop you?*

Yes

*That's sad.*

Yes, absolutely. I'm eligible for Trinidad citizenship on my mom's side and Guyanese on my dad's side, and Indian citizenship by ancestry, but I don't feel like I could take any of those. I guess mostly because they are countries in the South, so you know, if anything happens, definitely my Canadian citizenship would be called into question.

*It was interesting how you said you identify yourself as Guyanese in Canada and Canadian outside Canada. Does that ever seem schizophrenic to you, in the sense of two separate identities in two separate spaces?*

I was acutely aware of it when I was in South Africa because I didn't fit what Canadians look like to people of South Africa, so they would always want to know 'yes, but where are from' ... same question that I get here ... so I thought that was interesting... I was schizoid in my twenties, I think I've been able to re-consolidate and come to peace with it in my thirties.

*Was there a specific incident or event that actually helped you do that?*

I guess goes back to my time in South Africa...No. You know what? Just being away from Canada makes me realize that I think we live in the best society in the world... not to say that it doesn't have it's problems, and it has lots of problems, but there are a lot of privileges to being Canadian.

Jenkins (1996) stated that social identity is never unilateral and is subject to change and transformation and grows out of the interaction between differences (being the Other) and sameness (belonging to a group). According to Jenkins, personal identity *is* social identity because the 'self' is socially constructed within a context and a situation. As the participants'

experiences indicate increased mobility causes the context to change and, therefore, identities to shift. Yuan Mai/Elaine's example of going from being part of the dominant culture in Singapore to being a part of a visible minority in Canada and putting on 'masks' to fit in is a case in point. Although her shifted identity is restrictive in some circumstances, her knowledge of Cantonese and Mandarin puts her in a privileged position as a flight attendant for Air Canada. To examine this case of 'contextual identity' from another angle, when she is on board the national airline, she represents the multicultural identity of Canada perceived by tourists, immigrants and returning Canadians. In that circumstance, she is the face of Canada regardless of her own views and experience of inclusion or exclusion. The acknowledgement that identity is complex, transient, fluid and contextually-evoked changes the dynamics of the discussion around "Who is Canadian?" The answer is, "It depends on the situation" and every situation has its own limitations and possibilities. Nalini's experience of her identity as a Canadian in South Africa and Guyana exemplifies this.

Debbie extended the discussion on identity to address the issue of "What is Canadian?"

I agree with Bissoondath<sup>19</sup> who asserts that there should be something Canadian about Canada. I too find the theoretical notion of arriving in a country with little self identity and an offer of "we are what ever you make us" a bit disconcerting. When I go to Nepal, I like that it is NEPAL and different, notwithstanding, of course, the notion that Nepal like everywhere else evolves as a society under outside influences... There are a lot of myths attached to Canada – the railway, the Mounties, the canoe, and some would argue more recent myths such as peacekeeping and multiculturalism, but if they help define us, they are important, whatever the degree of reality... If one is to be a citizen of some entity, the entity needs to be understood as clearly and meaningfully as possible.

Country images are specific images that are associated with a country. Debbie mentioned the Mountie. Other iconic Canadian associations are the maple leaf, the Canadian loon, hockey

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<sup>19</sup> Debbie is referring to Neil Bissoondath's point of view in his book *Selling illusions: The cult of multiculturalism in Canada*. Toronto: Penguin Books, 1994.

and Tim Horton's coffee. Nadeau (2004) described it as managing a 'brand' for Canada, which refers to taking an image and standardising it so that the world sees us as we want it so see us. Multiculturalism, as Debbie mentioned, is one such image. Canada was the first country to adapt it as a national policy to provide "... an enduring statutory basis for Canadians' sense of themselves and their country" and make Canada "...a symbol of hope in a fractious, turbulent world" (Department of the Secretary of State, 1987, p7). Multiculturalism as a national ideology is often referred to as 'the Canadian model'.

What other images of Canada are promoted worldwide? Nadeau cites: "A world leader in innovation and learning, a magnet for talent and investment" (Speech from the Throne, September 30, 2002) and "Canada – A Profitable Option" (Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 2001). Nadeau explains that managing the image of a country is not a simple task and one of the challenges is maintaining consistent delivery of the message over time and over many distinct and independent points of contact. Xiaofeng implied this when she said, "I don't know about other countries but the embassy of Canada in Beijing is like a prison. No one can get in. People should be able to get in. It represents Canada." And Fatima referred to it when she said:

It should live up to the picture Canada portrays out there in the world. I want Canada to continue to meet that picture [as a 'rich' country]...When I came to Canada my first shock was the number of [homeless] people on the street. I would *never* have thought it in Nigeria...I believe that if Canada is portrayed as one of the best countries to live in, that picture should be what Canada is. That is why people come here.

### *Equality*

Equality is generally understood to mean equality of rights, and equality before the law. One key arena of inequality is the labour market.

Aldith indicated this when she said:

I think the true test of citizenship is all members should have equal access/ participation and the labour market, in particular, is one major area where “creeping apartheid” has been shown to exist. See Galabuzi, 2001.

Aldith was referring to Grace-Edward Galabuzi’s book *Canada’s Creeping Apartheid*, (Toronto: York University Press, 2001) on the economic segregation and social marginalization of racialized groups. The report *Canada 2017 - Serving Canada’s Multicultural Population for the Future-Policy Forum* (Canadian Heritage, 2005) observes that race and class affect how many ‘doors open’ to citizens in Canada. In the report, Pendukar (2005) shows that overall, visible minorities, regardless of citizenship status, fare worse in Canada’s labour market than White counterparts of similar age and qualifications. According to a Conference Board of Canada report (Baklid, Cowan, Mc-Bride-King & Mallet, 2005) the estimated loss to the Canadian economy as a result of the failure to recognize foreign credentials and work experience is \$2 to \$3 billion a year.

Unlike immigrants from Europe, immigrants of subsequent generations from ‘non-traditional’, non-European countries continue to bear the phenomenon of being ‘of colour’. Hiebert (2005) demonstrates that labour market exclusion and language acquisition barriers keep visible minorities and newcomers in circumstance of increasing poverty, thus affecting their opportunities for upward mobility. Dietz and Esses (2006, July 10) reported that “covert prejudice” exists in our expressly non-discriminatory society and is accepted when “...subtle biases translate into discriminatory behaviour if a seemingly non-biased or non-prejudicial excuse for these behaviours exists” (para 20), such as hiring practices that exclude applicants with foreign qualifications on the ground that they may be of lower standard than Canadian

qualifications. In essence, this sanctions immigrants as not only 'different from us', but as 'different and inferior to us'.

Another example of covert prejudice in the labour market is 'lack of Canadian experience'. Baklid, Cowan, Mc-Bride-King & Mallet (2005) raise an interesting point about Canadian organizations outsourcing jobs to India and China to take advantage of their specialists' skills and expertise, yet not accepting their credentials and work experience when those specialists immigrate to Canada. Jenson (2001) identifies two aspects required for social equality: "...fostering and ensuring equal access to market incomes, through regulations, education, training and employment policies. It also means reducing dependence on market income, so that citizens can enjoy similar levels of services and benefits, no matter their earnings or the source of their income" (para 9).

Debbie, who is a permanent resident, added another perspective to the issue of racialised asymmetry in Canadian society, tying it into the perception of who and what is Canadian.

I often remember a woman in a Chinatown grocery store. She didn't speak much English and had a worn out look that spoke of long hours day after day at her job. At the time I thought how differently she and I experience Canada. Albeit superficial, one of my benchmarks was that she probably would never sit on a lake dock in cottage country drinking a pina colada. If she has citizenship status, that makes her more Canadian than me. Yet, I think of myself as more a part of mainstream Canada.

Yuan Mai/Elaine's statement, "I actually went from being [part of the] dominant culture in Singapore to being visible minority. If I could assimilate into the dominant culture here, I would... Who am I kidding? I will never look White. I will always have an accent." is also very telling about who 'fits' in. While individual perspectives on identity and equality form the basis of this discussion, it is necessary to explore the systemic and structural factors that inform these views. It is difficult not to notice that official terms like 'a person of colour' and 'visible

minority' use skin colour as the defining factor of identity, and White is still a standard by which difference is measured, indicating that racism<sup>20</sup> is still very much a part of what drives government policy. According to Shadd (2003) "...racism is something that afflicts an entire society, it is ingrained and reinforced in all major and minor institutions of the society." (p167). Instead of being inclusively multicultural, Canada still inherently preserves its traditional exclusivist ideology of Anglo superiority, if colonialism is defined as a way of maintaining an unequal relation of economic and political power using social, cultural and religious means of control (Williams & Chrisman, 1994). Its "range of permissible diversity" (Parekh, 1994, p289) is determined by dominant society's standards. For instance, many Asian cultures have dog meat in their cuisine and if Canada was an authentic multicultural society, dogs could be bred for meat as long as the recommended code of practice for the care and handling of animals, and processing and packaging of meat were followed.

As discussed above, formal citizenship status does not guarantee equality of treatment. Crossing borders further reduces its efficacy. Lofgren (1999) writes that with the invention of passports people become "aliens" as soon as they cross the security of their own border and are at the mercy of "ridiculous officials with very minor powers" (p11). Nalini shared her experience of crossing the Canadian-USA border when her citizenship status did not protect her from harassment.

I never really thought about citizenship because it is by birth for me, so I never had to go and take the citizenship test like my parents had to. But, I guess when I first started to become conscious of it was at borders like when I went to Trinidad with my mom and she would be in a different line than I am because she, at that time, had different citizenship than I had. Crossing into the States before 9-11, I was banned from entering. They thought I was trying to work illegally - I was just going on a placement for my University, but they thought I was trying to work

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<sup>20</sup> In the context of this paper, I have used the term racism broadly to cover systemic (policies, laws,) social (beliefs, stereotypes) and personal (attitudes/beliefs/behaviours) aspects that differentiate others on the basis of physical characteristics.

illegally. It had something to do with NAFTA agreements and all that, so when your citizenship and the rights and privileges of it are called into question, you begin to think, you know.

This incident with Nalini raises an interesting issue about passports, and other government issued documents used for travel, which have been crucial in making distinctions between citizens and non-citizens. The July 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah conflict in Lebanon and the resulting evacuation of Lebanese-Canadians created a lot of debate in the media and among Canadians about who are 'real Canadians' and the responsibility of the Canadian government towards its citizens when they are abroad.<sup>21</sup> The evacuation process raised many questions about rights and privileges of citizens, and one of them was centred on the passport as proof of citizenship and the holder having a right to freely enter and exit Canada. However, Ottawa's decision to deny Abdurahman Khadr a passport on 'national security' grounds clearly gives the message that a passport is a privilege and not a right.<sup>22</sup> Harper's pro-US government went against the June 2006 Federal Court ruling that Ottawa did not have the right to deny Khadr a passport for security reasons without evidence. The rhetoric about citizens being 'equal under the law' has little meaning if those in power do not uphold the law. Government-sanctioned fear for

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<sup>21</sup> The spectrum of the debate ranged from Canada having no responsibility to rescues non-resident Canadians because the rights of citizenship should be tied to showing commitment to Canada to all citizens being equal under the law whether they reside in Canada or not and to do otherwise would be openly creating a 'lesser' citizen. The two major issues that seemed to have fuelled the debate were the surprising statistic that there were 50,000 Canadians in Lebanon, many of them 'Canadians of convenience', and Ottawa's announcement that it would evacuate all Canadian citizens at taxpayers' expense.

<sup>22</sup> At a news conference, Khadr's attorney Clayton Ruby said that the Canadian government had denied Khadr a passport at the request of U.S. authorities. On June 8, the Federal Court of Canada found that Mr. Khadr was entitled to the "fairness and legitimate expectation owed to all Canadian citizens" in terms of applying for a passport. Justice Michael Whelan wrote, "The principal reason for denying the passport — in the interests of national security — was based on concern about Canada-U.S. relations and public disapproval for issuing a passport to a member of such an infamous family." Ottawa was told it had used dubious grounds to deny him a passport, and was ordered to issue Khadr a passport. [Compiled from reports in the *Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Star*, and on the websites cbc.ca and msnbc.msn.com].

national security that fuelled paranoia during the two World Wars and led to internment and deportations of Ukrainians, Italians, and the Japanese has resurfaced, this time against Muslims and against people of Arab and Tamil origin.

Systemic, social and personal racism and xenophobia are certainly a part of Canada, but it is important to recognize that it is not a simple White/non-White issue. Fatima referred to this when she said:

Racism, as I see it, we are all capable of being racist.... Racism is not a structure that we can go and touch. It is about attitude. It is in the mind. When we say it is systemic racism, who is that? It is not a structure, it is people. It is all about attitude. And I think to change attitude you have to start with education...But racism is not the only vice that is biting us hard here, there are so many other things. We continue to have gender issues, we continue to have class issues, we continue to have sexuality-orientation issues. So I know when all this is combined together and we add to this issue, that is racism, then we have the worst nightmare in Canada...Racism is not the only thing to look at. Because when I am discriminated because I am a woman, it hurts the same way if someone is going to look at me and discriminate against me because of my colour.

The issue of not capitalising on 'white guilt' is pertinent if Canada is to be a just society. Parminder suggested, "The past has affected Canada...there is an active push for multiculturalism. It is almost as if Canada feels guilty for the way it treated past immigrants." As Fatima said, "We are all capable of being racist." Dr. Sagunasiri (cited in Cameron, 2004) suggests that minority communities can be part of society building if they "look inward at racism and discrimination within [their] own ranks" (p130). All Canadians have to individually and collectively be accountable for their attitudes and actions. Rights and responsibilities are related and reciprocal; if each individual has the right to be treated equitably and respectfully, then it follows that each individual has the responsibility to treat others equitably and respectfully.

Although Fatima touched upon several intersections of discrimination, in most participants' responses about "Who is Canadian?", as in much of scholastic discourse, the

primary focus of “Who is the Other?” remained immigrants, refugees and visible minorities, illustrating the general overlooking of French-Canadians and Aboriginal populations who, in some ways, are also marginalized from mainstream Canada. In the case of the research participants, as illustrated by their stories, this may be because their own personal experiences dominate their consciousness, as well as their academic background as students of the *Immigration and Settlement Studies* program at Ryerson University.

In a recent interview with *Toronto Star* (2006, August 30) Michael Ignatieff, a Liberal leadership candidate highlighted another growing area of inequality. When asked about his ‘big idea’ for which he would like to be remembered if he became prime minister, he responded:

Strengthening the spine of Canadian citizenship. The thing I feel everywhere in the country is that we’re an increasingly regionalized economy. And there’s a hunger out there that feels we’re more than the sum of our parts. The institutional expression of that is a desire to be equal, to know you don’t have huge regions of the country feeling that they have substandard health services, substandard roads, no access to broadband — just basically left out of opportunities. In small towns (people voice a) frustration, the sense that they’ve lost their kids, that taxes are growing — that’s a cry about citizenship. It says, “we want to be equal citizens of Canada and we’re not.” And its [sic] expensive (to create that equality)... Maybe if there is a core of the spine of citizenship, it is this idea that there is equal access to publicly funded health care. There is deep public support that if you get up in Chicoutimi, or Bathurst, New Brunswick you ought to be able to say that I have the same rights, the same responsibilities and access to a roughly comparable basket of public goods. And that’s what I mean by the spine of citizenship. Strengthening that seems to me to be the essential mandate of the federal government. (A19)

### **What Should Canadian Citizenship Look Like In The Imagined Future?**

The Appreciative Inquiry framework builds on positive past experience to build a vision for the future. Vogelsong and Wayne (2001) state:

All of us have somewhat different realities, even in defining what is positive for us. Valuing and acknowledging these different perceptions can lead to a much bigger picture of the future than just choosing one person’s reality and going from

there. This leads to the understanding that all key stakeholders, despite their realities, need to be involved in the change process. (para 16)

The following section is presented in two inter-related parts; the first highlights the participants' positive experience of living in Canada; and the second describes 'the dream.'

### *The Foundation of the Dream*

This segment presents participants' perceptions of the privileges and positive aspects of living in Canada. Freedom, both individual and political, is the strongest thread that weaves through the narrative. Other recurring themes were the geography of Canada (the physical space and the ecological aspect), diversity, Canada's international role as peacekeepers and its ideology as a welfare state.

#### *Canadian Policies*

- Aldith* I was born in this country. I have learned to appreciate the relative peace in terms of political stability, economic development, accesses to social services and liberal democracy that this country stands for.
- Debbie* I like the notion of Canada as a welfare state, despite its current state of erosion. Though currently more myth than reality, I like the notion that Canada generally takes pacifist stands and plays a peacekeeping role in international conflicts. Again more myth than reality, I like the notion of Canada as a supporter of the Geneva Convention in assisting refugees.
- Parminster* Growing economy, free public education, free health care, although they are not necessarily free because we pay taxes, but they're the good things about Canada, gives me great pride in being Canadian. I really appreciate that we're seen as humanitarian rather than as instigators, that our foreign policy is about peacekeeping, or at least was till recently. Still there are checks and balances.
- Xiaofeng* I am really satisfied with Canada, more than USA and Europe. I have friends everywhere and they say the same. Canada is better than here. My friend wrote a letter to the Prime Minister because of the time it was taking to get his family members' papers processes and he got a letter back. Can you imagine that?

## ***Diversity***

***Abdulhamid*** Diversity. There should be more of that especially making you feel an equal part of the whole.

***Yuan Mai/Elaine*** The access to lots of cultures and the opportunities to learn from them. The opportunities for jobs, for school...

## ***Freedom***

***Andre*** Freedom, choices, access to privileges that don't exist elsewhere – and the right to be who I am, without masks.

***Effat*** The best thing that I love in Canada is the democracy that I feel everyday. I'm not oppressed by anybody, any religion, any group, any political group...I came from a society that dictate to women especially what colour you should wear, how you wear things, how do you walk, how to smoke, how to talk, where to go, what to study, what do eat - can you believe that? Now, I can do anything I want. This is democracy.

***Parminster*** For me, the most important thing is that the Charter exists. I am so glad that our country has a framework that expresses equality and rights for all. That doesn't mean discrimination doesn't occur, but the framework exists...you can challenge it in the highest courts.

***Xiaofeng*** I value the freedom. I see myself change. Not just in the status as citizen, but through my work, through this course [MA in *Immigration and Settlement Studies*]. I have changed. It's like night and day...Can't say that I was passive before, but I followed rules. But now I feel I can say things. Especially, I have more gender freedom. I feel I have more power. I can speak. If there is a behaviour that I don't like, I can speak. Before I didn't. I speak up now because I know I have the support of the government.

## ***Physical Space***

***Debbie*** I love the wilderness notions attached to North and West. I love the contrast of the congested city with the country's vastness (but I hate suburbs and subdivisions).

***Xiaofeng*** Very nice natural environment. My region in North of China is very industrial. Never see the clear sky like here. No flowers, no trees, only chimneys.

Two participants highlighted that for them Toronto was the 'Canadian' experience. Noah Richler, in his book *This is my country. What's yours? A literary atlas of Canada* (McClelland & Stewart, 2006) refers to Canadian cities as being "...the vanguard of where we are as a nation" (Homel, 2006, p24).

- Debbie*      What I like about Canada has a lot to do with what I like about Toronto - its multiculturalism with a strong sense that most of us respect most of the rest of us. But it is noted that Toronto and other cities of immigration are much different from much of the rest of Canada where homogeneity of one kind or another prevails...
- Nalini*      I guess the diversity. I have many friends from different backgrounds. I'm able to interact with people who have different histories and different cultures than I do... When I travel, when I'm in Guyana and everybody looks like my cousin - that's a nice feeling too, it is nice to blend in. It is not an experience that I have too often - even though I live in Toronto. But I can go shopping in Toronto in certain neighbourhoods like the Beaches where there are not a lot of people who look like me and if I go in the same store once a year, the owner will remember me. So, there is that, but on the other hand, there is something about Toronto that when you are abroad and you are in a place that has a pretty homogenous culture, it makes you miss Toronto - and I guess it is not even Canada really - that is just Toronto.

### *The Dream Continues*

In Appreciative Inquiry, the 'dream' is formulated in a large group as a "provocative proposition" or an affirmative statement in the present tense. "The term 'provocative' comes because it causes participants to stretch from their current reality to possibilities of the future using the identified positives from the 'now'" (Vogelsong & Wayne, 2001, para 23).

This stage of the research project was left unfinished because the focus group discussion had to be cancelled, therefore it is not possible to reproduce a "provocative proposition" about Canadian citizenship. However, for the purpose of this paper I am reproducing a compiled version articulating the collective vision of Canada in the imagined future. It is based on

individual responses, which are attached as Appendix III. The compiled version was shared via email with all participants for review.

### ***Canada in the Imagined Future***

Canada is a country where mutual respect abounds. Canadians value shared commonalities of ideas and relationships and they embrace diversity without divisions. Canadians are active political co-creators of society and they rise above differences to sit together and tackle issues affecting society as a whole without offending anyone. Each Canadian makes informed choices and respects the choices of others. Canadians are multilingual and multicultural. Each Canadian's ancestry is acknowledged and accepted without it being used as a marker of hyphenated-identification.

Canada is a place where there are opportunities for all to succeed without any discrimination, either overt or subtle, and where citizens feel valued and empowered because of their contributions. It has a viable transnational economy, and all Canadians have access to adequate housing, education, employment, and healthcare. It is a collectivist society in which people look out for one another rather than compete against one another. Poverty is a feature of the past. Intra-city and inter-city transportation is eco-friendly, reliable, fast and safe. The weather is pleasant.

Canada's borders are fluid, and citizenship is not tied to residency. Those who identify with the values promoted by its people are welcomed without prejudice. It maintains its tradition as peacekeepers and its values of promoting human rights and social justice.

It is a model which the world emulates.

### **What Can We Do Today to Make This Vision a Reality Tomorrow?**

The Destiny phase of the Appreciative Inquiry answers the question, "How can we realise the dream?" in order to bring the preferred future into reality. The participants shared several ideas including forging links with the two growing economies, China and India, gender equity, a common language, settlement services based on immigrants' needs, and employment

opportunities geared to integrating non-Canadian qualifications and experience, but the two major themes that emerged from the individual interviews build on ideas discussed in the review of literature – political engagement and education.

### *Political Engagement*

The general consensus among the participants was that civic and political engagement<sup>23</sup> is the key to the creation of fully equal societies. In Jurgen Habermas's essay *Citizenship and national identity: Some reflections on the future of Europe* (1992, cited in Follesdal, 1997) he outlined an idea for a nation that would determine its identity from the practice of its citizens who consciously exercised their rights, rather than from some common ethnic and cultural properties. Several participants spoke of the role of individuals.

- Andre* For me, part of being who I am is acknowledging that complaining doesn't get me anywhere - hence, participation. Not as agents per se, but as citizens exercising our rights to the established process.
- Aldith* Activism is important. As an individual and as a society, being vocal and facing the issues that challenge the status quo, or challenge the myths we have of ourselves is key
- Debbie* A lot of work needs to be done so that equality is really equality. As Canadian society and politics are generally understood, participation in terms of contribution and having one's voice heard is crucial. All of this is part of an ideal. The reality is that for a lot of people citizenship has little meaning and a lot of different meanings for the rest of us.
- Parminder* Individuals need to take an active role in nation building. Right now the voter turnout is so low, such low numbers... individuals need to voice their needs if they want to be heard. It [political participation] is always a challenge.

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<sup>23</sup> The participants used the term "participation" in their responses, but I have used the more expansive term "engagement".

Chacko and Palmer (1995) outlined four systemic barriers to local participation – barriers of procedure, practice, representation and resources – which include rigidity of procedures, an emphasis on service delivery rather than policy making, lack of diversity on boards and committees, and lack of participation subsidies to low income individuals. New citizens may face additional barriers such as language and social distancing. This may decrease the likelihood of participation in the political process because of lack of access to information or lack of investment in the process (Ramakrishnan & Viramontes, 2006). Perceptions of women's role in decision making may also be a barrier to new Canadian women from countries where they were excluded from civic and political arenas. Effat and Xiaofeng highlighted two other issues that make active engagement challenging.

*Effat* I think in terms of making change[s], it should be the votes of residents, not just citizens. I think everyone should have the vote, every voice should be counted. Honestly, I don't know a better way of change... like the case of the Shariah law<sup>24</sup>, because all the women went on the street and talked to the provincial government and petitioned and all those things. And it was unbelievable that they [the Ontario government] said 'no'

*Xiaofeng* Political participation is very necessary otherwise you are not a real member. I have done an informal survey of friends, they have no idea of political participation. They say, "Who cares?" So sad.

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<sup>24</sup> Effat was referring to the much-publicised 2004 campaign by secular Muslim groups, women's groups and labour unions to ban the formation of 'Shariah tribunals' or Muslim family law arbitration tribunals on the grounds that they would perpetuate patriarchal fundamentalist and literalist Islamic norms which may be detrimental to vulnerable Muslim women. Shariah comes from several sources including the Quran, the Islamic holy book, and it governs every aspect of life. Under most interpretations, Islamic law gives men more rights than women in matters of inheritance, divorce and child custody. Under the 1991 *Arbitration Act*, Ontario had allowed Catholic and Jewish and even Ismaili Muslim faith-based tribunals to settle family law matters, but the practice was not common knowledge until some Muslim leaders demanded the same rights. On September 11, 2005, Premier Dalton McGuinty announced that Ontario would not only reject the use of Shariah law but would prohibit all religious-based tribunals.

Both these issues — political participation as a citizenship privilege rather than as a residential right, and apathy — tie in to the larger issue of alienation which in turn is affected by feelings of inequality, and not belonging. Diel and Blohm (2001) write that often immigrants feel alienated from politics in their new country because political parties do not actively seek immigrant participation. Mesch (2002) writes, “Rejection by the dominant group and stigmatization encountered by the minority groups enhance the retention of ethnic identity. Hence the rise and decline of ethnic affiliation depends primarily on the policies of the dominant group” (p2). Interestingly, Bishop & Preiner (2005) found that first- and second-generation Canadian youth are more likely to be interested in and involved in politics, and that they see voting, and being informed about whom to vote for, as “one of the most important responsibilities of citizenship” (p4) in comparison to average Canadian youth. This survey of 1,709 Canadians with an oversample of respondents 18 – 34 years, found that one third of the Canadians who were questioned said time constraints kept them from being engaged in political participation and that they saw it more as a matter of choice than a responsibility of citizenship.

One of the suggestions for encouraging political participation and civic engagement was increased representation of diverse voices at the ‘moving and shaking’ levels of government and community.

*Parminder* Main priority would be to get more people involved in the development of Canada, at social, economic and political levels....This is part of the government's responsibility. They need to get representation from different communities, encourage every minority community to actively be part of the political process....You also need people in positions of - I won't say power - in positions of being able to make change, like doctors, lawyers, media. Some communities are still young in Canada and don't have such people. They should be promoted and encouraged.

Other participants echoed the theory of creating social change through conversation proposed by activists like management consultant Margaret Wheatley, physicist David Bohm, and former astronaut, Dr. Edgar Mitchell. The book *The World Cafe: Shaping Our Futures through Conversations That Matter* (Brown & Isaacs, 2005) outlines certain principles<sup>25</sup> which were also highlighted by some participants.

*Abdulhamid* Each one of us should try to reach out to a person from a different group and consider them to be part of their family. We should try and learn about each others cultures, religion, customs and practices.

*Andre* Start talking to each other - all communities - new ones old ones -different cultures, different communities. And, this is the most important, the state needs to help all these communities talk and dialogue with each other.

*Debbie* My dream is that we have a notion of what Canada has been and is – and maybe the talking about it, the process of sharing ideas becomes central. Commonality becomes more about relationships of respect and sharing of ideas.

*Effat* Every individual person can make contributions when you go to the meeting, when you talk to people, even in a small group. Talk about these points. If it is important to you, then you have to talk about these issues.

### *Education*

A 2005 Centre of Research and Information on Canada (CRIC) survey found that there is a close association between civic engagement and education levels. Canadians with higher levels of education were more likely to have friends and family involved in public affairs and to believe in the possibility of individuals influencing change. Education was mentioned by several participants as one of the key sectors for the promotion of equity and social justice. The

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<sup>25</sup> The Principles of the World Café: create hospitable space, explore questions that matter, connect diverse people and ideas, encourage each person's contribution, listen together for patterns, insights and deeper questions and share that collective knowledge.

responses focussed on different aspects of education, ranging from tuition to changes in the school curriculum, illustrating the immense scope encompassed in the concept.

*Debbie*      Citizenship and diversity education are crucial. Schools become essential in fostering notions of identity, equality and participation. If Canadian society encourages multiculturalism, which it does and should, care must be taken to create commonality and the ability to participate meaningfully and equally. Schools not only can teach the principles but are a kind of community where the principles can be a lived reality. This becomes more difficult if school populations represent one or limited ethnic groups. I do not support forced integration but I embrace the notion of multicultural schools.

*Effat*        Education is very expensive... a high school diploma doesn't have any value right now...BA is nothing right now. You have to go to Masters and it is so expensive for everyone, not just for immigrant children, for everyone. This should be looked at and the tuition fee. Governments should subsidize education. It should be accessible by everyone. Education solves many problems in society.

*Fatima*      If we continue to divide people as 'we' and 'they' we will have racism. That division is not going to help us. The moment we are able to see everybody as we are all one, as we are all Canadian. At the moment we continue to capitalize on difference and forget similarities...We can do a whole lot through education. We can take baby steps. We can start by naming it [racism]. We can start by changing attitudes in the family...In schools, I strongly agree with that [anti-racism curriculum] and encourage it. Maybe I will say 80% or 70% of our learning is from there. Have you seen how much time our kids spend in school before coming home? So anything they learn in school is significant.

*Nalini*      I think, lastly, we should overhaul the educational curriculum to reflect the contributions of all Canadians...It [the argument that Black-focussed curriculum will marginalise the community further] is like the argument against ethno-specific organizations as well, and the counter-argument to that is that you need to have a space to consolidate, to come together. You need to have an enclosed space to engage with the wider society, just to gather strength and then when there is more equality then you can mainstream it. I think that we are in our separate identities that the dominant society has placed us in and until we can come together and say 'yeah, that's my issue too and that is important too' things won't change...it is all part of the way we have been subordinated and we need to fight for our rights collectively...We have to say the Chinese head tax is important to me, the Black curriculum in school is important to me.

As several of the participants suggested, public schools can play an important role in immigrant integration, as locations that have the resources to involve and include children and youth, and as gateways for inclusion into broader social venues (Wotherspoon, 2002). Interestingly, political participation and agency is one of the four overlapping dimensions of social inclusion that Freiler identified (2001, cited in Wotherspoon 2002) that are required to make schools 'safe' spaces for minorities.<sup>26</sup>

Xiaofeng referred to another aspect of education when she suggested an orientation program for potential immigrants.

Before getting immigration, start the education process. Today's immigrants are tomorrow's citizens. Fully educate them before they come. Embassies should do it [orientation classes]. Teach them to prepare resumes and cover letters before they come, not afterwards. Educate them about history, culture, weather. Give this to them before they can submit their papers so they decide and know the situation before they come.

Participants' suggestions that political and civic action and education are the key strategies for achieving a vision of Canada that belongs to all Canadians are neither new nor innovative. Yet these suggestions cannot be dismissed as 'same old, same old' because they illustrate the fundamental characteristic of progress, that evolution requires commitment of the individual as well as that of social and political institutions. Kymlicka (2003) states that the "...challenge of developing a stable political community amidst great ethnic, religious, regional and linguistic diversity" can only be managed by "conscious state policies" (p4), and Wheatley (2001) asserts that change does not happen from top-down, but from many local actions occurring simultaneously. Common sense suggests that it is not an 'or' situation, but an 'and' one; both the state and individuals have to be involved collaboratively in the process of change.

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<sup>26</sup> The other three dimensions are spatial/locational, relational, and functional/developmental.

The government of Canada or at least its public relations strategy recognizes this. The Canadian

Heritage Multiculturalism website (2004) states:

Canada has learned that constitutional measures and legislation alone are not enough to assure equal opportunity in a diverse society. To contribute fully and achieve their full potential, all peoples must have a voice in society and a chance to shape the future direction of the country of which they are a part. This requires mechanisms to enable individuals and groups to speak out and be heard, and to participate in national debate. It also requires programs that help and equip individuals, communities and organizations with the skills and tools they need to advance their interests. (para 20)

## CONCLUSION

*Canada is an ongoing discourse.*

Noah Richler<sup>27</sup>

This research paper explored issues of identity and equality in the context of Canadian citizenship, which is inextricably intertwined with issues of immigration and multiculturalism. It did not find any easy solutions to the questions, issues and problems around these interlinked concepts, except an acknowledgement that solutions require a willingness to adopt a collaborative approach between the state and citizens in dealing with them. The participants identified political participation and education as the two key strategies for achieving an inclusive society. They emphasized individual responsibility, including broader participation in decision making through exercising their political voice and building authentic relationships between diverse communities through conversation and personal interaction. Promoting public schools as inclusive spaces for integration and reforming school curriculum to include the contributions, experiences, perspectives, and voices of minority groups was also recommended. Participants highlighted the importance of the state's involvement in removing barriers to civic and political participation, recognizing minority group rights, providing opportunities for equitable employment and social welfare, and promoting diversity.

This paper's particular focus is on the future, and one of the crucial lessons from the past, which was corroborated by participants, is that concepts of citizenship, identity and belonging have multiple meanings, are relational, and are dynamic. It should be recognized that the answer to "Who is Canadian?" and "What is Canadian?" are invariably linked and ever changing, and that indeed the answers should change if they are to remain meaningful and current. To really

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<sup>27</sup> In an interview with David Homel. Homel, D. (2006, August/September). Noah Richler's Canada. *VIA Destinations*, 3(4), 21-24.

define “Who is Canadian?” we need to understand “What is Canadian?” even if it means challenging existing ideologies. As Sandercock, (2005) said, “The potential of MCism [multiculturalism] has not been exhausted, but as with any great ideal, it must evolve in a self-critical rather than self-congratulatory way” (para 35).

A critical review of multiculturalism may require re-examining the concept of Canada as a ‘mosaic’. An examination of an actual mosaic shows little bits of non-overlapping pieces which lie side by side to make up a whole image. The trouble with applying this metaphor to Canada is the description of individual pieces remaining unconnected to one another. Perhaps we should rethink Canada as a ‘melted mosaic’ in which the perimeters of each piece melts into the perimeters of the ones around it so that the larger image becomes a fused whole. Each individual piece retains its intrinsic colour and characteristics in the centre, but the edges are blurred as it fuses with the pieces around it. The drawback to even this ‘improved’ model of a mosaic is that inherently a mosaic is static. The metaphor does not capture the shifting kaleidoscopic nature of the idea that what Canada is today is not what it is will be tomorrow. In fact, if what Einstein said is correct and imagination is more important than knowledge, we do not necessarily have to extend the mosaic metaphor, but can imagine a brand new model of Canadian citizenship. It might be as a three-dimensional version of a chemical compound held together by attraction of individual atoms to one another through sharing as well as exchanging of their properties or as a multicellular organism in which individual cells and groups of cells co-operate together to function as unified organism. New models are bound to have limitations too and if that is the case we will need to discard them and conceive something different. The whole idea of conceptualizing Canadian citizenship in the imagined future is that the possibilities are limitless.

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## **APPENDIX I**

### **Canadian Citizenship in the Imagined Future**

#### **GUIDELINE FOR DISCUSSION**

*Note: Questions based on the theory of Appreciative Inquiry (David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva, 1987)*

#### **DEFINE**

1. What does citizenship mean to you? (This is a personal definition)

Probes on general aspects of citizenship:

- **MEMBERSHIP:** How do sexual, cultural, linguistic and other particular identities interact with and change our perspectives on citizen identities? Should citizenship be defined by legal and/or social boundaries?
- **ACCESS:** Should citizens be required to have certain cultural proficiencies/ capabilities? If so, what implications do you see for immigration?
- **RESPONSIBILITIES:** What are the duties of a citizen? When the duties of citizens do not correspond to state policies and practices, should citizens organize and act as agents to shape new notions of citizenship?
- **ENTITLEMENT:** What are the state's responsibilities towards the citizen?

#### **DREAM**

2. What about Canada makes you especially glad that you live here?

3. What should Canadian citizenship look like in the imagined future? (This is an exercise in imagination so let it fly.....)

#### **DESIGN**

4. What three priorities would you choose to enhance Canadian citizenship for the imagined future? Why?

#### **DESTINY**

5. If we want to make your vision a reality, what can we do today to make it a reality in the future? As a society? As an individual?

6. Any other suggestions/comments/instructions about how a truly multicultural state might create full and equal citizens?

## **APPENDIX II**

Ryerson University  
MA Immigration and Settlement Studies

### **Canadian Citizenship in the Imagined Future**

#### **CONSENT FORM**

##### **Researcher**

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##### **Description of Research Study**

The purpose of this research project is to construct a description of Canadian citizenship in the imagined future, encompassing three components of citizenship – membership, entitlement and expectations, and to recommend strategies for attaining it. The three questions that orient this research are:

- “What is citizenship?”
- “What should Canadian citizenship be like in the imagined future?”
- “What can we do today to make this vision a reality tomorrow?”

##### **Voluntary participation**

Participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. At any time during the study, you are free to pass on any question you do not wish to answer.

##### **Purpose and Benefits**

There is no financial compensation for participating in this study. However, it is expected that the study will impact Canadians by producing a vision of citizenship for the future that can be used to design programs, processes and an environment aimed at developing an inclusive citizenship model. This will benefit all Canadians.

##### **Procedures**

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do **four** things.

1. You will be asked to fill out a questionnaire about yourself. This information will include questions about your general background (for example, your age, gender, job related to immigration and settlement), and your status in Canada. Filling out the questionnaire will take 10 – 15 minutes.
2. You will be invited to take part in a focus group discussion. This will take 90 -120 minutes.

##### **OPTIONAL**

3. After the focus group, there will be an opportunity for individual follow-up conversation where you can clarify, extend or rebut what was discussed at the focus group. This may be done via phone, email or face-to-face interview. This may take 7-10 minutes.
4. You will be asked to provide a brief profile (maximum 75 words) about yourself. This is so that you get a chance to self-identify yourself for a wider readership. All profiles will be collated as an annex to the study.

##### **Risk, Stress or Discomfort**

The risks to participating in this project are minimal and no more than what may be expected during a discussion involving passionate views and diverse opinions.

**Expressed Non-Confidentiality**

The nature of the research and the dynamics of the group preclude confidentiality. However, best efforts will be made to remove non-essential identifying characteristics in the text. You will have an option of how you would like to be referred to in the text.

**Sharing of data/research**

The raw data may be shared after a period of five years with other researchers who may wish to use the data as a secondary source for a comparative or longitudinal study.

The research paper may be edited or extended for doctoral dissertation, books, monographs, and articles in professional journals. Presentations may be made at conferences and workshops to academic, professional and community publics, social service agencies and the general public. Other relevant means of dissemination, such a multi-media exhibition, website, summaries and press releases to the general public, may also be used.

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Researcher

Date

**Subject's Statement:**

The study described above has been explained to me. I have had a chance to ask questions. I will receive a copy of this consent form. If I have questions later on about the research I can ask the researcher named above. If I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I can call Alex Karabanow, Research Ethics Coordinator, Office of the Associate Vice President, Academic, akaraban@ryerson.ca, telephone 416-979-5000 ext.7112.

- I agree to take part in the research study by filling the questionnaire and attending the focus group discussion.
- I agree \_\_\_\_/do not agree \_\_\_\_ to have the researcher contact me for a follow-up conversation.  
I prefer email \_\_\_\_ face-to-face interview \_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_ (number \_\_\_\_)
- I agree \_\_\_\_/do not agree \_\_\_\_ to provide a brief profile of myself to be attached as an annex to the research paper.
- In the text, I would prefer to be cited as \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. full name, first name, pseudonym, initials)
- I would like to receive the research findings. I may be contacted at \_\_\_\_\_

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- I am aware that the research paper may be published for wider dissemination.
  - I am aware that the raw data including transcripts/audiotapes, filled questionnaires, may be used as secondary sources by other researchers.

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Signature of Subject

Date

## Appendix III

### VISION OF CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP IN THE IMAGINED FUTURE

#### INDIVIDUAL VOICES

*Abdulhamid* A place where all can have equal opportunities without any discrimination that is either overt or subtle and be a model for the world to emulate. Where a Christian, Hindu, Jew and a Muslim could sit together and tackle issues affecting the society as a whole without offending anyone. Very multicultural society with different types of people getting along very well as neighbours as one community.

I would like to see the country more accessible in terms of transportation. Residents of the east coast should be able to visit the west coast with little difficulty. Also public transportation to be increased especially within the urban centres so that we do not have to rely on driving cars. Would love it to be a little less cold.

Equal opportunity for all. Immigration policy that is not discriminatory. Be a leader in promoting peace and justice in its true sense. We have been known as peace keepers and should make it as our policy. We are becoming increasingly multicultural and would be in the best possible situation than others to play this role. It will cost us less and we would lose less of our citizens for no reason.

*Aldith* I would like to think that in the future a Canadians - particularly those who are minorities, would not be need a hyphen. They would be considered as "true" Canadians... The concept of 'social inclusion' rests on five major pillars

- a) Valued Recognition- where there is a sensitivity to differences (gender, cultural)
- b) Human Development-where talents, skills and capacities are nurtured, where individuals are empowered to feel self worth because of the contributions they can make.
- c) Involvement and Engagement-the right to be involved in the decisions that affect family, community and political participation.
- d) Proximity-reduction of distances / access to services such as public spaces i.e. parks, libraries, housing, schools.
- e) Material well being-housing, adequate income. (Saloojee, 2003)<sup>28</sup>.

Citizenship, for me, is about being included.

*Debbie* The essence of citizenship is a shared commonality. Part of it is spatial but this sense of shared space has little meaning when none of us experience all of Canadian geography. Part of it is ideological but this is pretty sketchy also when each person has his/her own idea of what it means to be Canadian. So what can be

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<sup>28</sup> Aldith was referring to the five "cornerstones" of social inclusion promoted by Laidlaw Foundation, cited in Saloojee, A. (2003, July). Social inclusion, anti-racism and democratic citizenship. *Working Paper Series, Perspectives on Social Inclusion. Laidlaw Foundation.*

shared by all ... Canada as a country where mutual respect abounds?...  
Commonality becomes more about relationships of respect and sharing of ideas.

*Effat*

Society is always changing - we cannot complete one's society. Can't say, okay this is complete and better. No, it is always changing... there will always be something else to reach... Canada is one the richest country in the world but it has poverty and homeless people every where. No one should live in this situation. Individuals should lead their lives in accordance with freely chosen values about what gives meaning to their lives, and individuals should be free to question their beliefs in light of new information...Hijab for Muslim women has different meaning than [that of turbans] for Sikh men.

*Fatima*

Canada should be working towards collectivity rather than individuality. We should be looking at taking care of our neighbour...not just say this doesn't concern me, it is not my problem, I cannot interfere in somebody else's business. We should be able to take collective responsibility for the safety and welfare of others, not only those who are in trouble . So to be able to have that openheart, share, not pretending, not a fake smile.

*Nalini*

Citizenship in the future? It should be like Israel, in that anybody could claim it and it would be open to anybody that wanted it but without the bloodline happening and without pushing other people into the sea, you know...the ideology of Israel but the openness that anybody could be Canadian that defines themselves as Canadian.... I don't want to define it, and I realize that this is completely untenable on an economic level- but I'm - I'm just talking from the heart. Let's say my cousin in Guyana that is born and raised there and many generations Guyanese, decides well most of his family has left Guyana and they are all here now- he's Canadian too because this is where most of his family is - well, why not? [Anyone] who felt an emotional, passionate sense of identity...rather than mistrusting everybody and thinking that everybody is a potential security risk and a terrorist threat or whatever. And then I would like to get rid of the citizenship test because I'm sure I couldn't pass it and I doubt my friends that were born in Canada couldn't pass it either and I don't remember my Canadian history and I know I tried to avoid it in history class because it was just so boring so um so that we can equalize the citizenship across. And I think that either everyone takes the test, or no-one takes the test and I prefer no-one.

*Parminder*

Ideally, I would it if there was no national citizenship. I would love to see global citizenship with equal rights to travel and move, although it probably wouldn't extend to equal opportunity. Ideally, I would like to see Canada with a viable economy. Canada has to forge relations with China and India, they're the growing economies. I would like to see Canada as an egalitarian society.

*Xiaofeng*

I would like all Canadians to be political co-creators of reality. Everyone knows it and they do it voluntarily, like members of a family. Everyone contributes with their effort, whatever they can do.

*Yuan Mai/Elaine* I would like to see all languages treated with equal value, with any language credited for work and school. And there would be no time limit to becoming a citizen and an emphasis on what we need, like we need construction skills. Less taxes for sure. A two-tier health care system, where people have choice to choose private or government care. Maybe visible minorities will just be part of Canada, not being asked 'where are you from?' like the French or English. Just taken as Canadians, without people being patronizing about Canada being multicultural. That's putting labels on it. That really bothers me.

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