

**FITTING IN AND STANDING OUT: IMMIGRANT YOUTH NEGOTIATING NEW
CITIZENSHIPS IN MULTICULTURAL CANADA**

by

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Abstract

Youth are forceful political actors who challenge mainstream conceptions of what it means to be a citizen, immigrants and a young person, contesting what it means to be representatives for these titles. We fail to realize that these individuals, especially youth who don't fit neatly into these categories, have their own personal stories and experiences that often go unheard.

This project is about the process of negotiating belonging and citizen action in Vancouver, British Columbia. The primary contribution of this project is towards understanding how Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) can create space and guidance for immigrant youth. My thesis rests both on academic and popular research, and interviews with refugee youth who have participated in an integration program called MYCircle. I present some of the ways people feel (dis)connected to the place they live, and integration in a multicultural society. Ultimately, this project sheds light on the youth's attitudes and opinions towards the integration process as well as conflicts and collusions between migrant youth and Canada during that process.

Preface

This thesis is an original, unpublished, and independent document authored by Sarah Przedpelska. The fieldwork conducted for this thesis was approved by the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board certificate H13-00749. The Principal Investigator was Dr. Daniel Hiebert.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Preface.....	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Abbreviations	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
Dedication	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 My Arrival	1
1.2 Youth and Identity: Kids These Days.....	2
1.3 A Race Conscious Lens	4
1.4 Chapter Outlines	9
Chapter 2: Understandings of Citizenship	11
2.1 Introduction.....	11
2.2 Traditional Understandings of Citizenship	13
2.3 Speaking from the Outside.....	18
2.4 State Guarantor?.....	25
2.5 Keeping the Construct.....	26
2.6 Territorial Presence and the Domicile	27
2.7 New Geographies of Citizenship-Belonging: Enacted Citizenship.....	31
2.8 Conclusion	33
Chapter 3: Changing Conditions in Multicultural Canada.....	35

3.1	Economic Migrants.....	36
3.2	Multiculturalism in Canada.....	43
3.3	New Policies Against Prescription.....	48
3.4	Service Provider Organizations in BC.....	51
3.5	Conclusion	59
Chapter 4: Reflections on Blazers, Ethics, Methods and People.....		60
4.1	The Blazer	60
4.2	The Ethics Board.....	63
4.3	Methods.....	64
4.4	Introducing the Youth.....	65
4.5	Conclusion	67
Chapter 5: Fitting In and Standing Out		68
5.1	Invaluable Space: The Importance of Peer Support at MYCircle	71
5.2	Fitting In	77
5.3	Standing Out	82
5.4	Discussion	85
5.5	Conclusion	88
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....		90
Bibliography		92
Appendices.....		102

List of Abbreviations

AMSSA - the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies of BC
BC – British Columbia
Bill C-36 - Anti-Terrorism Act
Bill S-7 - Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act
Bill C24 – Citizenship Act
Bill C31 - Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act
BREB - Behaviour Research Ethics Board
CIC - Citizenship and Immigration Canada
ISSofBC - Immigrant Serving Society of British Columbia
PR- Permanent Resident
SPO – Service Provider Organization
SWIS – Settlement Workers In Schools
TR – Temporary Resident
TFW – Temporary Foreign Worker
TFWP – Temporary Foreign Worker Program
UBC- University of British Columbia

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Canadian society has the tendency to group immigrants in terms of national identity and sort them into categories such as citizens, immigrants and refugees forcing individuals to be representatives of these titles. We fail to realize that these individuals, especially youth who don't fit neatly into these categories, have their own personal stories and experiences that often go unheard.

1.1 My Arrival

I used to describe myself as a person who loved to travel, discover new worlds, and get to know new people and places. I took pride in the number of stamps collected in my passport and got a high every time I picked up enough of a language to make myself understood on the terms of the people who were hosting me. I was completely blind to the privilege with which I travelled that allowed me to pass any border I desired without being questioned. While the radio or television has always been on in the background, reporting stories of refugees, forced migration, and the exploitation and travails of the labour migrants in my home country, I never considered how this was linked to my world. One experience in particular changed this. My very good friend visited me in Oslo from Assam. I remember asking when she would arrive, and why she couldn't just order the tickets. She replied that she needed a letter – a guarantee from someone in the host country that she would stay with me and leave when her trip was over. The fact that she didn't live in Oslo nor had any desire to didn't matter. She was under suspicion by border authorities. She embodied the risk that she might take advantage of Norway by remaining in the country, and deteriorating the benefits for the rest of us. I felt outrage that this in fact could be the case, and for never having thought of my privilege in this way before. I realized I was part

of a small proportion of people in the world who carried a little red book that could let them pass through national boundaries with ease. It cast my identity in sharp relief against other nationalities, and it made me question what it means to belong and why we make borders at all.

Questions of belonging are fundamental to the process of forming identity and they hit youth hard.

1.2 Youth and Identity: Kids These Days

A central premise to this thesis is that any idea about the future and what kind of country we want to live in has to begin with the issue of youth. Young people embody the projected dreams, desires and commitment of a society's obligations to the future. Youth not only symbolically register Canada's claim to progress, they also affirm the importance of the democratic tradition of the social contract in which adult responsibility is mediated through a willingness to fight for the rights of those who come after (the next generation), to enact reforms that invest in their future, and to provide the conditions for them to make use of the freedoms they have while learning how to be critical citizens.

Young people are key to the development of new citizenship: they are more interconnected to the global world than ever before because of migration and displacement, facilitated by technology. They matter as a political group, but are often silenced by formal exclusionary means, such as the age limit on the legal right to vote or in less formal ways such as disregarding their contributions and voice on the basis of age.

Buckingham (2002) presents a common assumption in traditional work on youth and citizenship: that young citizens –to the extent that they have rights –must be socialized into adult

norms of political involvement rather than being considered thinking agents who may express important critiques of citizenship and nationhood.

Youth are both a symbol of hope for the future and a threat to the existing social order. Caught in this contradiction, one can look to the images of youth at the barricades in the widely publicized 1999 blockade of the WTO meetings in Seattle. Those images are revealing of the underlying concerns of young people about globalization. Coverage of these events revealed an ambivalence that goes to the heart of the duality projected onto youth: the suspicion that young people are not mature citizens who can act effectively and, simultaneously, the fear that they are citizens with the power to affect change that some may not desire. Such moral panics about youth are amplified when the youth in question also represent a different culture.

Contrary to what Henry A. Giroux (2012:xiv) claims, youth aren't being "reduced to an invisible category". They have agency. They are far from apathetic or indifferent –they're just different. Giroux, along with far too many people who write about youth, complain about the injustices committed against youth, and in the same instance this conflates and erases youths' capacities for agency within those constraints. Denying youth agency also denies many of the opportunities for changing the unfavourable conditions Giroux claims creates the invisible category.

Immigrant¹ youth are caught in a double limbo: between cultures, not just generations. As young people, they already struggle with identity. As immigrants, they must also adapt to new languages, schools, status, gender roles, and very often discrimination. Disadvantaged and

¹ I use the words *immigration* and *immigrants* because they are common in the literature I rely on, but I recognize that these terms connote a sense of permanent settlement that might not occur. They also obscure the motivations of migration (political upheaval, economic needs, family reunification, etc.) and immigrants' particular status (undocumented, temporary or permanent legal resident, refugee, asylum seeker, etc.).

oppressed groups, such as many immigrant youth, continue their struggles over citizenship by exercising their agency. They build concepts and processes that can challenge exclusion and promote access, rights, recognition, representation, and social justice.

Notions of citizenship are especially negotiated and contested by those whose citizenship is incomplete. Citizenship has always been and continues to be about inclusion and exclusion but also power, agency, and identity: the power to name and categorize, the agency of contestation and resistance, and the identities formed on the basis of multiple, shifting intersections of group memberships (Dobrowolsky and Jenson 2004). All this underscores citizenship as a critical, fluid, and dynamic process of agency, resistance and negotiation. For immigrant youth in Vancouver, a critical understanding of citizenship and community engagement starts with a question of identity.

1.3 A Race Conscious Lens

The more power an identity carries, the less likely its carrier is to be aware of it as an identity at all. Those who have never been asked “How do you balance childcare and work” or “How can you prove that you will return home after this holiday?” are less likely to think that their masculinity or western citizenship and the privileges that come with them are anything but the normal state of affairs (Younge 2011:44).

In the quote above, Gary Younge confronts what James Baldwin calls the innocence at the heart of white identity. By innocence he means the refusal to acknowledge the other, a disconnection by which people protect themselves and their values against reality, experience, or change. For Baldwin, moral maturity and the value of democracy, multiculturalism, etc. depends on struggling against/with innocence by putting identities and principles at risk in encounters with experience and history. I interpret this to be race consciousness.

According to J. Lynn McBrien (2005), the key obstacles to success amongst immigrant and refugee youth are social alienation, language barriers and racist discrimination. For this reason,

attention needs to be drawn to the deficiencies of multiculturalism and the practices of exclusionary citizenship. Only by highlighting the problems and weaknesses inherent in the existing framework can alternative visions and transformative social justice projects emerge. Questions of citizenship, multiculturalism and integration in Canada need to be repoliticized through a racial lens in order to break down barriers of discrimination and reconstruct citizenship among more pluralistic and inclusive lines.

I use the term *white supremacy* and not racism in order to identify what forces are at work. Whiteness is privileged in our society, even amongst people of colour. As the author Junot Diaz (2013) phrases it: “It’s easy to fantasize the end of something, but it’s harder to understand how persistent it is. If you take all the white people and send them to the moon, and they come back 200 years later, things will all be the same. All the light-skinned people and their friends will be running things”. Put more simply, whiteness is privileged, structurally, culturally, and politically. It even exists in the absence of white people.

How can you change something if you won’t acknowledge its existence, or if you downplay its significance? White supremacy is a great silence, not addressed or acknowledged in circles of power. And yet this is the rub: if a critique of white supremacy doesn’t first flow through an analysis, if it doesn’t first implicate those of us who are white, then one has missed the mark. In this way, one has all but guaranteed its survival and reproduction. White supremacy’s greatest trick is that it has convinced people that, if it exists at all, it exists always in other people, never in ourselves. It is only by first recognizing the social and material realities we live in—by naming and examining the effects of white supremacy—that we can hope to transform our practices to create a more equitable society.

In order to combat white supremacy in society we also need to implicate ourselves and take responsibility for identifying our white privilege as well as the multiple ways in which racism works. This is uncomfortable, mostly because as white people our everyday seldom involves being confronted with race. However, if your skin is brown or you belong to a group of racialized people,² the discomfort is inescapable, regardless of how much you'd prefer not to deal with such a negative aspect of society.

Peggy McIntosh (1988) has taught many white people of the privilege we carry, and how we benefit from existing social and political structures. In the article *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*, McIntosh compiles a list of white privileges that serves as a common starting point for understanding white privilege. This privilege takes the form of an invisible, weightless knapsack of special provisions, such as cultural maps, passports, codebooks, clothes, and other social tools. Privilege is a package of “unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was *meant* to remain oblivious” (166). Accordingly, unpacking the knapsack and acknowledging how we all embody white privilege and white supremacy in different forms allows us, both as individuals and as a society, to move from a non-racist stance to an anti-racist stance (Srivastava 2005). Instead of denying racism and privilege, the acknowledgement of the knapsack opens room for action, which is the first step to improve social justice.

It is not enough, however, to just acknowledge this privilege and point out individual racist actions in order to combat white supremacy. In multicultural Canada, fewer instances of explicit racism are uttered than in many other migrant countries, thanks to legal frameworks against hate

²I use the term brown to signify people who have a different skin colour than white, both because the people I interviewed described themselves as brown, but also because I believe that the term people of colour assumes that whiteness is exempted from colour and therefore reinforces it as the default norm.

speech and an ideology that encourages diversity. Despite these legal frameworks against verbal racism and hate crime, racism still lives on in daily privileges pervading all institutions of our society.

When pointing out individual acts of racism, when the ugly spills to the surface, the consequences can be damaging. Before there can be outrage, the offending (racist) party must be caught red-handed – preferably documented on tape or in writing – using the worst epithets and most egregious insults. And so the perception takes hold that racism is not a system of discrimination planted by history, nourished by politics and economics, in which some groups face widespread disadvantage – it's about ignorant people getting caught saying mean things (Younge 2014). By privileging these episodes – outrageous as they are – racism is reduced to the level of an individual, isolated, and embarrassing indiscretion. The scandal becomes not that racism exists but that anyone would be crass enough to articulate it so brazenly. In white supremacist society these banal practices tend to be treated as largely the result of individual ignorance and certainly not intended to offend. Innocent until proven racist is the de facto culture of white supremacist society. This is what I wish to upend in my analysis of citizenship, immigration and belonging in Canada. This is why it is necessary to identify how white supremacy in society acts to understand how young immigrants struggle to negotiate their citizenship and belonging in Canadian society.

That is not to say that *all* white people are bad and nothing that we do can ever be good in the struggle to improve social justice. Rather, applying a race consciousness lens that centres whiteness as the source of historical wrongs causing contemporary and future repercussions, I believe it becomes a little easier to understand so many of the obstacles brown and other racialized immigrants (and non-immigrants) face.

At a meeting of SPO workers organized by my supervisor, Dr. Daniel Hiebert, at the Affiliation and Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies of BC (AMSSA) in the spring of 2013, one service provider expressed her desire to see research focused on success stories of immigrant youth rather than all the ways in which they are further marginalized, e.g. through racist discrimination. My focus on the capacity and agency of youth allows for this even through I present my analysis through an antiracist lens. That is not to say that we should close our eyes to all the bad things that are happening, but it gives heart to a defeatist attitude of dismal antiracist complaint.

It is important to tell stories of success, but also struggle to change the way immigrant youth are perceived by society, and let society at large know that youth define themselves. They don't sit around waiting for someone to tell them how the world works. Rather, they interpret the world through their own experiences and knowledge. This is not without challenges, of course. That is why I pose the following questions: What is citizenship today, and how does it enable belonging for immigrant youth? How do government, multiculturalism and service provider organizations (SPOs) factor into the process of negotiating citizenship belonging for racialized immigrants? How do youth articulate their citizenship belonging, and how does the MYCircle program facilitate this?

I answer these questions through a framework of citizenship theory, multicultural theory, theory around SPOs and theory about belonging and participation. My engagement with research within geography seeks to offer a constellation of critiques and meditations for new political engagements, understandings and practices of citizenship.

1.4 Chapter Outlines

In the following pages I share my research and analysis of a project conducted with immigrant youth in Vancouver. My goal is to engage with new ideas about what it means to be a citizen, and putting those new ideas to practice in my analysis of immigrant youth and their negotiation of citizenship in Canada. Furthermore, I wish to explore the ways government policy and non-governmental organizations interact, and what conditions these interactions produce for the youth who wish to participate in activities organized by SPOs.

In Chapter 2, I present traditional understandings of the concept of citizenship, and I demonstrate several examples of groups that have been excluded and that have fought for inclusion in the status of citizen. I then argue that it is intentional territorial belonging (i.e. residence)—what Harald Bauder (2012a) calls the *domicile*—and not the chance of birth or blood that should determine citizenship. Finally, I suggest that citizenship is enacted in many ways beyond the traditional conceptions. I call these *citizen actions*.

In Chapter 3, I present the changing conditions of immigration in multicultural Canada, and I argue that while the Conservative government's recent policy changes don't signify a completely new trajectory, something is indeed new. That something is the doublespeak of promoting multiculturalism as an identity marker of Canadian society while forming policies that are detrimental to many of the country's multicultural inhabitants, including immigrant youth.

Chapter 4 consists of my reflections around the ethics process and the research methods I used for my fieldwork.

In Chapter 5, I share some of the stories of negotiating citizenship that the immigrant youth related during the interviews. Through the MYCircle program and in the company of peers, the youth developed valuable skills to assist them in their navigation of citizenship. I identify two

ways the youth try to make sense of their citizen actions in Vancouver: *fitting in* and *standing out*. In my discussion I argue that this binary denies the immigrant youth agency in their negotiation of citizenship. I therefore develop a more complex image of what the negotiation process is like.

In Chapter 6, I briefly conclude, suggesting that immigrant youth have agency despite the structural challenges they face. They negotiate and determine their own form for citizenship belonging through their at times contradictory citizen actions. Peer led programs such as MYCircle facilitate this negotiation, empowering immigrant youth and creating a positive space for reflection and socially engaged community strategy building.

Chapter 2: Understandings of Citizenship

2.1 Introduction

What is the relation between a nation and its inhabitants, between a nation and its citizens, or between a nation and all the people from which it withholds its protections? What is citizenship and how is it established, demanded and enacted? These are key questions that echo throughout my thesis, and in this chapter they serve as the frame for understanding what citizenship has been, is, and can be in a context that incorporates a population, and especially immigrants.

In an increasingly globalized world, the populations of different countries are becoming more diverse, while transnational connections embed people in multiple geographies (Basch et al. 2005; Vertovec and Cohen 2002). At the same time, borders tighten and securitize, creating friction for travellers and migrants (Gilbert 2007). These two contradictory processes make transnational lives both easier and more difficult than ever before. Being a citizen in this context is no longer synonymous with home and nation; yet not having access to the benefits associated with citizenship is making it harder to create a home in a new nation, even an immigrant nation like Canada.

Though Canada has a high rate of immigrants turning citizens, the rate is diminishing.³ To complicate matters, even migrants with Canadian citizenship are in an increasingly precarious position. Since entering office in 2006, the Conservative federal government has been gradually

³ The longer immigrants reside in Canada, the more likely they are to become Canadian citizens. Among the foreign-born population who immigrated prior to 1971, 93.3% reported that they had become Canadian citizens. In contrast, a bit over three-quarters (77.2%) of immigrants who came between 2001 and 2005 had acquired citizenship. Less than two-fifths (36.7%) of the newly eligible immigrants, who arrived between 2006 and 2007, had become a Canadian citizen by 2011 (StatCan 2011). Safe to say, Canada has a high, if diminishing, rate of naturalized citizens.

increasing their discretionary power over Canada's inhabitants; in the summer of 2014, minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Chris Alexander, introduced Bill C-24. Under this bill, governmentally dubbed *The Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act*, legal citizenship became harder to obtain, and easier to remove at the discretion of immigration officials if circumstances prove suspicions of threatening activities. Global migration, national policy changes and local actions are changing what citizenship means, both altering and enhancing old configurations of citizenship, and shedding light on new practices of enacting the dimensions of citizenship, different to what citizenship has been since it was formally introduced to Canadians in 1946.

Chapter 1 serves as a discussion of the concept of citizenship, from T.H. Marshall's defining research in the 1950s to contemporary theorizations that especially take migration into account. There is, of course, already a vast body of literature on the idea and practice of citizenship, which is reflective of the topic's relevance to geographic, political, legal and economic fields. My objective in this chapter is to point to the existing contradictions in traditional conceptions of citizenship, and to show how a geographic understanding of space lends itself to a broader inclusion of people at the edges of Canadian citizenship. I will do this by discussing how citizenship has traditionally been framed in academic writing and what has been excluded from these framings, and then move into a discussion of how it can be reframed and reconstituted by the least likely actors. The final point of this chapter is to arrive at a working concept of citizenship that I will use for the remainder of my thesis.

My intervention in this literature review is to expose how citizenship granted by the state has been and is integrally tied to the differential categorization of populations, predicated on continual racist exclusion and dispossession of the marginalized, indigenous populations and migrants. This differential categorization is unfair, produces both direct and indirect inequality,

and is contradictory to Canada's commitment to equality and multicultural values (which I plot out in Chapter 2).

In what follows, I first discuss three theoretical dimensions of citizenship through Marshall's work. Second, I turn to feminist and anti-racist literatures that point out omissions in Marshall's writing, by emphasizing gendered, indigenous and racial struggles for and with inclusion in citizenship. Third, I make a case for the value of citizenship as a concept despite its weaknesses, but I suggest that it can be expanded and improved through the theoretical incorporation of Harald Bauder's (2012a) concept of the domicile. Fourth, through Irene Bloemraad's (2006) concept of belonging and Engin Isin's (2008) citizen innovations, I argue that immigrants, and particularly youth, are demanding and enacting new geographies of citizenship, regardless of definitions by the state. Considering both theoretical and practical conceptions of what citizenship can be, I argue that there is much to be gained by perceiving citizenship in more inclusive terms, in order to design effective policy and deter Canada from repeating its dark and exclusionary migrant past, but also to recognize how citizenship is as much demanded as it is granted.

2.2 Traditional Understandings of Citizenship

Citizenship, the inclusion and membership within a particular national territory, has awarded (certain) individuals the freedom of mobility (to travel freely outside the boundaries of the nation-state), the freedom to vote in political elections, and the freedoms to access educational grants, welfare and other social resources. The concept of citizenship has positive associations, guarantees and values. The key benefits relate to privileges, the right to a voice and

security; with citizenship comes control over crucial political, economic and social goods. These are all good things, for those with access to them.

Citizenship, as a juridical status, is tied to the categories of birth by citizen parents (bloodline, or *jus sanguine*), or birth in the territory (of the soil, or *jus soli*). Several countries with a substantial immigrant population, such as Canada and the US have adopted the principle of *jus soli* to integrate the descendants of settled immigrants. This citizenship principle ensures that the children of immigrants are included in the Canadian polity, even if their parents chose not to become (or were not offered the opportunity to become) Canadians. As such, the birth of a citizen in a nation linked to a particular territory marks the very grounds by which a person is included, and thereby granted certain inalienable rights and privileges. Those arriving from outside these categories complicate the nation's population and territory because citizenship can only exist by simultaneously defining the limits and conditions of itself—by defining the non-citizen, the foreigner, or the stranger (Bosniak 2008).

Traditional noncitizens are not always and entirely outside the scope of those institutions and practices and experiences we call citizenship. Indeed, many of citizenship's core attributes do not depend on formal citizenship status at all but are extended to individuals based on the facts of their personhood and national territorial presence. The experiences of being a citizen and enjoying citizenship are not always aligned as a practical matter; status noncitizens are the subjects of what many call citizenship in a variety of contexts (Bosniak 2008).

Passports and birth certificates may grant the formal citizenship status, with legal access to a country's borders, responsibilities and rights. The Government of Canada (2012) in their handbook for new citizens, *Discover Canada*, outlines the responsibilities for citizens, or what I call *citizen actions*: Obeying the law; taking responsibility for oneself and ones family; serving

on a jury; voting in elections; helping others in the community; and protecting and enjoying the country's heritage and environment. Many people possessing the required legal documents and status of citizenship do not enact these responsibilities, and conversely, there are many people in Canada who enact and live out this component of what the government has defined as citizenship. The former is what can be called *legal citizenship*, and the latter can be thought of as *lived citizenship*. These categories are not mutually exclusive, but one does not warrant the other either. This distinction provides an important component to how I will define new forms of citizenship and citizen action.

By its very definition, citizenship is an exclusionary concept. In order for an inside to exist, there must be an outside, where benefits and rights are not guaranteed by the state. For those who exist on the outside it is a tool used to draw lines and legally perpetuate inequality, to deny protections and securities from certain historically gendered and (almost always) racialized groups.

Grete Brochmann and Anniken Hagelund (2012) exemplify this when they argue for the necessity of (almost) closed borders and citizenship exclusivity in their book *Immigration Policy and the Scandinavian Welfare State 1945-2010*. They believe the distribution of benefits such as health insurance and welfare payments can only be sustained if immigration is limited. Granting citizenship indiscriminately would erode the state's capacity to ensure the well being of current citizens. Therefore, a certain form of discrimination is part of how the practice of citizenship functions.⁴ Further, these exclusions have been justified by the supposed need for social

⁴ This could explain how countries with high levels of welfare have a low level of permanent immigrants due to strict border policies, such as Norway, Luxemburg and Switzerland. More guests at the party mean a smaller piece of the pie for everyone. Still, anomalies exist, such as Sweden, with its approximately 70.000 Syrian refugees in 2014. In his book, *The Price of Rights*, Martin Ruhs (2013) argues for why high levels of immigrants are oft at times

cohesion, leading to the question of what sort of social cohesion is required for contemporary societies (Calhoun 2007; Joppke 1998).

In one respect, the trouble with citizenship is one of semantics: the term has multiple meanings, and this creates confusion. But the trouble runs deeper than that. Citizenship in liberal democratic states such as Canada, stands, as Bosniak (2008) argues, for both universalist (equal rights for everyone) and exclusionary (applies only to our citizens) commitments. Usually, however, the universalist/exclusionary aspects of citizenship are often not understood as conflicting but rather as complementary, with each one relevant to, and operative in, a different jurisdictional domain. Universalism, in this understanding, is applicable within the national political community, while exclusion applies at its edges.

In our world of porous borders, real separation is often elusive. This is nowhere clearer than in the context of increased transnational migration, where foreigners enter the bounded national territory from the outside and, once present, are assigned the status of outsider within (Bloemraad et al. 2008). These noncitizen immigrants, both temporary and permanent residents, have entered the spatial domain of universal citizenship, but they remain outsiders in a significant sense: the border effectively follows them inside (Bosniak 2008).⁵

In theory, citizenship allows for wider inclusion, even if one is neither of Canadian soil or lineage. Through the process of naturalization, one can apply to become a Canadian citizen after

incommensurable with high levels of social welfare, and he demonstrates how high income countries regulate the rights of immigrants as part of their labour immigration policies to diminish increased expenses.

⁵ As Geraldine Pratt (2004) summarizes in her *Working Feminism*, many of the people who exist within the nation, but outside citizenship, are the ones who enable the improved lives of struggling groups. Pratt's example is of the Filipina women who work as live-in caregivers, who take care of the children of white, middle class Canadian women, while themselves being exploited economically and emotionally. Granting these outsiders the same rights as the traditional insiders would, as in all other cases of migrant workers, remove the source of inequality that lets Canadian women access more social upward mobility. This gives an incentive to maintain the unequal relationship of outsiders inside. However, unique to Canada, is the offer of citizenship after 2-3 years, if the applicants fulfill certain criteria.

retaining a Permanent Residency (PR) for at least three of the past four years, caveats and bureaucracy battles of course included (Government of Canada 2009). There are other ways of legally belonging to Canadian society without being a citizen: as a refugee claimant, working migrant, as a student with a visa or as a tourist (Pratt 2004). These are all forms of differential belonging, in addition to undocumented migrants, present outside of the aforementioned categories, without the same rights and responsibilities. These legal practices reflect the identity of Canada as a settler and migrant society and the attempts to accommodate difference in the population.

2.2.1 Mandatory Marshall: Citizenship as Rights and Practices

Writing four years after the introduction of the Canadian Citizenship Act (1946), British theorist T.H. Marshall pioneered a more nuanced understanding with his now classic work on citizenship. In his *Citizenship and Social Class*, Marshall (1950) looked at the development of citizenship in Britain, and especially how the difference of the working class was incorporated into British citizenship. Marshall defined citizenship as full membership in the community, based on a threefold dimension of civil, political, and social rights and obligations. Without all three dimensions, citizens are not fully included as members of the state and therefore form a type of second-class citizen. For him the civil dimension is “composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom” and occurs through the legal system; the political dimension is “the right to participate in the exercise of political power” through the right to vote and hold political office; and the social dimension is the “the whole range from the right to a modicum of welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and the right to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society (Marshall 1950:10-11)”.

Already in 1950, Marshall was asking whether market economies, with their inherent inequalities, could be reconciled with a notion of full membership. Sketching out a historical evolution of rights, he suggested that economic changes led to the extension of civil rights, then political rights, and finally, using their political rights, the British working class won social rights. Social rights would, Marshall hoped, ensure formal and substantive equality (Adams et al. 2005).

Marshall's notion of full membership holds rights not only as valuable in themselves, but also as the means to ensure the solidarity necessary for the functioning of a social democratic welfare state. According to his logic, citizenship rights and legal status promote participation, which in turn facilitate social cohesion and common political projects across the class-ridden British society. Despite his groundbreaking inclusion of class in the concept of citizenship, critics argue that Marshall excluded important elements from his theory.

2.3 Speaking from the Outside

Marshall laid important theoretical grounds for recognizing the importance of political, civil, and social rights when defining citizenship statuses. However, his work focuses on the internal landscape of citizenship, which ignores issues of immigration or the role of state borders/institutions. According to Rogers Brubaker (1998), citizenship is a mechanism of social closure that distinguishes citizens from foreigners. His *externally exclusive* element of citizenship is important for understanding the impact of immigration on citizenship. Moreover, it opens up the internally focused theories of citizenship, like Marshall's work, which ignores the crossing of state borders and naturalization processes, to include issues of migration, integration, and assimilation of new residents into citizens.

Critics of Marshall, such as Seyla Benhabib (2004) and Niral Yuval-Davis (1997) argue that his definition of citizenship is one without empire and other internal inequalities beyond class. Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon (1994) emphasize that his perspective is derived from middle-class, English, male and white cultural values that do not take individual subjectivities and cultural differences into account, particularly those of women, racialized minorities, and children. Among other consequences, Marshall's focus on the native-born working class prevents him from seeing cultural rights as a distinct prerequisite to full societal participation (Bauböck 2001). These critiques highlight sources of inequality beyond class position and suggest that other inequalities might require a form of citizenship that incorporates difference.

Feminist scholarship has clearly shown that despite claims to universalism, citizenship has essentially been male defined, where women have traditionally been rendered to the status of children, property or mere non-citizens (Strong-Boag 2002). Up until 1932, foreign-born women could only naturalize through marriage, and it was only in 1940 that all (non-indigenous) women in Canada succeeded in their demand for the right to vote, a key component in Marshall's political dimension of citizenship (Hébert 2002).⁶ Feminist scholars argue that treating citizenship as a universal relationship between individuals and the state is incomplete without considering the way gender dynamics impact individuals in terms of status, access to resources, political participation, and the formation and implementation of state policies (Benhabib 2002; Bosniak 2008; Pratt 2004; Young 2011; Yuval-Davis 1997).

Feminists and critical race scholars have emphasized that Marshall's civil, political, and social rights need to be viewed as interdependent and intersectional, because rights do not

⁶ The western four provinces granted women the right to vote in 1918, and most other provinces followed shortly after. It was only Quebec that held out until 1940.

develop linearly from civil rights to political rights to social rights for everyone (Isin 2002). This interdependence is significant to all, but it is especially critical for women and other marginalized groups. The gendered and racial division of labour leaves disproportionately women and people of colour to rely on social programs to compensate for the structural barriers preventing access to the social dimensions of citizenship. Without equal social rights, how can they exercise their political rights? Structural and institutional constraints limit or exclude marginalized groups' ability to practice political agency in conventional ways. Recognizing how structural barriers work in different ways for different people allows us to understand how citizenship rights are not the same for all individuals and groups in Canada.

2.3.1 Aboriginal Exclusion/Inclusion

Especially relevant to the Canadian concept of citizenship is the exclusion of the people who first lived on this territory. European colonizers and settlers displaced Aboriginal peoples, appropriated their land, and denied them a political voice. This type of settlement through appropriation set the stage for the establishment of a new community built on large-scale immigration that excluded Aboriginal peoples. In this way, a clear material link exists between immigration and Aboriginal experiences, as the establishment of the former meant the dispossession of the latter.

Aboriginal peoples *were* offered citizenship by the government, but on very specific conditions: citizenship was tied to the goal of encouraging private ownership of land, and the abdication of their indigeneity (Thobani 2007). It sought to destroy their collective ownership of these lands and thus making them available to European settlers. The Canadian government also adopted the *Indian Act* in 1876 (a federal law which still exists in an amended form today) that

created state recognized Indian status, but until 1960 prevented the simultaneous maintenance of Indian status and citizen status with voting rights in the national election (Abu-Laban 2014). Access to citizenship rights was in this way extended to Aboriginal peoples upon the renunciation of their native status and their adoption of the so-called civilized institutions of private property, wage labour and the money economy (Lawrence 2004). These actions demonstrate a racist motivation by a colonial government who did not view the Aboriginal peoples as equal to them and therefore incapable of holding political power.

The category of citizen therefore did not evolve through some internal process within a community, with regrettable consequences for those on the outside. Canadian citizenship emerged as integral to the process that transformed Aboriginal peoples into inferior foreigners in their own territories, while simultaneously transforming outsiders (colonizers, settlers, migrants) into Canadian superior insiders and citizens (Walia 2013).⁷ The colonial exclusion of people who are of the soil unsettles the concept of *jus soli*, exposing a fundamental inconsistency that demonstrates the injustice and racism inherent to traditional Canadian citizenship. This inconsistency shows a racial exclusion that contradicted the principle of territorial belonging to Canada. In Chapter 2 and 4, I will discuss how a similar process excludes certain recent immigrants to Canada from and in citizenship, both structurally and intimately.

⁷ The inherent racism and the bloody past and present makes many indigenous scholars dismiss the concept of inclusion into citizenship and the Canadian state. A system that is inherently oppressive and founded on colonial violence will not improve merely by the inclusion of those who are outside. Rather, several indigenous scholars, such as Leanne Simpson (2013), Glen Coulthard (2014), Audra Simpson (2014), advocate resistance towards the imperial concept of citizenship and a reorientation around the practices of the people.

2.3.2 Group Rights and Canadian Contributions

Third wave feminists have been and remain, as women, people of color, aboriginal peoples, and immigrants, instrumental in addressing how citizenship produces and affects insiders and outsiders. They have also addressed how the concept can work towards a society that respects and accommodates people of all origins.

Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman (1994) describe how scholars of the left perceive social rights as providing the foundation for citizens' inclusion and participation; therefore, rights must be given before the establishment of responsibilities. The primary concerns of this school of thought are often expressed in terms of minority rights, welfare systems, or power structures.

In this context, Iris Marion Young (2011) argues for the politics of difference: the notion to include collective rights and group recognition claims based on differential needs, formed by gender, age, sex, migrant status, class, and race. Addressing the limits of citizenship, Young argues that equality cannot be fully reached if citizens are only granted the same rights as individuals, and she therefore suggests that individual rights need to be combined with group rights extended to certain communities.

According to Young (2011), society is formed of different groups that are either dominant or oppressed. A commitment to the universal rights of citizenship maintains this inequality. Following her logic, this strand of what she terms differentiated citizenship therefore concerns the denouncing of universal rights and the provision of special rights for oppressed groups. Young argues for a politics of difference and not one geared towards the possibility of universality. She writes that what is needed are *group rights* which enable marginalized and minority groups to uphold their autonomy in the face of dominant groups. Her citizenship ideal is one that accommodates and respects the diverse private identities of individuals enabling the

formation of a group-differentiated citizenship and a heterogeneous public. In Young's (2011:81) words, theory and practice must acknowledge "differences of social position, structured power, and cultural affiliation in political discussion and decision-making that aims to promote justice."

Canadian citizenship owes consideration of group rights to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (a bill of rights entrenched in the constitution in 1982). The attention Canadian scholars have given to group rights and the role of the welfare state and the Canadian constitution in supporting the demands and claims of groups for recognition, inclusion, and in some cases self-rule, has created a strong Canadian tradition of theorizing citizenship through a politics of difference.

Externally, Canada has received attention for its multicultural approach to citizenship, and internally, Canada has produced scholars, such as Kymlicka, Charles Taylor, James Tully and Joseph Carens, who shape similar ideas of multicultural citizenship that accommodates difference.

Demands from francophone, Aboriginal peoples, and other non-British, non-French formal citizens created what Kymlicka (2007) describes as the Canadian multicultural response. He identifies the importance of differentiated rights or differentiated citizenship in the creation of the Multiculturalism Act (Government of Canada 1988). In relation to Indigenous peoples, this entailed diminishing assimilationist approaches and moving towards self-government; for the francophones it meant an official bilingual policy; and for the non-British and non-French the Multiculturalism Act was drawn to signal a decrease of the Anglo-conformity.

The multicultural citizenship proposed by the scholars mentioned above is premised on the idea of group rights, whereby different ethno-racial groups exist together within a multicultural society and have the right to be treated as full, equal, and respected participants in the political

community (Kymlicka 1996). Multicultural citizenship has also been criticized for perpetuating inequalities and maintaining dominant structures (Bloemraad et al. 2008). Nancy Fraser (1996:185) is one, who in her response to multiculturalism, concludes that it “tends to substantialize identities, treating them as given positivities instead of as constructed relations. It tends, consequently, to balkanize culture, setting groups apart from one another, ignoring the ways they cut across one another, and inhibiting cross-group interaction and identification”.

I will discuss the concept of multiculturalism and how it relates to immigration in Canada in Chapter 2.

Incorporating group rights and differential needs into an understanding of citizenship has prompted scholars such as William Kaplan (1992), Bloemraad (2006), Nira Yuval-Davis (2004), Jasbir Puar (2007), Johanna Garvey (2011), and Marco Antonsich (2010) to describe a fourth dimension of citizenship, beyond the three dimensions that Marshall presented in 1950: belonging.

Belonging is not just about membership, rights, and duties (...) Nor can it be reduced to identities and identifications, which are about individual and collective narratives of self and other, presentation and labeling, myths of origin and destiny. Belonging is a deep emotional need of people (Yuval-Davies 2004:215).

Belonging is the component of citizenship that turns the concept on its head. It cannot be granted by a government, but has to be created, demanded and enabled. Belonging reaches beyond passport-holders and traditional conceptions of citizenship, and is rather a feeling that exists or is denied to a person in a place. Most importantly, it is demanded and created from below, by individuals and groups, and not granted by a government (McNevin 2006; Walia 2013).

Belonging is an equally interdependent dimension of citizenship. It creates social cohesion, fosters a social heritage and a sense of responsibility for a group, and it enables the political

dimension through fostering the ability and desire to participate and exercise political power.

2.4 State Guarantor?

Bloemraad et al. (2008) show that while citizenship entitlements and the material practices of citizenship are being decoupled from the nation-state level, these same sources of power have continued control over the formal rules and rights associated with citizenship. Even though migrants practice an increased level of lived citizenship, legal citizenship is still controlled by the same powers as ever.

Traditionally, acquiring citizenship happens on the government's terms: The requirement that prospective migrants pass tests on language skills and socio-cultural knowledge prior to being granted entry and citizenship indicates the importance which governments place on particular indicators of integration (Joppke 2007). Such a perspective on immigration, integration and citizenship is politically grounded in governments' need to be seen as managing migration and community cohesion in the context of increased global mobility. However, this perspective regards the integration of new citizens as a one-way process, with the onus on migrants to integrate into societies on the terms of the government.⁸ A one-way view of integration is revealing of an asymmetric understanding of social processes, where structures (such as a state's citizenship requirements and territorial boundaries) are rigid, with little room left for the agency of the actors involved, including that of the migrants themselves (Strang and Ager 2010).

At a practical level, without institutions such as courts and policing apparatuses, it is unclear how rights can be guaranteed without a state-like structure. As Hannah Arendt (1951)

⁸ Of course, the government represents the population in a democratic country such as Canada, but both election turnouts and the increased discretionary power granted to the government, by the government may undermine the idea that they serve society's demands.

notes in reflecting on the atrocities of World War II, rights might be in-alienable and universal, but the stateless have few protections. Still, rights are not solely dependent on the generosity of the guarantor. The rights of marginalized groups have never been altruistically awarded. People have not been given rights –they have taken them. Abolishing slavery, fighting for suffrage, civil rights are all the results of civic struggle, demand and action.

This iteration of citizenship does not challenge the territorial belonging of people but reconfigures the formal mechanism of belonging and rescales the territory to which migrants and non-migrants belong (Bauder 2014). Citizenship is already practiced at the urban scale, in particular when migrants assert their belonging through political action, engagement in the politics of home, performances of resistance and participation in local communities (e.g. Fleischmann et al. 2011; Hage 2002; Isin and Nielsen 2008; Nyers and Rygiel 2012; Staeheli and Nagel 2006; Tchumkam 2015). This is what I have looked closer at in my empirical research, and what the subjects I interviewed reflected upon.

2.5 Keeping the Construct

Pointing out the arbitrary nature of citizenship doesn't lead to its dissolution, practically nor discursively, and I don't expect it to. Rather, by exposing the contradictions of citizenship's territorial construct and its constant exclusion, my aim is to show that there is room for a new conceptualization that takes the territorial critique into account. Despite the traditional exclusions of citizenship mentioned earlier, feminist and critical race scholars have shown that by critiquing and re-articulating its meaning, citizenship can be an important analytical tool used to incorporate the spectrum of relations, processes, and movements that marginalized groups engage in, and a political tool to further social justice and equal rights.

While Bosniak (2008) proposes to eliminate the term citizenship altogether, because of its complex and sometime contradictory meanings in favour of talking about membership and equality, I argue that it is worthwhile keeping the concept for its ability to create social cohesion, and to function as a tool towards the government to ensure rights. I take a reformist approach, conditioned by the interrogation and acknowledgement of the violence and problems that exist within the concept of citizenship.

My definition of citizenship, on which I will base the analysis of my thesis, builds on Marshall and his critics. *I define citizenship as consisting of the interdependent dimensions of civic, political and social rights, enabled by a sense of belonging.* However, key to my understanding is how the mere territorial presence of individuals and groups can interrupt the logic of how citizenship is unilaterally granted by the state onto its citizens. The two following sections demonstrate how territorial presence can qualify as a form of citizenship, and how this citizenship is enacted and demanded.

2.6 Territorial Presence and the Domicile

A problem with traditional conceptions of citizenship is how legal status defined by state institutions rather than territorial presence tends to define migrants' access to citizenship. Territorial presence is highly regulated by visa and residency permits before a foreigner is entitled to apply for citizenship. This hinders migrant access to formal citizenship in their adopted political communities, even though they are practically living members of these communities and in these territories (Bauder 2014). Citizenship that is associated with bordered territory is ill equipped to handle the transnational populations that transcend geographical boundaries, in addition to the colonial exclusions mentioned above. Bauder (2014) therefore

advocates another mode of considering citizenship, one that incorporates immigrants in a formal sense by taking both territory and sense of belonging into account: the domicile.

Jus domicile is citizenship based on location of residency. At its core is the idea of home and the social bonds that people have with the political community in which they reside. The concept of domicile imports a legal relationship between a person and a country governed by a particular system of law. This relationship is inferred from how a person voluntarily establishes or retains their main residence within that country with the intention of making and keeping that place the centre of their personal, social and economic interests (Bauder 2012a).

This principle is similar to several iterations before it, such as *nested citizenship* (Kivisto and Faist 2009), *transnational citizenship* (Balibar 2009; Ong 2006), *postnational citizenship* (Soysal 1995; Sassen 2002), and *stakeholder citizenship* (Bauböck 2008). Bauder (2012b) suggests that the domicile is a more legitimate form of citizenship than the *sanguine* or the *solis*, because it doesn't depend on the accident of birth in a particular territory, or to specific parents. It is intentional.

Citizenship based on domicile puts emphasis on the bonds of association that individuals establish as members of a society. As such it is consonant with human mobility and peoples' rights to choose their civic and political home (Kostakopoulou 2008: 119).

Through the right to choose a home, the discussion of the domicile principle of citizenship relates to the ongoing debate about open borders. The concepts of open orders and the domicile relate to different theoretical principles – the former to mobility and universal rights, the latter to membership and democracy (Carens 2010). These concepts are compatible.

From a liberal political theory point of argument, Bauder (2012a) argues that the domicile citizenship principle under conditions of restricted border mobility would only reproduce the

birth-right of people who happen to be born in a territory and then decide who can enter the national territory and thus qualify for membership.

From a social justice perspective, restricting mobility is a way to deny workers and other permanent and temporary migrants the protective rights they would gain if they entered the territory and assumed domicile citizenship. Transnational corporations, for example, already circumvent a labour force endowed with rights by offshoring operations and exploit workers who are locked into territories abroad. Without open borders, the *jus domicile* principle of citizenship fails to achieve its promise of equality and social justice. Contemporary migration policies and mobility practices, however, are highly restrictive and selective.⁹ They prevent many persons from entering, let alone working or settling in a territory, while they permit other migrants to work only on a temporary basis. In fact, temporary migration programs are often designed for the very purpose to prevent migrants from accumulating postnational rights or becoming citizens (Bauder 2012a).

While the state may have a right to defend itself, the vast majority of migrants do not threaten but seek to contribute to the community; although a community may have a right to define its own collective identity (Walzer 1983), the identity of most contemporary political entities are multifaceted and shaped by migration (such as colonial Canada); the idea that state territory is the private property of its existing citizens who can decide with whom to share this property raises questions of feudal-like property ownership (Carens 1987).

⁹ Canada's temporary foreign workers programs (with exception of the Live In Care-Giver program) restrict work permits to such short periods and rigid employment conditions that foreign workers acquire neither extended economic, social and political postnational rights nor the right to stay in Canada. Although these workers are making important contributions to Canadian society and economy, they are denied equal membership in the national community (Bauder 2012a).

Bauder (2014) argues that the domicile can serve as a citizenship principle to include migrants under the assumption that being present in a territorial political community defines their residency. This approach to inclusion recognizes, on the one hand, that contemporary structures of governance are territorial, that political communities are defined through territorial boundaries and “that territorialized forms of citizenship are the most feasible way to regulate citizens for particular ends and to create institutional forms that citizens can access to make claims” (Staheli et al. 2012:3). On the other hand, this approach also addresses the fact that societies and people are increasingly mobile and transnational. Domicile-based citizenship is a practical response to these circumstances and aims to provide a tool for contemporary politics that complements more critical and radical perspectives (Bauder 2014).

One form of the domicile citizenship in practice happens not at the national level, but rather on the urban scale: Several cities through North America have implemented Don't-Ask-Don't-Tell policies and claimed a sanctuary status for the city. The City of Toronto, for example, has enacted Don't-Ask-Don't Tell policies to provide access without fear (Goldring et al. 2007). These policies allow municipal service providers to not collect information on a person's citizenship or immigration status (i.e. don't ask), and if they find out otherwise that a person does not possess legal status, they will neither relay this information to immigration authorities (i.e. don't tell) nor deny services. Thus, these policies effectively recognize urban citizenship by providing municipal services based on local residency rather than national status. Recently, Toronto City Council affirmed this urban citizenship by declaring itself a *sanctuary city* and

thereby expanding efforts to provide all residents – including migrants who are denied status by the federal government – full access to city services (Keung 2013).¹⁰

Contrarians may argue that Canadian immigration and citizenship policies already implement the domicile principle by allowing formal permanent residents to acquire the entitlement to Canada if they have remained in the country for the past four out of six years. The difference between Canada's current naturalization practice and the domicile principle is that permanent residency is granted on highly selectable and inequitable basis. The majority of temporary migrant workers in Canada have no option of retaining PR and subsequent residency through the legal structure of visas and temporary migration (Bauder 2012b).

The principle of domicile citizenship is useful for thinking about the presence and actions of the immigrant youth I have interviewed for this thesis. Through intentional actions of participation and taking responsibility for the people around them, the participants shape their own belonging and lived citizenship in Canada.

2.7 New Geographies of Citizenship-Belonging: Enacted Citizenship

Writing over a decade ago, Bosniak (2000:1) worked to expand the category of citizenship to accommodate the outsider inside. She lamented that much of the political theory on citizenship has been entirely “oblivious to the subject of alienage (those who by definition are non-citizens), which presumes a bounded citizenry amongst the already-recognized citizens”. Further, she writes, “the common presumption that formal citizenship rights are available to

¹⁰ Vancouver is also on a path towards Sanctuary status, after massive lobbying triggered by Lucia Vega Jimenez' suicide during Canadian Border Service Agency (CBSA) custody following an apprehension for fair evasion on Vancouver's public transit. Strict conditions have now been imposed on when transit officers can turn someone over to the CBSA (Quan 2015). While this move, and similar sanctuary-inspired moves don't entail the complete eradication of border controls in the city, and in some instances may create a false sense of security, they are also aspirational, and signal a move towards what kind of cities Canada wants for its inhabitants, regardless of status.

everyone in contemporary liberal democratic societies underscores aliens' invisibility in the literature" (2). She goes on to argue that though aliens are outsiders by legal definition, their presence in the political community raises pressing questions about the practice of citizenship, including, more specifically, how far the rights and status of citizenship can, and should, be understood to extend. Although the usual indicator of successful settlement and integration (particularly from the perspective of the federal government) is the acquisition of formal citizenship, it is not self-evident that formal citizenship status increases the levels of meaningful participation of immigrants in Canadian society (Hébert 2002).

Much has progressed since Bosniak wrote her arguments about citizenship, and many citizenship scholars from various disciplines seem to have taken her critique seriously. Isin and Bryan Turner (2007; see also Benhabib 2007), for instance, were *Investigating Citizenship*, and provided a theoretical avenue for the non-citizen to enact political claims, and to demand inalienable rights and privileges that we traditionally associate only with those who are citizens. They argued that acts of citizenship do not require one to be a citizen in order to make these political claims. Beyond the possession of formal rights and entitlements, researchers have demonstrated how citizenship is claimed through social practices and political action, is embedded in the ordinary and the everyday, and is enacted for the purpose of social reproduction (Bauder 2012a; Isin and Nielsen 2008; Ong 1999; Staeheli et al. 2012).¹¹ These contributions to the debates on citizenship support a shift in analytic focus towards an emphasis of practices and belonging, and many writers present citizenship as articulated and legitimized from below, by people and not the government. Isin and Turner (2007) charge that citizenship should be seen as

¹¹ Yasemin Soysal (1994) makes this argument by highlighting the similarity between civil/social rights given to guest workers by countries in Northwest Europe and those rights possessed by their citizens. In other words, *personhood* is beginning to replace citizenship status and the territorial borders.

a social process in which the emphasis is less on legal rules and more on norms, actions, meanings and identities in particular spaces.

These spaces and actions host new political actors who transform themselves and others into citizens by articulating ever-changing and expanding rights (Schattle 2008). In the case of this thesis, these actors are immigrant youth who engage in citizen actions, even while most of them do not hold a legal citizenship status. The rights (civil, political, social, sexual, ecological, cultural), sites (bodies, courts, streets, social media, networks, borders), scales (urban, regional, national, transnational, international) and actions (voting, volunteering, blogging, protesting, resisting and organizing) through which subjects, and in the case of this thesis, refugee youth, enact themselves (and others) as citizens is worthy of attention (Isin 2009). In Chapter 4, I present the stories of immigrant youth to illustrate how they embody these sites and rights.

To characterize practices, institutions, or experiences in a language of citizenship is to afford them substantial political meaning and social value. This is why, as Bosniak (2008) notes, scholars and political actors strive to characterize practices and institutions *as* citizenship – it is a legitimizing political act.

2.8 Conclusion

Pointing out the contradictions behind and the exclusions of Canada's citizenship practices doesn't magically eliminate the factors that cause these conditions. My hope therefore lies with the individuals who enact their citizenship from below, the ones who demand to be heard, and the ones who refuse to remain an outsider inside.

The articulation of citizenship acts and new spaces tells us something about the boundaries of citizenship, by whom and how they are drawn. Bauder's form of the domicile citizenship

unifies these new acts, sites and scales with the rights of citizenship. As I have argued, it is not simply traditional citizenship that determines citizenship belonging, or its inverse, foreignness. Citizenship belonging/foreignness are not stable categories, but rather socially and politically constructed, historically variable, and demonstrate both struggles and contradictions.

Migration challenges simple understandings of citizenship as state-centered and state-controlled. However, nation-states continue to hold substantial power over the formal rules and rights of citizenship and continue to shape the institutions that provide differentiated access to participation and belonging, with important consequences for immigrants' incorporation and equality. Expanding the idea that citizenship can be something wider than its traditional form, defined, asserted and practiced by people as much as the state, allows for an inclusion of those who are marginalized by institutionalized discrimination. Citizenship in Canada, as in any other country in the world is a construct premised on inclusion as much as exclusion.

This new understanding encompasses the presences and citizen actions of the young people I have interviewed, and allows for a more compassionate inclusion of members in the Canadian society.

Migrant lives highlight the limitation of citizenship as traditionally conceived: as a privilege granted by the state to its inhabitants. The scholars, activists and migrants enacting their form of citizenship have shown how globalization, migration, identity politics, and intersectionality challenge notions of public and private and demonstrate how citizenship is continuously contested, navigated, and negotiated through resistance and alliance building at the different levels –in the home and family, in the workplace, in the city, and globally.

Chapter 3: Changing Conditions in Multicultural Canada

Canadian immigration policies have always been oriented around the economic worth of immigrants and what they could contribute to the country, but policy developments in recent years present a particularly ugly turn, in contradiction to the values of the Multiculturalism Act. In its inception, multiculturalism incorporated difference and ameliorated tensions between different groups in society. But that does not mean that Canada is done with the differential treatment of migrants, especially the ones marginalized by the state because of their class, colour and category of arrival. This new turn is negatively shaping conditions of SPOs like the Immigrant Services Society (ISSofBC).

Recent changes in the Canadian regulation of labour migration demonstrate how financial gain is one of the main motivators for allowing immigrants access to the country. The dominant logic of current and forthcoming immigration practices secures the migrant population within the rhythms of capitalism, and thus redefines the individual as a unit in the marketplace, with economic utility, rather than a social being (Hyndman et al. 2006).

The focus on the economic aspects of Canadian immigration is important, not because it directly shapes the integration experience for the research participants of my study, but because it creates an idea of what an ideal immigrant is, how the immigrant brings value to Canada, and in what ways the immigrant is not welcome in this country. In addition, it influences the political climate in which SPOs have to operate, in their funding proposals and their work to create deliverables that are palatable for the current government.

In this chapter, I paint a layered picture of Canadian multiculturalism and immigration, from the policy level down to the service provider. Since the modern conception of Canada as a country, state officials have regulated immigration based on different criteria. David Ley (2007)

describes Multiculturalism Act originating as an attempt to ameliorate tensions between francophone and English-speaking Canada, extend inclusion to the aboriginal populations, and to incorporate the multitude of ethnicities, the country came to officially embrace multiculturalism, which planted the seeds for a powerful ideology about Canadian nationality. The current Conservative government is mobilizing this ideology to distract from new economically and politically unjust policies that adversely affect the immigrant populations of Canada. These policies have practical ramifications, and I will present one such example: ISSofBC, and their youth program MYCircle, the common denominator of my research participants.

3.1 Economic Migrants

Multitudes of push and pull factors cause migration. Economic displacement through Economic Trade Agreements (ETAs), such as Canada's acronym collection of deals with North and Latin America (NAFTA, CA4), Europe (CETA), Asia (CJEPA, CKFTA, FIPA) and the Middle East (CIFTA), contribute to the push for mono-cropping, open-pit mining, industrialization and economic processing zones (EPZs). These economic changes force people, mostly in the global south, out of their livelihoods and into exploitative work and a precarious life style (Castles 2003). The pulls that create these economic moves originating in the Canadian Parliament are linked to the pushes forcing individuals to give up their home and seek opportunities outside their home country. Many of the migrants arriving in Canada do so with economic goals in mind, with the idea of better futures for themselves and their children (Walia 2013). While many of these ETAs open the borders for goods to flow freely, the borders are tightened for the majority of people who feel the negative economic effects produced by the changes in the global economic landscape.

Some of these changes are part of a longer progression, for example, today's growing reliance on temporary workers is actually a trend dating back to the 1980s in Canadian immigration policy (Abu-Laban 2014), and exclusionary immigration policies have certainly been worse (i.e. more racist) than they are today. However, under the veil of multiculturalism, I argue that the government conducts a form of doublespeak, where the presence of a progressive policy tool (multiculturalism) distracts the Canadian polity from discriminatory reality of several recent policy changes.

Canada is responsible for the increasing globalization of its economic production, and reaps the benefits of cheaper outsourced, flexible labour, reduced import/export taxes and foreign investment. The flipside of this increase is the economic displacement of large populations that Canada is not as freely welcoming across its borders.

3.1.1 Historically

For much of its history, Canadian immigration legislation explicitly favoured the entry of British-origin Protestants. It was only in the 1960s, following emerging human rights discourses and emphasis on non-discrimination, coupled with Canada's perceived need for further immigration, that legislation shifted away from overt racial discrimination. As the 1919

Handbook for New Canadians states (cited in Russell, 2002:142):

The good citizen
Loves God
Loves the Empire
Loves Canada
Loves His Own Family....
Is Every Inch a Man.

Immigration policy became integral to not only state building but the building of a national population, sourced predominantly from White European countries, where *preferred* migrants

originated. For over a century after Confederation, the state organized and solidified white racial identity as political citizen identity. The nation's racial identity, as well as legal citizenship, was thus cemented as white (Thobani 2007:75).

Canada relies on immigration, *needs* immigration, in order to fill labour market demand, and has done so since colonial settlement, such as the Chinese migrants building the Canadian Pacific Railway (Lai 1998) or Caribbean domestic workers (Avery 1995). Although non-Europeans were needed as labourers, these migrants were not welcome as fellow citizens (Knowles 1997). Historically, Canada applied deterring head tax discriminately to Chinese immigrants, refused entry to boat refugees, such as the Indians on the Komagata Maru in 1914, and up until 1962, Canada's immigration selection procedures named *preferred races*.

The increased access of people of colour to equal rights and citizenship was the result of both their struggles for inclusion and the state's recognition of the need of harnessing their labour power, which led to their more formal incorporation in the Canadian state and legal apparatus.

In 1967 Canada began to select immigrants on the basis of characteristics such as education, work experience and proficiency in English or French through the Immigration Act. The *point system* focused immigrant selection on skills, rather than ethnicity, and it reoriented the overt racism that had dominated Canadian immigration (Abu-Laban 2007). The point system's blend of pragmatism and equity gained the respect of other countries, and was considered useful in attracting the kinds of migrants and future citizens that were desirable in Canada. The 1967 Immigration Act emphasized the importance of family by ensuring that immigrants could sponsor a spouse, dependent children, parents, and grandparents (Bauder 2014).

As part of the Canadian migration process, new arrivals are generally classified into one of two categories: Economic Class and the Non-Economic Class. Economic Class refers to those who have recognized skills and abilities that contribute to Canada's economy. The Non-Economic Class refers to those who do not meet this criterion (Government of Canada 2007). From 2004 to 2008, approximately 52% of youth who were new to BC were from the Non-Economic Class. Of these, 49% also lived in households where the total income fell below the Statistics Canada low-income cut-off level (Picot, Lu and Hou 2009).

The points system, still in effect today, is not neutral despite being based on skills rather than skin colour or religion. This is because the criteria for obtaining points tend to favour class-advantaged applicants from countries with educational opportunities in English or French. Still, after the immigration reform in the early 1960s, Canada reflects a larger diversity of source countries than before, and in many cases immigrants are able to find professional jobs without playing a subservient role in the economy first (Abu-Laban 2007).

The 2002 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act maintained the general structure of selecting immigrants based on immigrant classes but permitted the government to shift relative weight towards the economic class and thereby facilitate economic-utility driven immigration (Simmons 1999; Bauder 2008).¹²

While economic immigration to Canada is not a new strategy¹³ for the government, two recent shifts within Canadian immigration policy are important to highlight: the shift from

¹² Bauder (2008) describes this shift as neoliberal immigration, but I choose to stay away from the term as I find it easily conflates the nuance of the recent changes with so many other economic processes, as well as it proposes that economically geared immigration is something novel.

¹³ In his study of the intersection of post World War II labour markets and immigration policy in Canada, Ravi Pendakur (2001) traces two waves of permanent migration in the post World War II period. The first wave, occurring in the 1940s and 1950s, was based on family reunification and immigration from Europe. Reflecting

predominantly permanent to temporary migration, and the shift from a publicly determined immigration system (government) to one increasingly driven by private interests, like the Federal Skilled Worker Program, the Federal Skilled Trades Program, the Canadian Experience Class, or the Provincial Nominee Program.¹⁴ This is both evident in the number of immigration alternatives geared towards economic growth in Canada, and in the increase of migrant workers, especially those who are temporary.

3.1.2 Express Entry and Temporary Foreign Workers

In January 2015, the Conservative Government further revamped the Points System, and presented the immigration class of *Express Entry*. This new category for immigration operates like a job bank serving government and industry, matching prospective immigrants with employers seeking workers. According to CIC (2015), the program will select “the best candidates . . . rather than the first person in line.” The Conservative government is also allowing more temporary foreign workers (TFW) into the country. Since 2006 the number of temporary entrants has outnumbered the permanent migrants and by December 2013, there were more than 300,000 such workers, a jump of 50 per cent since 2007 (CIC 2015). At the same time, several ministers in the Conservative Government accuse refugees of being so-called *queue jumpers* and

international discussions around human rights and principles of anti-racism, and perhaps more importantly, the diminishing number of immigration applications from Europe, discriminatory selection criteria were removed from Canadian immigration legislation beginning in 1962. The second wave of permanent migration was thus based on family reunification and labour force requirements, leading to increasing numbers of Asian, African and Latin American immigrants settling in Canada in the 1960s and 1970s. Family reunification was key in both waves of migration following World War II. Due to the socially accepted notion that workers should migrate along with their families, workers were able to settle with the crucial support of spouses and other immediate family members. Canadian society was seen to benefit via immediate population growth and future labour force expansion (Valiani 2014).

¹⁴ Given that Temporary Residents only stay a defined amount of time, but Permanent Residents stay permanently, the long term effects of the latter program has much more impact.

the Government consequently denies status to many of the people most in need of Canada's protection (Bauder 2014).

The Temporary Foreign Worker program (TFWP) functions as a fix to the undesirability of migrant permanency, yet the desirability of their productivity. It is important to note that while the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) and the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) are the most commonly known streams of the TFWP, they only represented 3% and 12% respectively of entries under the TFWP in 2012. In BC, TFWs on work and travel visas made up 50% of the 49,488 TFWs admitted in 2012. The top source countries for TFWs in BC are (in descending order) Australia, the US, Mexico, the UK, South Korea, Japan, Germany and Ireland (AMSSA 2013). Also worth noting is the fact that about 1/3 of TFWs become PRs, making the precarious, at time exploitative situation, a temporary situation in the process to more stable forms of residency.

Meanwhile, the rights and entitlements associated with citizenship and permanency permit Canadians to occupy jobs that offer better pay, benefits, and career advancement opportunities. In fact, the availability of a flexible, dispensable, cyclical, and rotational foreign labour force to fill labour-intensive positions at the bottom of the labour market protects the capital-intensive skilled and higher-waged segment of the economy and stabilizes this segment in light of seasonal and cyclical swings (Piore 1979). As TFWs become a permanent feature of the Canadian labour market, these non-citizens are no longer simply a labour reserve army that can be hired and fired based on seasonal and cyclical economic cycles, they constitute an exploitable underclass (Sharma 2006).

It is worth noting that many of the TFWs in Canada enter through highly skilled positions in the upper echelons of the economy, in management, professional, scientific, technical or trade

occupations, when Canadian citizens and permanent residents are not available (Government of Canada 2013). The entrants under the Stream for Higher-skilled Occupation are much less likely to end up in an exploitative position, given their financial resources, education and likely other professional options, should employment in Canada not work out for them.

Valiani (2014) argues that the employer-driven immigration system is unlikely to provide for the long-term needs of building a stable labour force and a socially inclusive society in Canada. This presents a contradiction in Canadian migration processes. The country needs the labour force, yet does not create the conditions for a solid integration process. With one hand Canada is welcoming new residents, workers and citizens, but with another, it is denying people full participation in the social community as a whole. The Canadian government wishes to economically benefit from migrants, yet fears the economic dependency of those same individuals working here through their use of social services and welfare benefits. For example, the time limits of Canada's temporary foreign workers programs are designed precisely to deny foreign workers the possibility to claim naturalized citizenship (without qualifying for PR) based on period of residency, even though they make a contribution to the economy and society (Bauder 2012b).

Not all migration policies are economically motivated. Bauder (2005) links a significant amount of migration to political and humanitarian intentions, such as the numbers that make up family reunifications and refugees in the non-economic category. Even though the government is spending more than ever before on its immigrant population, immigration in Canada has since the ascendance of the Conservative Government become increasingly about what immigrants can do for Canada than what Canada can do for immigrants. According to Citizenship and Integration Canada (CIC), the total number of asylum seekers who came into Canada in 2013

dropped almost 50% from the year before, to only 10,000 (Government of Canada 2015).¹⁵

This trend of economic focus even has an impact on a group of people who are invited on a premise of what the Canadian government can do for them, as Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) and Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs) (and refugees who arrive in Canada on their own volition). Ideologically, the trend influences the idea of what an immigrant should be (skilled, work-willing, and self-sufficient), and practically, it restricts what an immigrant can be (dependent).

Statistics Canada projects that, by 2031, almost one-half of the population over the age of 15 will be foreign-born or have at least one foreign-born parent. The number of visible minorities will double and make up the majority of the population of cities in Canada (StatCan 2011). Since the 1970s, government officials have been actively engaging with the increasingly diverse cultural Canadian landscape, making a significant push to form and enact a policy that addresses the inequality between people in Canada.

3.2 Multiculturalism in Canada

As mentioned in Chapter 1, a set of debates over citizenship centers on the promise and pitfalls of multiculturalism, a concept whose meaning varies by context and writer (Fleras 2009; Chazan et al. 2011; Haque 2012). The concept is essential in understanding how Canada incorporates difference in its diverse population. The multitude of interpretations of the concept, however, unsettles Canada's multiculturalism, as meaning is conflated and nuance lost.

On one side, multiculturalism is perceived as a misguided idea that, unfortunately, is unfolding according to plan. On the other are those who believe that multiculturalism is a good idea gone bad because of twisted politics and diabolical interests. On yet another

¹⁵ The Conservative government says the drop is a result of its measures to tackle the problem of fraudulent claims (Chase 2013).

side is a belief in the inherent goodness of multiculturalism as an idea whose time is “prime”. For some, multiculturalism is excessively radical in advocating transformative change; for others it is too reactionary in promising more than it can deliver; for still others, multiculturalism has proven irrelevant regardless of what it does or doesn’t do because of intrinsic flaws; and for others still there are the salvageable strengths to be admired alongside exploitable weaknesses (Fleras 2014:243).

I operate with a dual understanding of the multiculturalism concept, inspired by Kenan Malik (2013), multiculturalism can be seen as a policy prescription and a visual description of society. The former is an ideal to strive for, inscribed in law, available as a tool for citizens and politicians. Braided into this conception lies the ideology that ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious diversity should be celebrated. Theories of multicultural citizenship consequently call for the recognition and accommodation of cultural minorities, including immigrants, and require states to create policies or laws that allow minority groups to root their participation in society within their cultural communities (Kymlicka 1995, 2001; Kymlicka and Norman 1994; Parekh 2006; Taylor et al.1994). The latter is a measure of the many different religious traditions and cultural influences that in their unity and coexistence in Canada make up Canadian culture. The nation consists of people from a multitude of racial, religious and cultural backgrounds and is open to cultural pluralism (Dewing 2013).

The Multiculturalism Act is one of the tools that new immigrants can use in negotiating their settlement in Canada. Because of this act, diversity recognition in Canada is not seen as incompatible with social cohesion (Banting *et al.* 2007). Pierre Elliott Trudeau adopted multiculturalism policy in 1971, which Brian Mulroney moved into law in 1988. Not only ameliorating the cultural tensions between English speaking and Francophone Canadians, the Act also recognized diverse ethnic identities represented in Canadian society (Ley 2007). The Act inscribed in law the cultivation and preservation of “culture and language” with goals “to reduce discrimination, to enhance cultural awareness and understanding, and to promote

culturally sensitive institutional change at the federal level” with an explicit focus on racism and the eradication of discrimination in Canadian society. The Multiculturalism Act is intended to eliminate barriers to participation in shaping all aspects of Canadian society, for all members. Multiculturalism allows people the privilege to maintain and celebrate their cultural heritage as long as those traditions don’t conflict with Canadian law (Government of Canada 1988).

Said to distinguish Canada from the US assimilationist melting pot, multiculturalism as official policy furthers popular perceptions of Canada having made a successful transition from a white settler colony to a multi-racial, multiethnic, liberal-democratic society (Thobani 2007). The policy paints Canada as welcoming diverse immigrants and valuing their cultures, and the nation-state came to be seen as particularly amenable to resolving ethnic and cultural divisions. This perception was and still is shared by many immigrants.

Multiculturalism can also be a way of describing society, by counting the manifold cultures, religion, languages, ethnicities and races within the same national space. The 2011 National Household Survey reported more than 200 different ethnic origins in Canada. The most ancestries reported were Canadian, English, French, Scottish and Irish, followed by German, Italian, Chinese, First Nations, Ukrainian, East Indian, Dutch and Polish (Dewing 2013).

Hailing multiculturalism as a description can mask structural inequality affecting people who aren’t experiencing inclusion. The presence of brown bodies in media, in public and in governmental structures demonstrates visible multiculturalism, e.g. in data about minority employment used to demonstrate racial equity. The increasing number of visible minorities demonstrates a decline in the measurable, visual workplace discrimination (Pendakur 2005). However, racism operates in many ways that cannot be counted, despite the number of people of colour in the workplace or in positions of power. Celebrating multiculturalism as cosmetic

diversity enables an idea of *trickle down* equity. Assuming that when placed in a position of influence, people of colour may exercise power differently creates causality between presence and equity. Enacting anti-racist decisions in an inherently racist structure places these actors in a situation with much to lose and little to gain by changing the rules of the game (Torres and Guinier 2003).

As Himani Bannerji (2000) and others argue (see Razack 2008; Thobani 2007), the policy must be understood as an ideological tool—mobilized by and for the state—not simply to manage diversity and difference, but to actively produce, reinscribe and reify multiculturalism as the most important element of the nation. Instead of ameliorating social injustice, multiculturalism as a description of society serves as a proclamation that the nation has fixed its race problem and that immigration has nothing to do with race. In this way, the policy stifles political discussion: those who question multiculturalism risk being perceived as against diversity, and experiences of racism are often ignored. For example, Sara Ahmed (2008) in her study of Australian multiculturalism finds that even if the cultural stranger is welcomed rather than expelled, the stranger is nevertheless fetishized as the origin of difference. Similarly, Hage (2002) draws attention to the discourse of enrichment that enables national subjects (and, by extending his argument about Australia to Canada, could also be seen to be about white Canadians) to consume multicultures within their vicinity, through consumption of ethnic foods and arts. He argues that white people who support multiculturalism use this support to define themselves as sophisticated, urbane, and cosmopolitan. In this way, they identify themselves in opposition to racists, as tolerant, and hence more adaptable to changing global conditions and more amenable to availing themselves of newly emerging global opportunities.

The construction of multiculturalism as the opposite of racism erases the less visible experiences of racism. Bannerji (2000) claims multiculturalism creates a *post-racial* approach to integration and success in Canada. If it is written into law that all members of society are equal, what explains existing inequality other than the individuals' shortcomings? Since everyone *can* feel belonging in Canada under the law, what happens when they don't?

Constructing racists as an isolated and marginal minority, individualized instead of phenomena pervading all social fabric, the embrace of multiculturalism allows progressive white Canadians to break from an older damaging national imaginary and transform it for a new era. Contemporary racism under multiculturalism can therefore be treated as limited to extreme right-wingers, in those who dismiss multiculturalism, and certainly never in ourselves or in contemporary society. This mechanism reflects current Conservative government policy changes pertaining to immigration.

As descriptor and ideology, multiculturalism has the potential of attributing social failure to the individual, rather than social structures or institutions (Pratt 2004); it is thus the immigrants' responsibility if they feel uneasy living in multicultural society, as Canada has granted them the ability to do so. Multiculturalism creates a political and social environment such that to reject its supposedly inclusive ethos is to risk being labeled ethnocentric and culturally chauvinist, a charge that sticks more readily to people of colour than it does to the nationals revered by the state as tolerant and committed to valuing diversity (Kraft 2012).

The policy, as David Ley (2007) explains, should not be dismissed as simply a rhetorical tool as it in fact represents strong claims to protect diversity and immigrant rights in the country. There is opportunity to create change in the Canadian experience of multiculturalism, both from within the corridors of power and from without. Within Multiculturalism as policy there is room

to address racism, to make improvements, and to better social relations. This complexity also goes to show the versatility of formal policies, and how different agents with different intentions can employ them.

By naming Canada a multicultural society, as done in majority of Canadian official documents, and collective and individual national narratives, we risk taking the multiculturalism policy's ideals for granted, or as already achieved. This erases the experiences of the very people the Act is intended to protect. It can also allow white Canada to rest – to be at ease having done enough to ensure integration and anti-racist efforts. The conflation of prescription and description adds to the confusion about the meaning of cultural diversity at policy level while, also entrenching the idea of multiculturalism as a self-evident good. Furthermore, the logic of the conflation shapes a multiculturalism ideology, letting the current government pass bills contrary to the intent of prescriptive multiculturalism.

3.3 New Policies Against Prescription

The current Conservative government has initiated many policy changes related to immigration since they took over in 2006, and is continuing its practice of granting rights integrally tied to the differential categorization of populations, predicated on continual racist exclusion and differential incorporation of marginalized groups such as migrants.

Several new policies seem to be antagonistic to the Multiculturalism Act. The recently approved Bill C24 targets people with dual citizenship, makes it harder to appeal court decisions regarding citizenship, and gives unprecedented power to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Among several changes that will make Canadian citizenship more difficult to obtain or maintain for people who have another citizenship, the bill will:

- Extend the formal residency requirement from three to four years.
- Make it harder for students, workers, and refugees to become citizens (time spent living in Canada prior to their permanent residency is disregarded).
- Remove the right to appeal a negative citizenship decision.
- Triple the cost of applying.
- Decisions on citizenship will now be made by a civil servant as opposed to a third party Judge.
- Enable state officials to revoke citizenship from naturalized persons if they believe the person never intended to live in Canada.
- Enable state officials to strip citizenship from dual citizens if they are convicted of certain crimes, even if those convictions occurred outside Canada.

The consequences are disturbing for Canada's 863,000 dual citizens (in the majority of cases meaning migrants) who run the risk of being treated as somehow less Canadian with two passports. The Act encourages the possibility of co-existing cultures, each being as valuable as the next (save so-called *barbaric cultures*), but this bill contributes to the opposite, making it harder to possess multiple nationalities. A bill like this reveals the government's concern that people are not Canadian enough, and demonstrates a desire to control the naturalization of Canadian immigrants, using a refined legalese to exclude, replacing the aforementioned overt racism of the Head Tax and preferred races that determined the right to citizenship and inclusion in Canada. Both inside and outside of traditional Canadian citizenship, people are being treated differently and unequally by the state, despite the encouragement and promises of the Multiculturalism Act.

The Conservative government is also sending a signal explicitly directed at Muslim immigrant communities. The tabling of the *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act* (or Bill S-7) by CICs Chris Alexander, solely addressed examples from Canada's Muslim communities in demonstrating the need for the Bill (Alexander 2015). The Bill allows the Conservative party to exploit the tired trope of *the foreign barbarian* (Blanchfield 2014). The bill bans polygamy, child marriages, and honor killings, as if the Canadian criminal code doesn't

already ban all of these practices. Alexander has emphasized that the target of his law are immigrants — who don't have an established tradition of polygamy, such as the Mormons of Bountiful, British Columbia (CBC News 2014).

While the bill does contain positive elements —such as explicitly outlawing forced marriages, clarifying the provincial practice that sets 16 as the minimum age of marriage, and making it illegal to transport a child under the age of 16 for the purpose of marriage —it seems more to pander to bigoted fears towards Muslims than improve the lives of Canadians (Walkom 2014).

Bill C31, or the *Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act* also altered the cultural landscape for how Canada welcomes foreigners, especially refugees. Through this bill the immigration minister has increased discretionary power of the refugee determination process. Amongst the changes is the minister's power to choose which countries are safe without a committee including human rights experts. Anyone of the 37 safe countries does not produce legitimate refugee claims, according to the logic of the bill, and therefore refugee claimants originating from the safe-list will be rejected. Claimants from countries on the safe country list have to wait a year before applying for compassionate and humanitarian considerations to become PRs, and could be deported in the meantime. Rejected claimants are not able to appeal the decision to the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB). Former CIC minister Jason Kenney claimed that the bill is necessary to protect the refugee system, and that it would address the number of *bogus refugees* and claimants from the European Union (Government of Canada 2012).

Both the increased focus on economic migrants and the potential traps of multiculturalism are shaping the conditions under which SPOs and the youth participants in this research are

managing the integration process. In the next part of this chapter, I will look closer at what these conditions entail for the particular SPO I have encountered in my research and their youth program.

3.4 Service Provider Organizations in BC

Immigration in Canada is regulated jointly between the federal and provincial government. Predominantly, the federal government sets admission levels, defines and manages the admission system, and administers integration programs. The provincial government provides mainstream services to immigrant populations, such as school and health care (Hiebert and Sherrell 2009).

British Columbia receives the third largest share of immigrants in Canada – almost 40,000 immigrants each year. China, India and the Philippines are the top three source countries for immigrants in British Columbia. There are also about 120,000 temporary residents (temporary foreign workers and international students) in British Columbia at any given time, a number that has dramatically increased in the past 10 years (CIC 2013). Immigration is critical also to the province's economic recovery and growth, and will account for most of British Columbia's net population growth within the next two decades. CIC estimates that there will be approximately 950,000 job openings in British Columbia between now and 2020 and it is expected that immigrants will fill one-third of these jobs (CIC 2013).

Up until recently, through the Agreement for Canada-British Columbia Co-operation on Immigration (CBCCI), the federal government had devolved responsibilities for most integration services from Ottawa to Victoria, giving the provincial government an active role in the integration process (Hiebert and Sherrell 2009). The agreement led to a substantial increase in

funding and services, such as the website welcomeBC.ca, the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program, and English language programs.

In April 2012, CIC Minister Jason Kenney announced that he was revoking the Canada-BC Immigration Agreement effective in two years. Starting in April 2014, organizations like ISSofBC had to apply directly to CIC for funding in a process that doesn't allow an appeal if an organization is denied funding (Secher 2014). The range of funding granted per partnership has decreased under the restructuring of immigration funding, from \$133,000 - \$567,000 to \$100,000 to \$500,000. The total amount of funding per capita has remained constant, yet one can question the rearrangements this entails for SPOs in the form of cutbacks to existing programs. The old Agreement allowed for up to 5 years of fiscal planning. The new arrangement requires new funding every 3 years (CCR 2014).

The assistance that used to support immigrant youth has changed. Immigrant Settlement Services is one of the many affected service providers.

3.4.1 ISSofBC – “Helping Immigrants Build a Future in BC”

ISSofBC is a group formed in 1968 by volunteers at the request of then-Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, as a response to growing violence in East Africa. Their goal was to assist repatriated Ismaili refugees fleeing Uganda and Idi Amin settling in Vancouver. The group initially assisted with housing issues and directed the arrivals to settlement resources. In 1972 the group incorporated as Immigrant Settlement Services of Greater Vancouver, seeing that the needs of arriving refugees were great, and started to advocate on behalf of them. ISSofBC is the largest immigrant settlement organization in BC, with branches all over the Lower Mainland, providing services such as language training, resettlement assistant programs (*RAP*), adult and

continuing education. ISSofBC expressly addresses the needs of BC's immigrant society, facilitates settlement and integration, works with the broader host community, and is a space for mainstream volunteers to interact with refugees and immigrants (ISS 2015).

ISSofBC helped over 940 Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) from 17 different countries build new lives in Metro Vancouver in 2014—the highest number of arrivals in more than 10 years. This number represents a 46 per cent increase compared to 2013 arrivals. This is good news as it means more refugees were resettled and offered a chance to continue their life in a safe place.

While ISSofBC is structured and describes itself as an NGO, the organization, like so many others, is heavily dependent on funding provided by the federal government. In their “at-a-glance” manual, ISSofBC's dependence involves a \$21 million annual budget, of which \$16 million is dependent on CIC (ISS 2015). ISSofBC is charged with the task of providing integration services, outsourced to them by a government that requires performance reviews, such as quarterly statistics, monthly financial reviews and daily incident reports. Funds are allocated through a competitive process, where the government issues a request for proposals and ranks the submissions by quality and economic efficiency. Charity and community foundations, such as United Way, the Vancouver Foundation, the Surrey Foundation, the Red Cross and the VanCity Community Foundation, represent the second and third largest sources of funding for newcomers after the provincial government. In Metro Vancouver, programs and services supported by these institutions include drop-in programs (e.g. for preschoolers, children, youth, seniors and women), family support, and community outreach programs (Hiebert and Sherrell 2009).

ISSofBC applies for funding annually, necessitating a frequent (re)negotiation of resource allocation within the agency, as well as renewal of program mandates to fit funding requirements. While the total budget for ISSofBC allocated by the government has increased over the years, the expansion of services has not been equal across the programs. Currently, the majority of expansion is in youth-related integration programs, complementing the municipal proliferation (such as in the City of Surrey and City of Burnaby) of youth programs. ISS themselves describe the role NGOs hold as more flexible, independent, rooted in community and with more specialized services and knowledge than government organizations –but with annual reports and grant applications demanded by a government, this independence seems fragile.

ISSofBC has been responsible for distributing the funds for refugee mental health services in B.C. since 2008. Up until recently they received annual funds of close to \$800,000 from the provincial government and divided it between three B.C. organizations: Vancouver Association of Survivors of Torture (VAST), Family Services of Greater Vancouver, and the Bridge Refugee Clinic under Vancouver Coastal Health. The funding came as part of a larger sum that the federal government sent to British Columbia each year through the Canada-BC Immigration Agreement to fund the province's settlement and immigration programs. Under the restructured system, ISSofBC was denied funding for mental health services (Secher 2014).¹⁶

¹⁶ Denying welfare to the majority of refugee claimants, a demographic who often are desperate and come out of traumatic situations, is one of the newer policy changes the current Conservative Government had made. Under bill C585, only those whose claims have been accepted by the Refugee Protection Division and those deemed to be victims of human trafficking would be exempt from the new restrictions. The minority in the latter categories would still receive provincial social assistance. Refugee claimants in the queue waiting for their cases to be heard or appealing rejected decisions would not (Nerenberg 2014). This bill, in addition to C31, is an attempt to halt what the government perceives to be bogus refugees and further illustrates the differential incorporation of immigrants into the country.

The Conservative government is also behind the other aforementioned policy changes compromising the conditions under which immigrants integrate into multicultural Canada. The recent restructuring of BC's immigrant funding to a dependence on satisfying the demands of the federal Conservative government begs the question of ISSofBC's position, between seemingly conflicting government and immigrant interests.

ISSofBC and other SPOs perform a role Jennifer Wolch (1990) has called the Shadow State; serving as a parallel system comprised of NGOs that deliver collective services propping up the functions of the state. Kareem Sadiq (2004:1) argues that "Canada's settlement sector has evolved into a para-state system that is financed by contractual arrangements between the state and non-governmental settlement agencies" to deliver employment, language, housing, education, and other services to newcomers. This type of restructuring of the settlement sector has created instability, service gaps, as well as "a general diversion of precious human resources from service planning and delivery to irrational administrative burdens".

Annually writing over 800 pages of funding proposals is a strain on any organization, even one as large as ISSofBC. Despite providing essential immigrant integration services, aiding the federal and provincial government in immigrant related tasks (even some mandated by international refugee law), ISSofBC does not have guaranteed funding from the government. The government regulates immigration in a way that necessitates service providers –the form of funding creates a precarity that makes service provision a tenuous task. Every year, employees of ISSofBC receive pink slips, and the organization holds its breath while waiting for government confirmation to proceed as usual.

This awkward position between government policies and immigrant needs, presents non-governmental organizations as effectively governmental organizations due to their financial

dependency. The issue of funding is crucial in how it shapes the non-profit sector in general, because of the competitive nature of the process, though this was the same before the centralization of the funding. Funding is not simply available to a group because they advocate in an organized manner, nor is it available if they provide a service previously part of a government's responsibilities (which is pushed by a downsizing Canadian state under the auspices of *responsible citizenry* initiatives (Ilcan and Basok 2004)). Nor is it guaranteed because a group has been successful in meeting the government's objectives or funding application requirements. This increasing instability in the non-profit sector means that agencies are now spending ever more time and money into competing for funding, directing their organizational focus away from social advocacy, and rendering them inefficient to the people for whom they are meant to advocate (Richmond and Shields 2005). This redirection is further warped as NGO's head towards private corporate funding—or, ironically, private sponsorship—and cement to an agenda that obstructs efficient service provision (Miraftab 2004).

ISSofBC mobilized an emergency response plan and substantial effort in their preparation to align the organization's settlement, employment and language programs with CIC's National Settlement Program that took place in April 2014. The organization was able to maintain all internal programming and staffing resources, including their Multicultural Youth Circle (MYCircle) (ISS 2015).

A large number of programs are designed to support young immigrants with their acclimatization and adaptation. These include general social and educational programs, SWIS, community-based augmented academic support, counseling services, and heritage language support. The variety of these services addresses the different needs of immigrant youth. Some youth have recently come to Canada from places of conflict and need help processing trauma and

figuring out the logistics of school and housing with or without their family. Other youth need assistance in finding jobs and to understand the culture of the Canadian job market. Others yet need additional help in learning English. Finally, SPOs also focus on civic participation and leadership, and the MYCircle program featured in this research is one example. According to Hie Van Ngo (2009), the civic participation and leadership programs are the most frequent type of service offered to immigrant youth in Vancouver (4), after general social/educational youth programs (3) and school to work transition programs (3).¹⁷

In his 2009 study of SPOs and their youth oriented programs in Vancouver, Toronto and Calgary, Ngo (2009) found that programs do not clearly articulate the needs and issues on which they focus in the context of immigrant youth development. The programs are often described in generic terms without clear statements of goals, objectives, activities, targeted outcomes and impact.

Again, according to Ngo (2009) very few programs related to social justice, leadership, and advocacy prepare young immigrants for civic participation and raise their political consciousness. In the light of the high prevalence of discrimination and marginalization experienced by immigrants and visible minorities in Canada and their devastating impact on formation of identity and the well-being of individuals and groups (see Desai and Subramanian 2000; Davies and Stevenson 2006), most of the programs in Ngo's study do not adequately help immigrant youth to deal with racism and discrimination.

¹⁷ Ngo (2009) also points out that the settlement sector often asserts the notion of two-way street integration. However, their services, for the most part, mostly reinforce support for immigrants to integrate into Canadian society. SPOs exhibit a functionalist focus on the development and adaptation of immigrant youth. Less prevalent, are activities that help the receiving community to adapt and change in response to new socio-cultural realities. Much of this, he argues, is due the public perception that SPOs offer charity, instead of a rights-based model of practice.

MYCircle is different as it has an explicit goal to provide youth with critical insights into their politically, socially and culturally situated realities.

3.4.2 MYCircle

MYCircle is a peer support program offered by ISSofBC to immigrant and refugee youth. The 80-hour long training program helps immigrant youth deal with stress, build confidence and become more involved in community. It is intended to be a welcoming and supportive environment to share stories and struggles

MYCircle is only one of several established initiatives to provide space and advice for immigrant youth. The initiative functions as a springboard for many later activities for immigrant youth, as it is a place where connections are forged and topics emerge over time. Throughout the progression of MYCircle's meetings, the group covers topics of self-awareness, communication and facilitation skills, group dynamics, integration processes, racism and discrimination, leadership skills and importantly, peer support. More than 800 youth in the Lower Mainland have completed the MYCircle program since its inception 16 years ago.

It is hard to know what the economic restructuring means for MYCircle as a service. There is little to deduce from public documents, and since the changes are quite recent, the impacts may not yet have occurred. However, several youth commented upon a negative turn in the content and structure of the program.

From the interviews I present in Chapter 4, it is clear that MYCircle provides a valuable space for immigrant youth in their negotiation of citizenship and integration in multicultural Canada.

3.5 Conclusion

All these strains produce unfavourable conditions for integration for immigrant youth. The Multiculturalism Policy and current Immigration policy changes act in the best case in contrarian ways, and in the worst case, in a detrimental way that allows for the negatively differential incorporation of migrants. Not all of these conditions directly impact the refugee youth who went through the MYCircle program, but they are indicative of many of the pressures the research participants negotiate in their struggle to define citizenship and belonging in Multicultural Canada.

MYCircle provides a tremendous opportunity for youth to engage in politics, each other and social issues, as well as learning leadership and facilitation skills. The changing landscape of funding and the priorities of the current government of Canada places the future of the MYCircle program in a precarious position

In this chapter I have presented examples of Canada's immigration history and current practice to highlight how the country's policies around immigration has always been around the differential and hierarchical incorporation of racial subjects to accommodate economic needs. While the Conservative government's recent policy changes are not creating a radical new trajectory for the country's economic immigration strategy, I have argued that the novel aspect is how all of these changes are occurring in the presence of a multicultural ideology and policy. This produces a form of doublespeak –of hostility towards immigrants, but also the inclusion of them –erasing the feelings of exclusion and discrimination immigrants of colour face in their settlement in Canada. This doublespeak also creates a strain upon the working conditions of SPOs in Canada, like ISSofBC.

Chapter 4: Reflections on Blazers, Ethics, Methods and People

4.1 The Blazer

Sitting down for my first interview, I was prepared in all the ways I thought I should be. I had brought my questions and notepad, I had read everything I could come across about MYCircle and I was ready to get the information I was searching for. Dressed in what I assumed to be appropriate attire, I realized the moment my first research participant entered the café that I was getting it wrong. She looked at me as if I was from another planet and I thought for a moment that I was too. The blazer did not help.

Throughout my fieldwork I encountered tension caused by my position in relation to the people I wanted to speak with. I met vast skepticism from youth, youth workers and multiple organizations, who understandably wished to avoid the exploitation of the youth they worked with and for. With persistence, the good fortune of established contacts, and piggybacking off of other people's networks, I was granted an in. Then I had to prove myself.

For all the talk and readings I had done on the topics of reflexivity and positionality (see Roy 2002; Duncan and Duncan 2003; Nagar 2003), it was only when I experienced being out of place that I realized some of the consequences my position brings. Throughout this research, I have tried to be mindful of my own positionality, and the power that allows me to theorize about citizenship, with two passports in my pocket; to somehow quell the arrogance that only a citizen might best know how to reform citizenship or propose ways to expand the institutions of political membership.

My blazer-moment was not only embarrassing, but also valuable, teaching me that I was of a different position than the research participants, and how this difference shaped my research, from the materials I read, the strange encounters I had, to the analysis I developed. The

experience also revealed that I did not know enough about the environment I was about to enter, and it revealed the shortcomings of trying to balance my insecurity about the interview with a piece of clothing that appealed to authority.

Luckily, the experience taught me that I was learning research by doing it. The classroom and my peers could only aid me so much, before I had to determine how I would navigate field research.

Reflecting upon my research, I see how my knowledge claims are historically situated, socially embodied and mediated through multiple shifting relations of privilege and power (Creese and Frisby 2012). Being reflexive about this is difficult and uncomfortable, and leads to doubt that is often damaging, but necessary to a scholar ('s ego):

Well aware of all the ways in which I am privileged, I have struggled with concerns when trying to write *with* rather than writing *about* the participants in my study, to a point where I doubted whether I should be engaging in fieldwork at all. It is a challenge that scholars have taken up in recent years in order to redress concerns about marginalization, essentialisms, and differences in representation (See Katz 1994; Mahtani and Mountz 2002; Staehli and Nagar 2002). Conducting fieldwork across race and resources involves being attentive to current and historical discrimination, colonialism, economic differences, and local realities –reflexively and generally –to avoid exploitative research and perpetuation of relations of domination and control. This awareness, Farhana Sultana (2007) argues, should permeate the entire research process, from conceptualization to dissemination, and that researchers are especially mindful of negotiated ethics in the field. Just adding reflexivity on at the end is mere introspection, and maintains damaging power structures. Echoing Richa Nagar (2003), I hold that these can be overcome by understanding that fieldwork can be a productive struggle, as long as the researcher

bears in mind the critiques, and undertakes research that is more politically engaged, materially grounded, and institutionally sensitive.

Rather than seeing reflexivity as self-indulgence or navel-gazing, it is a way to reflect on how one is inserted in grids of power relations and how that influences methods, interpretations, and knowledge production, and therefore produce more responsible and aware knowledge (Kobayashi 2003).

Several feminist methodologies emphasize non-hierarchical interactions, understanding, and mutual learning, where researchers pay close attention to how research questions and data collection may be embedded in unequal power relations between the researcher and research participants (Moss 2002; Bondi 2003). In this spirit, I've come to see my own research as far more interesting thanks to the contributions made by the research participants. I call them participants and not subjects because they are as active as me in shaping the outcome and understanding of my research, and I have learned far more from them, than they have from me. Viewing the participants as peers, I attempt to counter the hierarchical relationship between researcher and research participant, and ameliorate the exploitative nature of arriving at a research site, collecting data, and exiting the community in exchange for a university degree. It has been important to me as a researcher to use a collaborative methodological approach to better identify the complex social problems faced by youth who are rarely included in knowledge production and policy-making by virtue of their age and social status.

Through my work, I question what and who is at the centre and who is at the margins of knowledge making by reflecting over tensions and considering alternative ways of accessing knowledge. This makes research with, rather than for or about, important to how I perceive the production of my knowledge, and the recommendations I make for future policy. However,

being critically reflexive does not remove the possibility of negative consequences in my research, or that I won't reinforce the injustices I seek to address. This is in large part because the simple act of "bringing marginalized groups into visibility is insufficient to change hegemonic relations" (Pratt 2004:173).

For my next interview I dropped the blazer, and while it didn't grant me automatic insider status, it certainly helped in creating a more relaxed tone in the conversation.

4.2 The Ethics Board

The ticky-box process of UBC's Behavior Research Ethics Board (BREB) is disconnected from my idea of research ethics. BREB's process of review and approval is standard procedure for all researchers who wish to work with human subjects, but serves perhaps more as a liability guarantor for the University than as a qualifier for ethical research. While the board's stated effort is to "protect human research participants seeks to ensure that UBC research is conducted in accordance with the highest ethical standards" (UBC 2015), it does this only by presenting forms to fill.¹⁸ The concerns raised by the ethics board focus on privacy, consent, harm and risk with specific emphasis placed on the researcher's role and responsibility to their research subjects (UBC 2015). The researcher fills the gap between the ticked boxes and what takes place in the field.

In classroom conversations, books, talks with my supervisor and colleagues, I started to understand that I very much had to develop my own ethics. I had to figure out why I wanted to do this research, and why my participants would want to be part of what was ultimately the

¹⁸ Since I completed BREBs process it has changed significantly, to a more intuitive user interface and a more extensive online learning process. The board initiated these changes after significant feedback from researchers at UBC.

stepping-stone for me to get a degree. I was left wondering how much the ethics process was intended to educate me as a researcher, and how much it served as a waiver for me to take on any liability, relieving UBC.

4.3 Methods

For my primary data, I conducted one to one and a half hour in-depth, open-ended, tape-recorded semi-structured interviews with 9 immigrant youth, interspersed with participant observation during the winter and spring of 2013. I used a guide covering the relevant themes and research questions for the conversation-like interviews. I had prepared questions ranging from the specific to the general, about various aspects of the youths' political experience, immigration stories and feelings of belonging. Next to posing direct questions, I made a deliberate choice to allow myself as an interviewer to actively participate with comments and claims in order to promote a more in-depth discussion. An active interview can be regarded as a form of collaboration towards producing a narrative, whereby the interviewer helps the interviewee to use all their interpretive resources and experiences to deliver nuanced and complex answers (Gubrium and Holstein 1997).

I identified most of the participants in this study with the help of the coordinators of MYCircle. Announcements of the study were made at the locals of ISS where MYCircle held their training. Once the initial announcements had been made, I was able to collect an unsystematic sample of research participants by using snowball technique and chain referrals. All of the interview participants have received pseudonyms to protect their anonymity.

The majority of interviews were conducted around downtown Vancouver, close to the location of ISS, where the group's activities take place. In addition, several of the youths invited

me to events and political actions they themselves were taking part in or arranging. I chose Vancouver as a location for my research, partially due to convenience, but mostly because I wished to be embedded in the environment that I studied, and to have the opportunity to engage with the research participants over time.

There are of course limits to my small sample of participants. Their contributions are not statistically significant, making it hard to argue that there is indeed a trend or structure in their experiences, and the use of the snowball technique necessarily creates a homogeneous sample. I focus on these cases not because they are exceptional, but because they are points in departure for thinking about/analyzing how these *outsiders inside* negotiate new citizenships and their process of the incorporation in the state. A common denominator to the research participants is their engagement in their local community around issues of immigration and settlement. All of the participants have since their time in the MYCircle program continued on to other community based projects. Their strong engagement and what I in this thesis call citizen action make the sample of participants eligible for understanding what these concepts mean from the point of view of immigrant youth.

To supplement the interviews, I used a variety of secondary research materials; websites promoting the organizations the youth are involved in, surveys, as well as content analysis of media reports and news articles.

4.4 Introducing the Youth

The youth I interviewed represent a diverse range with respect to origin country, experience prior to arriving in Canada, and their experience of living in Vancouver. Of the 9 youth I interviewed, 7 were permanent residents, one was a citizen, and the last person chose not

to share their status. There are several distinguishing and common characteristics of my research sample. They all spoke English as a learning language, and were in the same age bracket, between 17 and 24. The youth are mostly from middle class backgrounds with highly educated parents, though few of the parents are working within their field in Canada.

The majority of the youth I interviewed were GARs (Government Assisted Refugees), meaning that they went through a more formalized process of settlement than Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSR) or refugee claimants who arrive in Canada on their own accord. Hailing from three different continents, and 7 different countries, the youth had been through unique experiences: the push to leave, how they left, when they arrived, the refugee camps, their family structure and history, as well as their age upon arrival in Canada.

Each person generously shared a fragment of their lives with me, and it has been my responsibility as a researcher to critically engage and respect that fragment in my analysis and further writing. As Daniel Hiebert (2002) carefully shows in his examination of cosmopolitan identities in Vancouver, B.C. too great a focus on one component of a person's life, one element of the story, can obscure the complex realities of that story. Similarly, the momentary glimpses I was granted access to in these individuals' lives doesn't speak for their entire experience or complete attitudes about integration, citizenship or the functions of MYCircle's program.

Prior to our interviews, the majority of youth had not reflected over the concept of citizenship beyond legal status. Nevertheless, many of them had enlightening examples and observations around the themes I set out in Chapter 1, pertaining to new citizen action. I provided a brief description from academic literature in the part of the interviews that were about citizenship, and many of the youth nodded, and even started to speak before I was done with the reference.

MYCircle only allows 16-20 participants per semester, which leads to several people being waitlisted. This demonstrates both the popularity and limits to the program. Participation in the program is free, lowers the barrier for youth who may have financial limitations. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the program is directed towards fostering civic participation and leadership. This also affects the selection of attendees: they have the capacity to dedicate time on weekends to a program that entertains questions of identity and belonging, time that could be spent on a part time job or doing homework.

The youth participants in my research are negotiating far more than a sense of citizenship and the meaning of multiculturalism: they are also preoccupied with translating for their parents, struggling in school, coping with social exclusion, worrying about money, future education, longing back to their home countries, and find themselves constantly puzzled by Canada's culture.

MYCircle's goal is to increase the active participation and positive integration of young newcomers by providing them with a safe, supportive and comfortable place where they can gain validation and understanding around the complex issues of integration and adjustment. It focuses on resilience and strength building.

4.5 Conclusion

Through a dynamic interview process I got to know 9 wonderful immigrant youth. They shared their stories, and while books had in a certain sense prepared me for conducting research, it was these encounters that gave me insight in the negotiations of citizenship amongst immigrant youth in Vancouver. The analysis of their stories features in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Fitting In and Standing Out

Sooo, where are you from?

Vancouver.

No, really, where are you frooom?

Well, Richmond.

But that is where you live. Where are you really from, yknow, really?

-Rachida

Rachida lives in Richmond, BC, a city that comprises over 140 different ethnic origins and where 58% of the population was born in countries other than Canada. Yet she still experiences being out of place as an immigrant. In our interview, she told me about the frequent interrogations she experiences when she meets new people, which shaped her “preparedness with new encounters to always [have] been in the service of others”. Several of the youth I spoke to had an iteration of the interrogative encounter above, and they described a feeling of alienation and the idea that “this country does not belong to us” (Samira). One after another told of these encounters, despite diction, compartment, style or unrelated conversational topic, and how they struggled with the assumption since childhood that they must reply to a stranger’s inquiry into matters they themselves struggle to have words for, let alone understand. There is a privilege that comes from having never been obliged to answer questions about the meaning of one’s name or about one’s country of (so-called) origin, or to explain that the way you look is generationally and geographically worlds apart from where you were born. This demand, of explaining identity, and the ways in which it confuses or interests others has consistently taken precedent in that these youth are expected to remedy the curiosity of others before mediating their own.

It’s so difficult all the time justifying yourself because of your nationality. A simple question that for most people is a one-word answer to “Where do you come from? I am French. I am Canadian” For an Iranian, it’s a one-hour explanation: I am Iranian but, I am Iranian but...

-Shirin

These interrogations relate to citizenship, multiculturalism and peer process: It operates under a logic that allows a white interrogator to center whiteness as unquestionable belonging and people of colour as outsiders, and it enables the erasure of indigenous peoples and their belonging. Because white identity is seldom interrogated, white people are easily seduced by the idea that they do not have one (Younge 2008).

These stories of questioning identity¹⁹, of and by the youth, trouble the promise of the multicultural state as well as challenge its many assumptions about who can belong and what forms of citizen action they can engage in. Reflecting over origins and place, the youth make space for “emergent and unknown forms of belonging, connectivity [and] intimacy” (Puar 2007:xxviii) and widen the scope of discussion in studies of immigration, citizenship and multiculturalism. Their stories and responses in the pages to come are by no means universal to the immigrant experience in Vancouver, nor are they unique. They deserve to be heard, as all stories do. The common denominator for these accounts is the immigrant origin and the reflections around what it means to enact citizenship in Canada, but also the participants’ relation to ISSofBC and the MYCircle program, and how the latter enables the former. These accounts enliven the theory and structures of citizenship, multiculturalism and action in the face of new policies and the changing conditions described in Chapter 2.

¹⁹ In a multiethnic society, a person’s identity may be seen as the behaviors, beliefs, values, and norms that define the person as a member of a particular ethnic group. However, social categories — such as ethnicity, race, and gender — are not innate characteristics of people, but are socially constructed attributes and boundaries that are often used to differentiate people from one another for economic and political purposes, whereby some groups obtain more privileges than others. The construction of such social categories, and the idea of nationhood, are accomplished, to a great extent, through discursive means (e.g., see Anderson 2006) Through his concept of *superdiversity*, Steven Vertovec (2007) describes the transformation of the idea of nationhood through shifts in global mobility.

In this chapter I explore the complex ways that citizen action (the mode of participation that I laid out under the concept of new citizenship in Chapter 1) and Canadian multiculturalism come together for immigrant youth. For the interviewees, the space of MYCircle and the process of peer support, recognition, and learning have been vital in negotiating these categories. I reflect over the peer mode of learning, central to the method of MYCircle, and argue that it is this flat structure that provides the success and empowerment the youth research participants speak of. I then turn to two ways the youth I spoke with narrated their stories. First, concentrating on the concept of *fitting in*, I present the many ways in which these youth use conventional avenues and struggle with *white masks* (Fanon 2008) for enacting their citizenship and participating in social and political processes. Given the ways these avenues demonstrate exclusionary or tokenistic attitudes towards immigrant youth, I question the nature of these relationships. Secondly, in seemingly opposing ways, I present the stories of the youth participants and the ways they are *standing out* with their culture, identity, and voice. Finally, I present a discussion of youth agency in negotiating citizen action through the lens of Homi Bhaba's (1994) *third space*, and reflect upon how institutions like MYCircle facilitate this negotiation.

Observing the stories of immigrant youth and their take on how they negotiate citizen action, with and without the structures of MYCircle, I identify an understanding of participating in society (lived citizenship), that isn't merely scripted by voting and passports (formal citizenship). Both fitting in and standing out allows me to take into consideration youths' alternative modes and spaces of exercising influence, expressing opinions, contesting the status quo and speaking up.

5.1 Invaluable Space: The Importance of Peer Support at MYCircle

It was my lifesaver. People back home would call and ask, 'How is Canada?' I lied. It was so bad. But I couldn't admit that, so I just kept it all bottled up.

-Maria

It was a space that once a week allowed me to be me without having to put on a front. I realized I'm not the only lost soul floundering, saying, 'What am I? Who am I? Where am I going to go?'

-Sina

Saying you're a refugee puts people off. The word's loaded with bad meanings to most white people. In the space of MYCircle though, it's something to be proud of.

-Darko

(...) being here allowed me to see other people who are going through similar things as I am, and it let me know that I can actually do it – 'cause they did it.

-Miguel

Structured peer support makes MYCircle different from other services provided for immigrant youth in schools and at community centres, where an instructor teaches the participants. Examples include SWIS,²⁰ which practices counseling and preventative support, and ISSofBC's job training classes. The program caters to immigrant youth who are negotiating their identity and who already speak a certain amount of English, and explicitly asks youth to enter with a strong commitment to community participation. Through 80 hours of intensive training, the youth practice and discuss strategies addressing issues of integration, including social isolation, racism, trauma, communication barriers, family conflict and lack of support (ISS 2015). Based on what the program offers, it attracts many youth who have been through similar experiences, even though these experiences didn't happen in the same spaces. Their shared age range of 14-24 creates a space where peers surround them. Particularly prominent among the

²⁰ SWIS is an outreach program offering guidance to new immigrant students and their families in both elementary and secondary schools. SWIS provides information and support to enhance an understanding of Canadian culture through promoting engagement in the schools system, providing information to immigrant students and parents about registration, activities, and resources; it also offers support in conflict situations.

youth participants was the appreciation of white absence. All of the interviewees described some form of relief from being able to talk about issues they were facing, such as race and racism, in a brown space, where the others around them had similar experiences, and shared strategies for overcoming future experiences. Unlike most other spaces the immigrant youth inhabit, the MYCircle program allows them the time, place and encouraging peers to be a version of themselves that isn't interrogated for being Other.

I would never share what I have experienced with white people, 'cause they think that just because there's conflict where I come from, people are dying of hunger and shoot each other in the street. (...) I don't wanna share, 'cause they see me as someone who abuses Canada and the welfare system. That is really messed-up.
-Samira

What is really important is peer support. They really stress that at MYCircle. They place importance on peer support, empowering people, being there and creating positive spaces; not teaching, but facilitating in order to engage youth and make a positive change in their lives.
-Darko

Encountering peers who recognize their experience and can speak to similar feelings is the biggest reason why MYCircle is such a success. Surrounded by peers, the program participants said they experienced many of the benefits of peer learning: mutual discovery, reciprocal feedback, frequent sharing of ideas, supportive communication and assistance (Shiner 1999).

According to William Damon and Erin Phelps (1989), peer support encourages experimentation with new ideas and unspoken thoughts, thereby enabling room for a critical re-examination of one's own assumptions and identity. Distinct from the competitive classroom or the solitary experiences many of the participants had before coming to ISS, the peer support provided a sympathetic forum for creative and emotional risk-taking "to say things aloud that I only ever said in my mind" (Samira). Relieved from many of the racial, ageist and cultural power dynamics prevalent in their everyday, several youth (7) described how the MYCircle space

allowed the flow of new ideas. In this space, the participants provided each other with sought-after recognition of the experience of negotiating citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism in Canada. Along with their peers, the participants described a sense of empowerment, ready to tackle the hurdles of fitting into the Canadian context, which too often makes them feel like outsiders who have to prove themselves.

It created a safe place and empowered us, letting us know that our ideas are important as well.
-Sina

Of course, peer support isn't the panacea to barriers against immigrant youth participation. This format also has its own priorities and limitations, such as interpersonal dynamics, limited exposure to on site community building, and the absence of academic expertise. While none of the research participants mentioned distinct conflicts or even negative dynamics, it is worthwhile noting that any social group will have a degree of differential power dynamics and tension. While I have defined the participants in MYCircle as peers, they possess very different characteristics (ethnicity, religion, origin country, knowledge of English and experience prior to Canada) that can be antagonistic.²¹ This makes the recognition that several of the participants described is more complicated, as there are many characteristics and experiences the participants don't share. The supposedly non-existent level of conflict among participants may be attributed to the anti-oppressive communication tactics that are among the skills the group facilitator shares with the youth, or the desire to not share that in the interviews.

²¹ In the realm of SPOs, Saadiq (2004) identifies two tiers – large SPOs like ISSofBC and smaller ethno-specific SPOs. The ethno-specific services are often far more able to tailor services to the specific needs of their demographic with their *ethno-capital* of language, ethnicity and culture. Serving a specific demographic may remove tensions that exists among participants in larger multi-service agencies. The smaller SPOs are often dependent on collaborations with the larger SPOs to receive funding for their operations, due to a lack of resources to compete for government funding. Different priorities and modes of implementation between the two tiers can create disagreement about delivery, and consequently this imbalance of monetary power can cause an uneven geography of service provision.

In addition, just as adults need support and training, encouraging authentic youth engagement requires that youth be given the time and space to develop the skills they need to participate effectively. This does not mean that youth need to learn now and participate later, but rather that they have ongoing training and support during the participation process. To engage meaningfully in decision-making, youth (like adults) may need workshops and practice in facilitation, public speaking, and collaborative processes. Youth too may need experiences that alter their understandings about what is possible for young people (O'Donoghue et al. 2002). MYCircle recognizes this need for learning through distinct skill building.

5.1.1 Networks and New Skills Foster a Range of New Engagements

During the many hours of training at MYCircle, the youth participate in sessions oriented around themes and skills that will be useful for future community participation. Some sessions build facilitation skills, while some strengthen the critical analysis of power relations and policies affecting youth. Others explore youth empowerment, group dynamics, integration processes and strategies for coping with and working against racism and discrimination, and two sessions introduce outreach and session planning with an emphasis on cross-cultural leadership skills and peer support in communities (ISS 2015).

MYCircle trains you, to speak, to understand others around you. It's great. The space helped us learn to work together effectively, deal constructively with conflict, and have time for fun and forging strong relationships.

-Maria

Providing the skills to build future facilitators, MYCircle both ensures an institutional memory of the participant experience, remaining relevant to the incoming cohorts. Those who choose not to continue as facilitators said that they still maintain contact with ISS, their former facilitators, and most importantly, each other:

I know a lot of the people who went through the program. I don't talk to everyone in my cohort, but there are people there, you know, in the same circles.
-Flo

Through MYCircle the youth not only engage with new people and potential friends, they also form relations that extend into the world of political advocacy. Having gone through the MYCircle experience, many of the youth participants express an increased desire to engage in greater community initiatives in the Lower Mainland, such as the citizenU project, Engaged Immigrant Youth, S.U.C.C.E.S.S.'s Youth Leadership Millennium, BC Youth Parliament, the Dialogues Project, and NuYu Popular Theatre. Some participants (6) explained that prior to the program, they did not know of the many options for participation that existed in the Lower Mainland. The skills they acquired made them confident that they could succeed in other organizational activities. Many of the youth were also inspired to continue doing similar work with program alumni or with elected officials and public servants. New initiatives have therefore sprung from the minds and collaboration of MYCircle graduates, such as the Fresh Voices Youth Advisory Team (YAT), a team working with a youth agenda towards improving the settlement process of immigrant youth.

As an example, The Fresh Voices initiative and the YAT have been dedicated to revealing the challenges facing newcomers to Canada, articulating the need for migrant justice and engaging youth in the process. With the support of provincial partners, the YAT organized the first province-wide conference that brought together newcomer youth, service providers, and politicians to discuss how different programs and systems affected immigrant and refugee youth in BC. Subsequently they hosted dialogues that culminated in a report that collected the voices of more than 220 newcomer youth and over 50 policy makers. The report advanced recommendations regarding the improvement of services and programs.

YAT and several of the aforementioned youth-led groups and initiatives work with government and non-governmental organizations to bring attention to issues concerning immigrant youth. Through these initiatives, the MYCircle graduates have connected with Vancouver's Mayor, Gregor Robertson; the provincial representative for Children and Youth, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond; and city councilors and task forces. The initiatives are new, but the channels are traditional, giving youth the space to participate in places where they previously have been excluded.

Darko said that his involvement with YAT and the opportunities it gave him to talk to important political figures in the province made him "realize that I too can have an impact on the big things". By providing opportunities for important but rarely held conversations, both MYCircle and the consequent initiatives created strong bonds and new insights with community members throughout the city.

While immigrant and refugee youth in BC have been consulted on their settlement experiences in the past, they have seldom led the investigative processes that lead to improved practices and policy outcomes. Excited by the many other options that exist in the Lower Mainland, three of the youth participants pointed out that there was a difference between the peer-led model of MYCircle and other initiatives. "[T]he services provided by organizations aren't enough," said Maria, while Hanif said "I want more youth spaces. MYCircle's nice, but there should be programs like this all over the place (...) there shouldn't even be the need for a program. All spaces should just be for youth as well." Sina was not impressed by the other offerings in the region, as many of them don't provide the same youth-positive, anti-oppressive space as MYCircle: "To feel belonging, you need to have connections. But there are not enough spaces to be taken seriously, and make these connections."

Both the skills and networks expanded through participation in MYCircle created stepping-stones encouraging the immigrant youth to participate in a wider political context, exercise influence, and fit into traditional forms of political action.

5.2 Fitting In

The question of fitting in is always a question of fitting in *where*, or into *what*. In addition to managing expectations of strangers and people around them, the immigrant youth participants also spoke of the expectations of parents and close family in their negotiation of citizen politics, white Canada, and in the workforce.

5.2.1 To Politics

MYCircle strongly encourages and contributes to the involvement of immigrant youth in larger community engagement projects and political processes (ISS 2015). Through their participation in the projects mentioned above, the youth are enacting traditional citizenship, as described in Chapter 1. This participation allows the youth to demonstrate towards their peers and other community members that it is possible for them and youth like them to engage in political conversations with higher authorities, not *despite* but *due to* their immigrant and youth status. Their presence in politics may signal a shifting demographic landscape of local and provincial politics, and it can encourage other migrant youth towards political participation. The majority of the youth (6) described a sense of empowerment and pride in participating in political activities, such as voting (two participants had formal citizenship), arranging conferences, and speaking to politicians.

Two of the youth described their experience of being invited to participate in political processes as tokenistic; they experienced their involvement more as an aesthetic choice than involvement that was fully incorporated into the events they attended.

So often you're in, kinda like, around adults, and they just don't listen. Or they listen, but only because you're the token young person.
-Maria

Like, at this conference, where our group was invited to speak. They scheduled us at the end of the very last day, in this separate room, when all the *important* stuff was over. We had things to say, but no one really came to listen.
-Sina

Many school boards, city councils, and boards of directors of non-profit organization have begun to create space for youth representatives. Although this marks a potentially important first step in opening the door to youth voice and participation, it also may limit the involvement of young people. Such a conception carries with it two related problems: tokenism and exclusivity. Inserting one or a few youth into an adult-created and adult-driven process runs the risk of involving youth as tokens or decorations, precluding any opportunity for meaningful participation or substantive influence. In addition to the risk of tokenism, involving a few young people as representatives of larger groups may result in exclusivity, whereby only the most privileged or skilled youth are chosen to participate, even in a community where many of the members are considered marginalized.

While some youth experienced the participation at conferences and meetings as empowering, inviting youth to participate in traditional political processes can also be a form of absorbing a dissenting group into the dominant mode of society. Being given space by people in power can also be a way of silencing voices, especially dissenting ones, as they may be formally incorporated but still ignored (or at least not valued as much as other voices).

Using their citizen action to participate in a political system that has historically discriminated against and excluded immigrants places the immigrant youth in a strained position. As described in Chapter 2, migrants have for much of Canada's existence been differentially incorporated into the state. Similar to the frustration Glen Coulthard (2014) expresses over the indigenous participation in Canadian legal and political processes, immigrant youth can be seen as supporting a system that works against them, legitimating their continuous unease. In his book, *Red Skin, White Masks*, Coulthard echoes Fanon (2008) in describing the balancing act of trying to obtain political influence in conventional channels of action, while being aware that this participation also acts as an endorsement to the current political system. The immigrant youth who participated in this research are also negotiating this difficult position—in politics, but also in other aspects of Canadian society.

5.2.2 To White Culture and Parental Expectations

Culturally and socially, the youth described a desire to fit in Canadian popular culture, through music, clothes, and language. All of the youth described a conflict between the culture that they came from and the culture that they had encountered in Canada. For some of them (4), this was also manifest in a gap between their parents' generation and their own. Some parents viewed the embrace of Canadian cultural norms as somehow a dismissal of their heritage:

There is a fear of their child becoming corrupted or losing their heritage values. No parents want their kid to listen to that shit [rap music].
-Darko

I don't know how to communicate with my parents because they are like: 'Are you ashamed of us?' They see my adoption of Canadian life as somehow a rejection of them.
-Flo

Two of the youth spoke of how embracing a Canadian identity, with the knowledge of how society functions, the fluency at which they were able to pick up the language relative to their

parents (and consequently gave them the ability and stressor of being interpreters of gas bills and bureaucratic meetings), reversed power relations between generations. While their parents were glad that their children were achieving an integrated status in Canada, Hanif and Flo also said that their superior cultural fluency made their parents resent their success. The youth therefore experienced dual cultural tensions, of not being Canadian enough, and of being too Canadian.

Parental pressures also enforced the idea of being a model minority, of doing well in school and fulfilling their ideas of what it means to be successful. Amongst the interviewees, parents often figured as another factor complicating the negotiation of meaningful belonging and citizen actions. Hanif, now a social worker with a local SPO, also shared the expectations his parents had for him and his brother:

It's so complex. When my brother was in university, he wanted to go into creative writing. "[My mum said] You're the first son and I can't have this happen" and so she was really disappointed. He graduated and he did really well, publishing his work in really good places. Now my parents are OK with it, but at that time they said, "You [Hanif] can't be a social worker. You just can't." My dad hated it. He was like, "This is not going to make you any money. I did not come to this country for you to be a social worker".
-Hanif

Hanif's telling of parental expectations reveals that his father didn't much care for the occupation of social work, and it illustrates the pressure of making parental sacrifices worthwhile. Furthermore, Hanif's parents emphasized the importance of success, but they were skeptical of achieving it through a creative pursuit. This shows that Hanif's parents may want some form of successful integration (monetarily), but also reject certain aspects of Western culture.

Related to these pressures, and demonstrating her parents' awareness of racial inequality, Flo spoke of what she said was a cliché amongst immigrant parents, encouraging their children to "work twice as hard to be considered half as talented [as white people]". The parents of the

youth in the study had done a lot to see their children succeed, but had very specific ideas of what success means.

The parental pressure of working twice as hard can perhaps be explained by Sunera Thobani (2007), when she argues that successful integration (in this case participation in traditional politics, profitable jobs and state building) is one end of a dichotomy, of being an original, cultural self, or being compromised by dominant cultures:

The immigrant who longs for acceptance into the national fold can project, with external support, the caricatured cultural self onto other immigrants as the real bearers of the devalued cultural practices. ... this subject is required constantly to prove her divestment in the negative aspects of her cultural self. The fear of slipping back into that “primitive” culture, lapsing into a thicker migrant accent, or forgetting how to perform the multicultural Canadian is a constant threat (Thobani 2007:171)

The harm of this dichotomy, Thobani (2007) continues, is that the racial subjects are under constant white surveillance that watches for a slip in order to prove that the knowing national subject always already knows: *they* are all really like that. This immigrant absorbs the dominant society’s disdain and projects it onto other immigrants contributing more scorn and derision, ever distancing herself as modern, assimilated, hyphenated and no less urbane or cosmopolitan than the national. Showing that they are different from those others who don’t follow the rules enables a racism that is not just enforced by white people but lives and breathes in everyone.

Four participants described a desire to “just be normal”. Shirin was among them, but she pointed out that the desire dissipated when she realized much of what that meant was striving to be white, whether by means of straightened hair, preppy clothes, a subdued accent, or an Anglicized “name that would pass (Sharon).”

Looking back, wanting to fit in was not something that pained me so much as it was an element of some deeper sense of disorientation: that I am first generation and therefore proficient at splintering who I am in order to accommodate everyone else’s expectations.
-Shirin

Multicultural Canada, despite its multicultural policy, is a country where white skin and white culture is the default, and the bodies that display a different skin colour are interrogated. This is visible in the interrogation Rachida described at the beginning of this chapter, and the unease of Shirin in the quote above. Whiteness is the identity that isn't interrogated, being Canadian without a hyphen, and complicates the negotiation of citizenship and belonging for immigrant youth.²² In a white country, fitting in for a person of colour will be complicated and at times contradictory.

Yet the interrogation the youth experienced, and what it led to, of questioning their own identity and place in Vancouver, was a catalyst to seek out both MYCircle and other forms of community engagement for answers. In the process of questioning who they are, they reflected over their position within their community and how they could be agents in their own lives.

Simultaneously registering and acting under the expectations of people around them, trying to fit in, the immigrant youth also addressed ways in which they stood out, embracing difference and how important this was for their sense of identity and self.

5.3 Standing Out

5.3.1 Demanding space

As much as participating in already existing forms of political action is encouraged by MYCircle and practiced by the majority of the immigrant youth, three of them—Miguel, Rachida and Samira—told me about other spaces for their citizen actions. These spaces are

²² Assuming that the Canadian identity is white illustrates the erasure of the Aboriginal populations of Canada, and the dominance of whiteness.

perhaps unconventional compared to conferences and meetings with ministers, such as political rallies, music performances, and standup comedy.

Social media was a frequent topic, such as Twitter: Samira insisted on using unconventional spaces for speech and writing instead of writing essays in an Important Publication, and insists that she can do better in 140 characters than what other writers do in a page.²³ Samira's high school teachers would frequently question the authenticity of her written work and her high performance, doubting the idea that she, as an immigrant with English as a Learning Language, could do better than her white, native-born peers. In embracing alternative spaces, these youths refuse the assumptions of the white classroom, white expectations, and instead insist on it being better.

Many people of colour don't consider public spaces of literature and public discussion their own, because it doesn't occur to them that they could belong there too. This is why a racial lens is essential – it reveals the difference of public critical contributions between white and brown.
-Rachida

Rachida continued to describe the courage it takes to contribute her thoughts and writing in predominantly white spaces. She found it intimidating to demand attention and not waiting for someone to grant her the space or invite her to speak. Similarly, Gayatri Spivak and Judith Butler (2011) write the story of predominantly undocumented Mexican immigrants demanding their belonging in the US, demonstrating in the streets unannounced, singing a Spanish version of *The Star Spangled Banner*. They write how this group of people did not wait for permission to translate the song, nor to walk on the streets as an assembled group. Before being given rights by

²³ Similar to the socioracial commentary of many brown and black people within pop culture, musicians and writers alike, like Kanye West, Teju Cole and Ayesha Siddiqi, use Twitter to communicate stories that defy conventional (white) expectations of how social commentary is done. While much great work is done within academia, the format of 140 characters demands both a different audience and fewer years and dollars of formal education.

the government, the Mexican immigrants seized their rights and enacted their right to assemble in the street. The Spanish anthem was one response to the simultaneity of being at once contained by the state and disposed from it.

We have to understand the public exercise as enacting the freedom it posits, and positing what is yet not there. There is a gap between the exercise and the freedom or the equality that is demanded that is its object, that is its goal. It's not that everything can be accomplished through language. No, it is not as if "I can say I'm free and then my performative utterance makes me free." No. But to make the demand on freedom is already to begin its exercise and then to ask for its legitimation is to also announce the gap between its exercise and its realization and to put both into public discourse in a way so that that gap is seen, so that that gap can mobilize (Spivak and Butler 2011:68-69).

Unfortunately, these forms of citizen action, the uninvited ones, create a backlash, both real, in the form of negative comments online, in their own head and in real life. As Sarah Galo (2014) paraphrases Ayesha Siddiqi "The voice in your head that's asking how dare you is the voice produced by an environment that's going to be challenged by your daring. The risk of undervaluing what you have to offer, especially to women of colour, is so much greater than overvaluing it". She goes on to explain how so much available talent is foreclosed by people waiting for permission to speak, and that one of the many tragedies of oppression is this untapped potential, both on an individual level and as a culture.

It's like they say, but not out loud, you know; how dare you exceed our expectations.
Don't you know your place?
-Samira

Youth are defining themselves outside of the traditional spaces of instruction, such as the home, school, conventional politics, and even MYCircle. Citizen action is located elsewhere – in popular spheres that shape identities through forms of knowledge that appear absent from what is taught in schools or conventional political spaces (Giroux 2012). The literacies of *kids these days* are located in electronic, aural and image-based media, and "it is precisely in these diverse terrains of pop culture that pedagogical practices can be established as part of a broader politics

of public life – practices that will aggressively subject dominant power to criticism, analysis and transformation as part of a progressive reconstruction of democratic society.” (Giroux 2012:xvii)

5.4 Discussion

The histories of racialized citizenship are nuanced, complex, and contradictory. However, there is still an opening (following Butler 1995:136; also cited in Pratt 2004:20) to ask, “what are the conditions under which agency becomes possible”? Instead of understanding an individual simply through binary oppositions (the dominant vs. the dominated, the oppressor vs. the oppressed, fitting in vs standing out), it is also important to note that many people, like immigrant youth, belong to more than one social category or cultural group that may be more or less in conflict with one another, and these people often feel the need to negotiate between various discourse practices. Immigrants, in particular, are constantly negotiating between the dominant discourses of their adopted country and the discourses that signify their ties to their native country and various other communities.

5.4.1 Doing Both

Both fitting in and standing out serves the interest of immigrant youth. Youth need multiple spaces for engagement. In this way, youth participation efforts can tap into the interests, passions, and skills of young immigrants. Alternative points of entry can also open the space for youth to redesign and recreate the institutions that influence their lives. Theorists of public participation have raised important questions to consider in thinking about authentic youth involvement. Central among these are questions about *who* participates, which points to the need to work towards broad and inclusive participation.

Although youth participation, through programs like MYCircle and beyond, imply that youth share common interests, it is important to remember how multiple and diverse their backgrounds and experiences are, even amongst immigrant youth. Young people engage with the public world as individuals, not as representatives of all youth, indigenous youth, hyphenated Canadians, youth of colour, or queer youth.

5.4.2 A Third Space

Edward Said (1979) has argued that the change and hybridization of cultural identity, and the perspectives that arise from it, can constitute a new space for understanding culture. In his terms, colonial subjects, having their precolonial nature unsettled by imperialism, developed a *second nature* in the midst of cultural contact and living under domination. However, Said insists that this second nature is inadequate to explain the consequences of colonial dominance; it is necessary to seek out, to map, to invent, or to discover a third nature wherein resides the potential for better understanding the experiences of postcolonial subjects (Said 1993). I apply his logic to thinking about immigrant youth, some of whom were colonial subjects where they originated and in one sense are new colonizers where they currently live, and how they live under the cultural dominance of white Canadian society.

Building on Said, Bhabha (1994) reacts against the polarization and simplification of culture in the binary opposition of self and other, center and periphery, oppressor and oppressed. He uses the metaphor of *a third space* to signify a new frame of reference and process of meaning-making that occurs in between cultures as a result of contact and the clash of difference. It is in this third space that I locate citizen action. For Bhabha, there is no simple definition of *nation* in a world where the movement of peoples and cultures occurs on a massive scale. Many

people are forever dwelling in the *in-between space* on the margins of and within nations. For Bhabha, hybridity is never a mixture of established cultures or identities, but the elusive conditions where signs and meanings can be "appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew" (37).

It feels like this place in between. You can't go back. You are not the same anymore.
You want to honour where you are coming from (and learn) how to remain true to
yourself and ... embrace new things without feeling guilty
-Shirin

While on the one hand, participating in traditional forms of politics and citizenship maintains the meaning of authority, on the other hand, specific actors (immigrant youth) redefine it through a strategy of emulation. Emulating dominant and traditional political participation reproduces but also diminishes the presence of authority by articulating it with (their) other knowledges and positionalities. This emulation both subverts the dominant mode of politics and produces new forms of knowledge. In this space of engagement, the identity of the immigrant youth is situated less in the dichotomy of the weak minority or the dominant government, but in the "cutting edge of translation and negotiation," (Bhabha 1994:38) where new subject positions may be formed.

Lavie and Swedenburg (1996) elaborate on this when they call for the exploration of the third space in the practices of everyday life. In their words, "We stake out a terrain old in experience and memory but new in theory (...). This is a terrain where opposition is not only responsive, but creative. It is a guerrilla warfare of the interstices, where minorities rupture categories of race, gender, sexuality, class, nation, and empire in the center as well as on the margins" (165-6). The study of this third space is an attempt to displace the notion of the autonomy or boundedness of culture and to map out some of the everyday practices with which immigrant youth create new subject positions as citizens. It is in this space that minorities may

resist subordination and the terms of their incorporation into the dominant structure. It is also where they may create new alignments and solidarity with one another.

Hence, in creating social ties through community engagement with their peers and beyond, the immigrant youth partake in conversations and actions that serve to construct an in-between space that they use to subvert the dominant spaces of both their native and adopted countries through what I've termed citizen action. It is also in this space that they may mobilize their subject positions in different social systems and cultural fields to forge new grounds for defining themselves in relation to both their host and home societies.

Most importantly, whether it is by fitting in or standing out (or both), immigrant youth are their own agents in the process of negotiating citizen action. Criticizing the different forms of citizen action (fitting in and standing out) may be productive in identifying how power, and especially whiteness, influences the actions and possibilities available to immigrant youth, but it can easily deny them agency in the face of larger social structures.

5.5 Conclusion

The youth who participated in the MYCircle program all told of different ways in which they negotiated their citizen actions. The tensions they embody between fitting in and standing out cause stress and sadness, but they also spur a generous engagement with their wider communities. This has been partially enabled by their peer encounters over the 80 hours of training in MYCircle, but also by being given the space by those in power and by demanding new spaces, not waiting to be asked to speak up. Those who strive to fit in still have agency, and those who stand out are demanding to be heard, enacting a disruptive but productive form of agency.

All 9 participants described the MYCircle space as invaluable and lamented the fact that there were not enough similar services to provide for all immigrant youth. While some of the participants complained about the declining state of the MYCircle program after its acceleration, the youth were in agreement on the importance of the space ISS provided, and the future engagements it encouraged.

I have shown that while many migrant youth experience discrimination, marginalization and a feeling of unease in their Canadian daily lives, there are still sources of potential empowerment through their engagement in practices that develop intercultural voices and perspectives, informing their actions as citizens. Their negotiation is only ever a struggle, but their engagement and citizen actions put them in the struggle. Their presence in politics is not an end in itself, but rather a means to enact political change.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In this thesis I have discussed the evolving concept of citizenship, and demonstrated how its expanded meanings and practices are a result of struggle by those who have been excluded from it. I have further presented a concept of citizenship, *the domicile*, which bases inclusion on the intention of creating a home within the border of a state. While borders still matter, and produce outsiders and insiders, I have engaged with the productive tensions that occur when outsider subjects on the inside contest belonging and forms of citizenship. These contestations allow immigrant youth to define what lived citizenship means to them, and by doing this they also influence the political structures that define formal citizenship. The current Conservative government is creating a hostile environment for immigrant integration, though the financially dependent SPOs and immigrant youth are not without agency or counter efforts.

Youth negotiate their citizenships through their citizen actions in many different settings, both in conventional channels of influence, and in new areas that are less defined. While the Canadian state regulates formal citizenship, the lived experience of immigrant youth transcends the state's definition and therefore challenges it. The youth embody contradictions and contain multitudes in their struggle for developing a sense of citizenship and belonging under racism, reminding us that their struggle is constant and will never be fixed. Rather, the youth are able to use the tools of certain policies, political action and community engagement to improve their lives and influence those who hold power.

In this research I have found that MYCircle provides immigrant youth with a valuable space to share thoughts of identity, belonging and citizen action, fostering a wide array of future community engagements and leaders. While the immigrant youth participants are from widely different backgrounds and circumstances, they all face discrimination and struggle due to their

immigrant background. MYCircle surrounds the immigrant youth with peers, and they empower each other by granting recognition and developing strategies for coping with their lives in multicultural Canada.

The peer oriented model centres youth as the sources of knowledge, allowing them to be fully capable agents in their own lives. MYCircle builds skills for community engagement and leadership, but the youth determine what that means to them.

In future research I would like to question how the youth's different identities create tensions and benefits in service provision. Drawing on the work of this thesis, future research would benefit from more participants to identify differential needs amongst youth from different demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds. MYCircle is a solid program for the youth who have access to it, but it would be worthwhile finding factors that contribute to barriers for participation in the program.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Email to Organizations and Community Groups

Dear (specific organization name)

My name is Sarah M Przedpelska and I am an M.A. student in the department of Geography at UBC. I am writing to ask about possibly conducting some of my research with you and your organization.

My thesis focus is on conceptions of civic engagement and building of identity amongst people who have recently immigrated to Vancouver. I am hoping to explore the ways in which this group comes to identify with Canada in the initial stages of their settlement and integration.

For the purposes of this project I will be interested in interviewing up to 30 young people between the ages of 20 and 28 who have immigrated to Canada and see themselves as active civic participants.

Please let me know what you think and if you have any questions or concerns do not hesitate to contact me,

Thanks so much for your time and consideration in advance,

Sarah M Przedpelska

Appendix B - Poster for Recruitment

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Department of Geography
1984 West Mall
Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6T 1Z2
Tel: (604) 822-2663 Fax: (604) 822-6150
Url: <http://www.geog.ubc.ca/>

Are you interested in participating in a research study on civic participation amongst immigrant youth?

The purpose of this study is to identify the processes by which immigrant youth enact their participation in a new society, and how they navigate the transition between countries as well as age groups.

The study seeks immigrant youth who are able to commit to one 90-minute interview with the researcher. If you would like to participate in this study, please contact Sarah Przedpelska at s---@geog.ubc.ca to obtain a research consent form.

All information will be kept confidential and has no relationship to the services or membership received at this organization.

Sarah Przedpelska

s---@geog.ubc.ca

Sarah Przedpelska

s---@geog.ubc.ca

Sarah Przedpelska

s---@geog.ubc.ca

Sarah Przedpelska

s---@geog.ubc.ca
Sarah Przedpelska

s---@geog.ubc.ca

Appendix C - Information Flyer

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Department of Geography
1984 West Mall
Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6T 1Z2
Tel: (604) 822-2663 Fax: (604) 822-6150
Url: <http://www.geog.ubc.ca/>

Resistance and Engagement: Immigrant Youth Citizenship in Vancouver

Principal Investigator:

Daniel Hiebert, Professor, Department of Geography, University of British Columbia, email: ---@[geog.ubc.ca](mailto:---@geog.ubc.ca)

Masters Student:

Sarah M Przedpelska, MA Student, Department of Geography, University of British Columbia, phone: 604---368---xxxx; email: ---@[geog.ubc.ca](mailto:---@geog.ubc.ca)

‘Resistance and Engagement’ is a Masters thesis that aims to answer questions about the process of settlement, integration and civic participation of immigrant youth in Vancouver.

The purpose of this study is to identify the processes by which immigrant youth enact their participation in a new society, and how they navigate the transition between countries as well as age groups.

Project Timeline:

Sep 2012 - May 2013:

- Conduct interviews with immigrant youth referred through partner organizations
- Document and transcribe interviews
- Conduct focus groups with participants in the interviews

May- July

- Write up and present findings

Objectives:

- to uncover the ways in which young immigrants are heard, silenced and speak up, and how this is influenced by settlement organizations.
- to identify if there are certain ways the youth feel encouraged to behave and participate in order to be read as legitimate participants in society, and whether that behavior conflicts with their own notions of identity.
- To investigate what other external factors (institutions, familial relations, markets) are contributing to notion of identity, belonging and participation.

Appendix D - Consent Form

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Department of Geography
1984 West Mall
Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6T 1Z2
Tel: (604) 822-2663 Fax: (604) 822-6150
Url: <http://www.geog.ubc.ca/>

Research Consent Form

Resistance and Engagement: Immigrant Youth Citizenship in Vancouver

Principal Investigator:

Daniel Hiebert, Professor, Department of Geography, University of British Columbia, office phone: 604-822-xxxx; email: dan.-----@geog.ubc.ca

Masters Student:

Sarah M Przedpelska, MA Student, Department of Geography, University of British Columbia, phone: 604-368-xxxx; email: sarah.-----@geog.ubc.ca

Purpose:

This consent form concerns the research for a project titled, “Becomings and Resisting.” The purpose of this study is to investigate the process by which immigrant youth come to develop feelings of belonging and civic participation under transnational and changing identities within Canada. There are three main areas of questioning for the study:

- 1). How do young immigrants come to develop understandings of identity and civic participation in Canada? Do their identity categories come into conflict with one another? Is this process marked by their age, racial and/or gendered identities in particular ways?
- 2). Further, is this a process that is influenced by exposure to narratives of what ‘fits’ in Canada and what doesn’t? How do settlement organizations facilitate and influence this process?
- 3). And finally, are there other external factors (institutions, familial relationships, markets and media) that contribute to notions of belonging and participation in Canada? Are these shaping the process or are they an unimportant background noise?

Study Procedures:

In order to answer the above questions, young people who have immigrated to Canada and are

involved in a settlement organization's youth programme will be asked to participate in one on one interview.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to give a 90--minute interview, consisting of a series of formal questions. The interview will be recorded with your permission. Please note that you may end the interview at any time or ask for further clarification of any or all of the questions asked. You will also be able to withdrawal comments at any time, including from the audio--tape once the interview is over.

Confidentiality:

Your identity will be kept strictly confidential. All documents will be identified only by code number and kept in a locked filing cabinet. Data records kept on a computer hard disk will be password protected. Your name will not appear in any publications stemming from the research, nor will it be associated with any information you provide.

Potential Benefits:

The results of the research will be presented to you (and all others who agree to participate) at the end of the research study. When the research is complete you will receive a summary of the findings if you would like one.

Contact for information about the study:

If you have questions or desire further information with respect to this study, you may contact either Daniel Hiebert (Principle Investigator) at 604--822--xxxx or Sarah M Przedpelska at 604-368-xxxx

Contact for concerns about the rights of research subjects:

If you have any concerns about your treatment as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604--822--8598 or if long distance e---mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca

Consent:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy to you.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

Subject Signature Date

Appendix E - Interview Script

Part One: Opening

- *Establish rapport:* shake hands and introduce myself
- *Purpose:* I would like to pose questions about background, and the experiences the participants have had regarding civic engagement.
- *Project goal:* producing a masters thesis based on data collected from interviews with immigrant youth, aged 20-28
- *Project title:* Resistance and Engagement: Immigrant Youth Citizenship in Vancouver
- *Time Line:* The interview should take between 60-90 minutes.
- *Confidentiality and consent:*
 - How I will treat and use the information the participants
 - The maintenance of confidentiality (all personal information will be safely stored in a password protected hard drive)
 - The duration of the project and what will happen with the material once the project is completed
 - The project is voluntary and participants can withdraw at any point
 - Presentation of consent form
- *Answer Questions:* Before we begin, do you have any questions about the research?

Part Two: Main Part

A: The Participant and their Identity

- Demographic profile: Age, country of birth, country of residency before Canada, length of time in Canada, citizenship, language, family status, current occupation, anything else.
- How do you describe yourself?
Probes: do you consider yourself a person of colour? What about visible minority?
- How do you think others see you – in your opinion or experience – and is that different from how you perceive yourself?
- What do you feel are the most defining aspects of your identity
- Do you consider yourself an immigrant? Why/why not? How do you define being an immigrant?
- Do you consider yourself Canadian? What do you think makes a Canadian?

B: Participant Experiences and Feelings of Belonging

- How do you participate in society? In which forums, activities are you active?
- Which means do you use for participation?
- What are the conditions for your participation? Do you face any barriers to your participation?

- Probes: racial, gendered or socio-economic/classed barriers?
- How did you become involved in (name of settlement organization's programme)?
 - What does it mean to be part of a community?
 - Do you find a difference between belonging and feeling 'at home'?
 - Do you find that there are certain aspects of your identity you downplay or emphasize when participating in participatory political/public events?
 - Can you tell me about the process of coming to Canada?
 - What sticks out in your mind as the most difficult part of the process? What about the easiest?
 - Did your expectations of the process match your experiences?
 - Did you receive any information from the government?
 - Did you take any classes?
 - Did you read anything about Canada either before you got here or once you arrived?
 - What did you think of how the country portrayed itself? Did this match with what you experienced?

Part Three: Closing

Maintain Rapport: I appreciate the time you took for this interview. Is there anything else you would like to mention that I have not asked about?

Conclusion: Thank participants for their time, emphasize that they may contact me if there is anything they are curious about. Also, ask the participants if I can contact them for follow-up interviews