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**IMMIGRATION AND THE CANADIAN FEDERAL ELECTION OF 1993  
THE MEDIA AS A POLITICAL EDUCATOR**

by

**Liane Rose Soberman**

**A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
Graduate Department of Education  
University of Toronto**

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## **Abstract**

“Immigration and the Federal Election of 1993: The Media as a Political Educator”

Liane Soberman, Master of Arts, 1995

Graduate Department of Education, University of Toronto

This thesis deals with immigration, the Reform Party of Canada and the election of 1993. It is based largely on an examination of the Canadian immigration debate which took place prior to the election, an investigation into Reform’s ideology on immigration, and finally, the collision which took place between immigration, Reform and the media during the federal election campaign of 1993.

In the 1990s one hears stark reminders that Canada is far from being the accepting society it often envisions itself to be. According to researchers and policy makers, immigration continues to add to the national strength. Many Canadians remain unconvinced. Driven by emotion and coerced by myth, they feel that immigration is a problem best resolved through lower numbers and greater selectivity. In the 1990s the Reform Party emerged to give these previously underrepresented Canadians a political voice.

In spite of Preston Manning’s claim that Reform’s immigration policy recommendations were strictly predicated on what was economically best for Canada, the policy rubbed up against ethnic issues and fed racial anxieties. During the campaign, immigration, the Reform Party and the media collided to produce a ground swell of angry discussion over Canada’s ethno-cultural policies. In the end, this collision served to legitimize growing anti-immigrant sentiment.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## Introduction

The dislocations of the 1960s and 70s--the struggle for racial and sexual equality, military adventures such as Vietnam, Watergate, the resilience of the economic crisis--produced both shock and fear. "Mainstream culture" was shaken to its very roots in many ways. Widely shared notions of family, community, and nation were dramatically altered. Just as important, no new principle of cohesion emerged that was sufficiently compelling to recreate a cultural centre. As economic, political, and valuative stability...seemed to disappear, the polity was itself "balkanized." Social movements based on difference--regional, racial, sexual, religious--became more visible... "the common good" was fractured.<sup>1</sup>

Out of this "balkanized" polity, lacking a sense of "the common good", emerged the core strength of the Republican Party under Richard Nixon--at the time a strongly middle class Party with deeply populist roots. According to conservative critic Kevin Phillips this constituency represented "cloth coat" middle Americanism.<sup>2</sup> In many ways "cloth coat" America has spilled over the border into Canada; witness the popularity of Reform and the victory of Mike Harris in Ontario in 1995.

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<sup>1</sup>Michael Apple, "Rebuilding Hegemony: Education, Equality, and the New Right," in *Views Beyond the Border Country*, ed. by Dennis Dworkin and Leslie Roman (Routledge N.Y., 1993), p.103.

<sup>2</sup>Kevin Phillips. *The Politics of Rich and Poor* (New York, 1990), p.212.

However, it is not only out of the social dislocation of the 1960s and economic crisis of the 1970s that we have witnessed a conservative backlash. The rapid industrialization and urbanization of the Gilded Age spawned the populist Progressive movement in the United States at the turn of the century and a parallel, if politically less activist, movement in Canada. The Great Depression spawned the rise of several right-wing populist movements in the United States with leaders like Huey Long and Father Coughlin to name a few, and in Canada there emerged the United Farmers of Alberta, the Social Credit Party and the Quebec nationalist crusade of Adrien Arcand. In the 1990s Canada is witnessing yet another conservative wave, maybe a tidal wave. While these movements or outbursts of political expression vary widely in nature, intensity and impact, there exists a common thread among them all: each movement erupted out of a profound displeasure among large elements of society over unwelcome change in the state of either the economy, society or both.

Persistent economic downturn is one obviously unwelcome change traditionally precipitating a backlash. Movements arising out of a need to survive an economic downturn often target certain groups in society to be used as scapegoats. The Nazis use of the Jews as scapegoats is perhaps the best example. In western Canada Asians were made scapegoats for the declining economy around the turn of the century and scapegoating remains a hallmark of numerous radical right-wing or white supremacist groups who have always blamed minorities for society's ills. However, among the most consistent Canadian scapegoats in times of economic downturn has been immigrants. As long as immigration has been a Canadian phenomena immigrants have been blamed for recessions.

Less obvious changes, but no less welcome, precipitating a conservative insurgency are those changes that alter or threaten traditional elements within society. Progressive populism was in large part a response to the social changes brought on by urbanization and industrialization such as child labour, the growth of urban slums, and the development of urban ethnic enclaves or ghettos. Implicit in this period of conservative ascendance were attempts to assimilate and socially control new and different elements (i.e. immigrants) within society. The populist heyday witnessed after the capitalist heyday of the Gilded Age was largely a Protestant, ethno-centric movement.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, just as immigrants and minorities have factored into economic scapegoating, so have they been perceived as key elements challenging traditional norms and much cherished national values in both Canada and the United States

Perhaps the most striking example of a conservative insurgency resulting from both a threat to national tradition and cohesion as well as economic insecurity was that experienced in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the United States. By 1972, in the United States, a mainstream, middle-class conservative backlash had erupted out of both increasing economic instability and grave social dislocation which seemed to threaten core American middle-class values. Tapping this well of discontent, Richard Nixon rode the moral majority to victory by claiming he would bring the American people together. Instead, he

exploited the divisions within America--white against black, South against North, conservative against liberal, hawk against dove. In fact, the task of healing the nation's

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<sup>3</sup>For further discussion of the nature of Progressivism see Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York, 1955) and Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York, 1967).

wounds and offering reconciliation clashed directly with the political need to transform the resentments and grievances of the 1960s into a solid Republican majority in 1972.<sup>4</sup>

The conservative victory under Nixon signified a watershed not only in American history, but also in the contemporary history of the greater western world. The election marked the siderailing, if not derailing, of the liberal political tradition. Since Nixon's election conservative political tradition has advocated small government that remains off the backs of the people. Conservative platforms emphasize family values, a strong law and order stance, self reliance rather than social welfare, and a rejection of affirmative action or employment equity programs.

Much of Michael Apple's description of the 1960s and 1970s still holds true of Canada in the 1990s. Economic crisis persists, there is "shock and fear" among many Canadians precisely because "mainstream culture" has been so heavily eroded over the last twenty years, national cohesion seems threatened, the "cultural centre" has been displaced in an orgy of "balkanization", and more and more Canadians feel that "'the common good' has been fractured".

What does all this mean? Today, in Canada, there exists a profound displeasure with the state of the economy and society. Canadians are looking towards government to heal societal ills but mistrust politicians. A yearning for the "common good" is expressed through demands to cut welfare payments, decrease unemployment insurance, crackdown on crime, and reinvigorate the Protestant work ethic. To end the "balkanization" of the polity there are calls to quash federal multiculturalism, end employment equity and reduce immigration from non-

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<sup>4</sup>Robert Divine, *Since 1945: Politics and Diplomacy in Recent American History* (New York, 1985), p.164.

traditional sources. More and more Canadians, not to mention French, British, Americans and Germans, are seeking a cultural centre, social cohesion, and a return to core national values. The West is witnessing yet another conservative backlash.

Evidence of attempts to re-establish social norms can be seen in a recent experience I had. Several times in the last year I have looked at homes for sale in a quiet north Toronto area.

An associate broker for a major Toronto real estate agency whom I encountered at one open house has since been sending me his newsletter. The most recent one I received had a "Facts Sheet" on the front page of the newsletter that was intended to sell the reader on the benefits of the north Toronto area he was promoting. The information was presented in the following way.

Area X (his area) has an average household income of \$72,000 compared to \$51,000 for surrounding area Y. He presented several "facts", among them were that area X had a higher percentage of young families, a higher percentage of two parent families, a lower percentage of one parent families (which is apparent from the previous fact, but he still felt it was a selling feature), a higher percentage of home owners rather than renters, and finally the "facts sheet" boasted that the percentage of households whose mother tongue is English is twenty percent higher in Area X than in surrounding Area Y. In fifteen lines this real estate broker painted a vivid picture of an archetypal Canadian neighbourhood--hard working, upper middle-class, with traditional families who are white, English speaking and own their own home. This real estate broker captured the traditions and ideals precious to an increasing number of Canadians--never mind that he did so by inadvertently pressing the racial, anti-immigrant button. He presented what he felt were the attractive features of this neighbourhood, illustrating either his ignorance or, more likely, the receptiveness of some Canadians to such a message.

This paper seeks to examine how this growing appetite for a cohesive civic society with core Canadian values has played out through the immigration debate, the Reform Party of Canada, and the print media. This paper seeks to explain why, during the federal election of 1993, Canadians witnessed a public outpouring of anxiety and, at times, blatant racism when immigration was discussed. In the first chapter I will examine the nature of the immigration debate which took place prior to the federal election of 1993. The second chapter examines the ethno-cultural policies of the Reform Party of Canada, and the final chapter looks at how the Canadian federal election of 1993 proved to be fertile ground for the encounter which took place between the media, as a political educator, the Reform Party and the issue of immigration.

For the first time, explicit opposition to Canada's immigration and cultural policies found a political home in the Reform Party. The print media played the crucial role of mainstreaming previously unexpressed views held by a growing and anxious constituency.

A recent issue of *Canadian Public Policy* warned:

The dramatic breakthrough of the Reform Party...is an early warning sign of a pending Canadian version of what James D. Hunter has called 'Culture Wars' in the United States...Typically, they involve clashes over abortion, gay and lesbian rights, feminism, the constitution of the family, pornography, the role of religion, gun control, law and order, and the treatment of criminals. In the Canadian case, these concerns are supplemented by a debate over language policy, immigration and state support of multiculturalism.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout this paper I will be referring to "the issue of immigration" and it is therefore necessary to clarify my understanding and usage of this phrase. Immigration is a process

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<sup>5</sup>Alan C. Cairns, "Election 1993," *Canadian Public Policy*, Vol. XX no.3 (September, 1994), p.230.

whereby people from different origins migrate across international borders for the purpose of permanent resettlement. However, in the social context, one cannot deny that immigration is also a force for population change. For those worried about the sources of that change, an important thing about immigration is from **where** or from **what origins** the migrant is coming. Because this paper circles around issues such as the political Right, the media and, perhaps most importantly, public opinion, and how they all relate to immigration, it is important to note that when discussing “immigration”, I am reaching beyond immigration as a process and, in line with issues raised by Reform and the media during the election, I am far more concerned with immigration as a code word for who comes into Canada. When viewing immigration in this light, one cannot escape the views of the host society, thus issues of race, ethnicity, intolerance, and notions of preserving “Canadian values” must be addressed.



## Chapter 1 - The Immigration Debate

Since Confederation, Canadians' attitudes toward immigration has wavered between support and opposition, promotion and restriction, tolerance and intolerance. During the past few years the tone of immigration discussion has grown hostile and increasingly remindful of the turn of the century when certain immigrant groups were associated with crime and others were feared as potential 'public charges'. This chapter will review the historical literature on the relationship between anti-immigrant sentiment and immigration policy in Canada. It will explore the national immigration debate gaining momentum prior to the federal election of 1993. This debate or dialogue took place on three levels: the level of public discourse, the academic level, and the policy level. The debate will be analyzed along these three lines..

The immigration debate has repeatedly surfaced in Canadian history. A survey of the historical literature indicates that at certain periods in Canada's history immigration was rigorously promoted by government, while at other times it was tightly restricted. Freda Hawkins has labelled this the "tap on and tap off" phenomenon. In *Canada and Immigration*, she outlines how the immigration tap was turned on during periods of economic expansion and

turned off during periods of economic downturn.<sup>6</sup> While national immigration policy was designed to compliment Canada's economic needs, prior to the 1960s strict guidelines existed as to the 'character' or 'type' of immigrants Canada welcomed when the immigration tap was turned 'on'. Regardless of how expansionary immigration policy ever became, prior to 1967 there were restrictions that prohibited the admission of persons based on such ill defined categories as nationality, ethnic group, geographic area of origin, peculiar customs, habits, methods of holding property, unsuitability to climate, likelihood of becoming a public charge, or, an omnibus category, probable inability to become readily assimilated. Such sweeping exclusion guidelines enabled government to close Canada's door to racially, religiously, or culturally dissimilar groups. A hierarchy of preferred immigrants has been the quintessential feature of Canada's immigration policy since, as Harold Troper argues, Frank Oliver became Minister of Immigration in 1905. Contrary to popular belief, Troper argues that the Immigration Acts of 1906 and 1910 were more than a formalization of the restrictive practices of Clifford Sifton with respect to non-agrarians. He states that, "while designated employment was of no small consequence in gaining entrance into Canada, the new emphasis on racial and ethnocultural restrictions went well beyond Sifton's pro-agricultural bias".<sup>7</sup> Thus, after 1910, a 'White Canada Policy' as Freda Hawkins describes it in *Critical Years in Immigration*, remained in place for 57 years. By the 1920s, rankings in this ethnic and racial hierarchy of preference placed those from the British Isles and the United States at the top, followed by those from Northern and Western Europe, after which came Southern and Eastern Europeans who were not considered totally

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<sup>6</sup>Freda Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration* (Montreal, 1988).

<sup>7</sup>Harold Troper, *Only Farmers Need Apply* (Toronto, 1973), p.23, (emphasis mine).

'white', and finally, Jews, Asians and people of colour in a 'non-preferred' or 'undesirable' category.

A review of the literature reveals instances where anti-immigrant sentiment, driven largely by a pervasive Anglocentrism among Anglo-Canadians and a parallel anti-immigrant sentiment in French Canada, lead to a tightening of immigration restrictions. These instances are well documented. In *A White Man's Province*, Patricia Roy argues that restrictions imposed on Chinese and Japanese grew out of an increasing anxiety on the part of whites over challenges to their racial superiority, when faced with increasing competition from the Chinese and Japanese. While not denying that racism increasingly became a factor leading to outright exclusion, Roy challenges conventional interpretations of Asian exclusion by arguing that it was not a belief in white superiority that led British Columbians to demand Asian exclusion, rather it was a racially defined class consciousness with which white labourers wished to protect themselves from competition of Asian labour. Roy states that, "By complaining about the competition of Chinese and Japanese, white British Columbians betrayed a lack of confidence in their own race."<sup>8</sup>

In *Only Farmers Need Apply*, Harold Troper argues that while economic needs underlaid government led promotive immigration schemes to populate the West, restrictive elements were still very much a part of immigration policy, especially after 1905 when Clifford Sifton was replaced by Frank Oliver as Minister of the Interior. Even as Canada was actively courting American settlers, Troper argues domestic fear of a "colour" problem led to the

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<sup>8</sup>Patricia E. Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants 1858-1914* (Vancouver, 1989), p.23.

exclusion of American Blacks. The policy of restriction quickly went from being ad hoc. Troper argues, to "a well polished mechanism completely geared toward preventing Negroes from crossing the border into Canada."<sup>9</sup>

The period 1896 - 1914 is generally characterized by its massive, and unprecedented, influx of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe. Donald Avery, in *Dangerous Foreigners*, states that immigration policy between 1896 and 1914 "served, above all else, the dictates of the capitalist labour market."<sup>10</sup> However, Avery does not overlook the importance of race to Canadian immigration policy. He sees 1919 as a critical watershed. In the wake of the Russian Revolution, fears of Bolshevism became equated with fears of Eastern European immigrants. It was easy for government to use red baiting racism to put down the Winnipeg General Strike and press for immigration restrictions--especially as a surplus of labour grew. Avery states that,

Ethnic, cultural and ideological acceptability had temporarily triumphed over economic considerations. Whether Canada was prepared to accept a slower rate of economic growth in order to ensure its survival as a predominantly Anglo-Canadian nation now became a matter of pressing importance.<sup>11</sup>

This theme is repeatedly echoed in the literature. In his historiographical article in *Daedalus*, entitled "'So Great a Heritage as Ours': Immigration and the Survival of the Canadian Polity", Robert Harney states that, "Immigration policy has always reflected a dialectic between the

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<sup>9</sup>Troper, *Only Farmers Need Apply*, p.121.

<sup>10</sup>Donald Avery, *Dangerous Foreigners* (Toronto, 1972), p.9.

<sup>11</sup>*ibid.*, p.89.

desired population increase and the impact of immigration on Canadian ways or on the racial and ethnocultural composition of the country."<sup>12</sup>

Gerald Dirks in *Canada's Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism*, Barbara Roberts in *Whence They Came: Deportations from Canada 1900 - 1935*, Irving Abella and Harold Troper in *None is Too Many*, Donald Avery, and Pat Roy all argue that the Canadian Government acted, on racial grounds, to restrict the entrance of specific immigrant groups identified as undesirable or unassimilable. Discretionary power in the hands of immigration authorities proved to be an effective vehicle for implementing the racial agenda of nativist and xenophobic elements pervasive in Canadian society.<sup>13</sup>

There is certainly agreement among Canadian historians that prior to the introduction of the point system in 1967, administrative discretion was utilized to attract those who, for economic, political or racial reasons, were desirable immigrants and to repel those who, for the same reasons, were undesirable. In *Canada and Immigration*, Hawkins, with respect to the post 1967 period, states: "it seems evident that the period of an exclusive, federal, bureaucratic prerogative in immigration policy-making...is now coming to an end." Hawkins further states that "Canada is at last developing a small 'informed public' in this field which is very important in any area of public policy."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Robert Hamey, "'So Great a Heritage as Ours': Immigration and the Survival of the Canadian Polity," *Daedalus*, Vol.117 no.4 (Fall, 1988), p.52.

<sup>13</sup>Gerald Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism?* (Montreal, 1977), Barbara Roberts, *Whence They Came: Deportations from Canada 1900-1935* (Ottawa, 1988), Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None Is Too Many* (Toronto, 1983), Donald Avery, *op. cit.*, and Pat Roy, *op. cit.*.

<sup>14</sup>Freda Hawkins, *op. cit.*, pp.353 and 398.

It can certainly be argued that since Confederation Canada has undergone a tremendous transformation. From 1867 until the Second World War in English Canada, racial assumptions, rooted in a pervasive white Protestant ethnocentrism, touched all aspects of Canadian social policy. The value system within which English Canadians functioned was fundamentally anglocentric, if not overtly racist. The parallel value system dominating English and French Canada may not have been the same, but they joined to make racial determinism a factor in Canadian immigration policy.

In the years after World War II, the sure footedness of Canadian racial assumptions quickly disappeared. To what extent the introduction of the points system in 1967 signified a fundamental abandonment of Canadian racial assumptions is debatable. We do know that a racially based immigration policy became no longer politically acceptable on either a domestic or an international level. Certainly, following the Second World War a number of changes took place that caused many Canadians to slowly abandon their belief in the inherent superiority of Euro-ethnics. In the post war period revelations about Nazi genocide led to a questioning of racism and white supremacy. The grandchildren of Canadian soldiers of Southern and Eastern European descent demanded an end to the kind of racism perpetrated against their parents and grandparents who also sacrificed for the common war effort. In the post war period, the collapse of European colonialism signified the larger demise of beliefs in an international racial order. Finally, in the post war period, the social unrest of the civil rights movement led to the revision of American social policy culminating in the passage of two historic Bills, the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act of 1964 and 1965 respectively. These changes in the post-war period received further credence as scientific racism and eugenics were widely rejected by the scientific

community. Challenges at the academic level trickled down to the general public. Scientific racism had been the basis for much of the legal racism including that in Canada's immigration policy. Once it was repudiated, it was hard to defend racism in law. It was also no longer desirable, nor was it in Canada's best economic interests, to maintain any social policies that were based on discrimination. The removal, in 1967, of all vestiges of race selection from Canada's immigration policy symbolized a fundamental departure from older racially based notions in Canadian society.

Since 1967 other changes have occurred in Canadian society. The federal announcement of its Multicultural Policy in 1971 marked the symbolic celebration of Canada as an open society. It was not long before Canadians accepted a vision of themselves not only as a pluralist and tolerant society but that this vision was as true of the past as it was true of the present. Even if historically incorrect, it was a comforting vision. It also offered the added advantage of presenting Canadians with a national image separate from that of the United States--Canada, according to the new multicultural mythology, was a mosaic; the United States, a melting pot.

All remaining vestiges of racism in immigration selection were removed with the introduction of the points system in 1967. The results have proven dramatic. When the point system was introduced the majority of immigrants coming into Canada were Europeans. Four years later the majority of immigrants entering Canada have been non-Europeans. Prior to 1961 over 90 percent of immigrants were of American or European descent. According to Statistics Canada, between 1977 and 1990, 71 percent of immigrants came from regions other than Europe, 42 percent alone came from Asia. If the impact is felt unevenly across Canada, these changes in the racial and ethnic make-up of Canada's immigrants are increasingly reflected in

schools, restaurants, universities, suburbs, and major cities across the country--Canada has become a racially and culturally diverse society.

But since 1971 a number of other things have also changed in Canada. Canada's relative economic position on an international scale has significantly declined, the domestic economy is in disarray, Canadians have lost immeasurable confidence in their political institutions, and Canada's demographic profile has rapidly been altered by an unprecedented level of immigration from previously non-traditional sources. The impact of the changing racial reality in larger urban centres and an economic downturn has been problematic. Today there is no longer a widespread celebration of Canada's non-racial immigration record. Instead the issues of immigration, refugees, race and ethnicity are increasingly associated in the media and popular mind with crime, welfare fraud, and other societal ills. What was once a widespread celebration of our open society has turned, in some cases, to a call for a more restrictionist immigration policy. Immigration is no longer widely hailed as a positive phenomenon; instead, it is increasingly perceived as a threat to the Canadian 'Heritage'. Negative views of immigration, once held only by the fringes of Canadian society, have now moved into the mainstream. By the time of the federal election of 1993, immigration was among the most quietly, yet widely, debated issues among Canadians. Immigration, not then in the realm of open public discourse, was debated at the dinner table, in the home, in the car, and among friends.

How did immigration, race, ethnicity, and multiculturalism go from being central and positive features of the Canadian identity in the 1960s and 1970s to being vocally negative issues in the public mind in the 1990s? Journalist Daniel Stoffman argues that no one thought in the 1960s that non-whites would eventually form the majority in our major cities. No one thought



abandonment of a racially based immigration policy would fundamentally alter the ethnic make-up of Canada. It did. Has this fact alone served to exacerbate racial and cultural tensions?

Orest Kruhlak, a political scientist with a special interest in immigration, argues that in spite of the changing character of Canada's population Canadians are not fundamentally racist. Rather there is a growing discomfort over the changing nature of society. For many there is a yearning for the security of the good old days.<sup>15</sup>

### Public Discourse on Immigration

In "Immigration and the Canadian Ethnic Mosaic", Jean Leonard Elliot and Augie Fleras shed light on the nature of the immigration debate ongoing among the general public.

...acceptance of unlimited numbers of Third World immigrants is not widely endorsed by the public. Criticisms range from those who regard immigrants as unfair economic competition to those who resent the 'problems' (divided loyalties, drugs, gangs, etc.) associated with visible minorities. *Foremost is the fear of undermining the WASPish character of Canadian society through unrestricted entry...*<sup>16</sup>

Underlying this level of discourse are the *perceived* problems associated with immigration from the Underdelevoped World. The quotation mentions immigrants as "unfair economic competition". It makes the association between Third World immigrants and crime, and it talks of Third World immigrants "undermining the WASPish character of Canadian society" by

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<sup>15</sup>As quoted in Daniel Stoffman, "Pounding at the Gates," p.6. Stoffman was the 1991 recipient of the Atkinson Fellowship in Public Policy for *The Toronto Star*. The series of articles appeared in September 1992.

<sup>16</sup>Jean Leonard Elliot and Augie Fleras, "Immigration and the Canadian Ethnic Mosaic," in *Race and Ethnic Relations in Canada*, ed. by Peter S. Li (Toronto, 1990), pp.61-62 (emphasis mine).

displacing “conventional immigration sources” (ie. white, European). Elliot and Fleras’s reference is limited to “Third World” immigrants. They might have done better to include Asians and all other non-Europeans in their explanation. It remains to be shown if or how Canadians make the distinction between different non-white immigrant groups and whether there is an unspoken opposition to all of ‘them’. It remains for journalist Daniel Stoffman to infuse debate with the notion that refugees and immigrants are a costly lot. Stoffman reminds us of the vast number of bogus refugee claimants who are overcrowding our cities and using up valuable social services (ie. overburdening our welfare system). According to Stoffman,

We are getting too many immigrants, too many uneducated immigrants, too many people who cannot speak one of our languages, and too many refugees who are not refugees. Most of them go to our three largest cities where they are overburdening school systems and social services.<sup>17</sup>

The path of discourse on immigration among the general public is not easy to trace. Up until the federal election of 1993 discussion of immigration was often muted and confined to familiar quarters. It was, according to one academic observer, the issue that “everyone is talking about, but no one is talking about.”<sup>18</sup> Certainly public discussion of immigration was seen by some as risky. As noted in *Western Report* in 1988, “all critics of immigration policy...labour under a cloud of racism.”<sup>19</sup> Those publically criticizing Canada's immigration policy before the 1993 election were in danger of being charged with political incorrectness. Nevertheless, while much of the discussion of immigration was in the shadows, it remains possible to examine the

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<sup>17</sup>Daniel Stoffman. “Pounding at the Gates,” p.23.

<sup>18</sup>“Immigration: Too hot to handle,” *The Toronto Star*, (September 25, 1993), p.B1.

<sup>19</sup>“A debate at the gates,” *Western Report* (May 2, 1988), p.14.

nature of public discourse on immigration through a number different sources. Public opinion polls were taken on immigration prior to and during the election. There was a fair bit of dialogue on immigration in the print media during the year prior to the election. Daniel Stoffman's controversial work on immigration was printed in a series of feature articles in the *Toronto Star* and the *Ottawa Citizen* in September, 1992, one year before the election. Finally William Gairdner's negative appraisal of public policy, *The Trouble with Canada*, enjoyed several months on the *Globe and Mail's* bestseller list in 1991. A key aspect of Canada's trouble, according to Gairdner, is to be found in Canada's "foolhardy immigration policy"<sup>20</sup>. Gairdner acknowledges the risks of discussing immigration restriction. He argues that, "By now, the entire subject has become so politicized, the average Canadian so frightened of expressing an opinion, and the media so ready to pounce, that all reasonable dialogue has been shut down completely. Public opinion on immigration has been officially squelched."<sup>21</sup>

Because *The Trouble with Canada* enjoyed such a long period on the *Globe and Mail's* bestseller list, it is worthwhile considering the message it conveyed. In his preface Gairdner states that he "resolved that this book would not be aimed at academics or specialists but at the everyday reader searching for answers to our troubles."<sup>22</sup> To Gairdner this 'everyday reader' is the "silent" or "neglected" majority upset by what they saw happening to this country. His call to the "silent majority" was reminiscent of Richard Nixon's call to the 'Joe Sixpacks' of America

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<sup>20</sup>William Gairdner, *The Trouble with Canada* (Toronto, 1991), p.404.

<sup>21</sup>*ibid.*, p.405

<sup>22</sup>*ibid.*, p.vii.

that swept him into office in 1968 and again in 1972, the same 'moral majority' that supported a return to law and order after the turbulent 60s.

The most disturbing chapter in *the Trouble with Canada* is chapter 15 - "The Silent Destruction of English Canada - Multiculturalism, Bilingualism, and Immigration." The title certainly speaks for itself. Gairdner slashes at multiculturalism because he claims it celebrates difference which he sees as a threat to Canadian values, traditions, and to the country's stability. He argues that the object of multiculturalism is to convince Canadians that there is no natural common denominator among the Canadian people. Yet, if Gairdner was speaking to the "silent, neglected, and moral majority", according to the findings of the *1991 Attitude Survey on Multiculturalism* conducted by the Angus Reid Group for Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada in June and July of 1991, this group was in fact a minority. The survey found that 77 percent of Canadians believed Multiculturalism enriched Canada's culture, while only 12 percent believed strongly that Multiculturalism would destroy the Canadian way of life.<sup>23</sup> Who then was Gairdner speaking for in 1991? By the language he uses it is evident that, at the very least, he spoke for himself.

The greatest problem for English Canada -- and I mean not only for its language, but also for its every tradition -- is that this extremely unnatural policy of multiculturalism, which will have -- has already had -- the effect of reducing the country's core culture to parity with a hundred *alien* ones, is that it has been imposed from the top down, by politicians.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>*The Canadian Ethnic Studies Association Bulletin*, Vol XIX, No.2 (Autumn 1992), p.3.

<sup>24</sup>Gairdner, *op. cit.*, p.394, (emphasis mine).

Basically what Gairdner argued is that Anglo-Saxon Protestant Canadians and their values are at the core of this country and everyone else is an alien. Gairdner further argued that common sense dictates that perpetuation of old world cultural conflicts prevents the formation of a successful multicultural society.<sup>25</sup> Gairdner demanded Canadians find a 'natural cultural system' that everyone should 'assimilate' to. As far as Gairdner is concerned the English culture and system of government offers just such a solution.

Gairdner spoke to those who long for a mythical earlier day when Canada was all white and all English. He lamented the changing nature of Canadian society and particularly the decline in what he saw as an English Canadian way of life in the face of immigration. Perhaps Gairdner appeals to those who oppose headgear in the Legion Halls, and those who oppose official multiculturalism and large scale non-traditional immigration because it symbolizes the loss of central 'core' Canadian values and represents a threat to the Canadian heritage. As Lloyd Robertson stated on the CTV News in 1992,

...intolerance does flare up when familiar symbols are threatened. The uproar over changing the Mountie uniform to accommodate the Sikh turbans showed some of the limits of Canadian tolerance. Analysis of our [CTV's] poll indicates Canadians feel society functions best when we share common values and the prospect of more third world immigration is seen by some as a threat to Canadian traditions.<sup>26</sup>

Gairdner cites moral decay as one of the fundamental problems confronting this country. In opposition to multiculturalism, Gairdner argues there are too many value systems in conflict, and without direction Canadians have witnessed a flight from core values. Gairdner certainly

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<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p.395.

<sup>26</sup> Kathleen Morrison, "Immigration Part I: The Human Interest Story," *On Balance*, Vol.6, No.3, (1993), p.6.

finds fault with the relativistic notion that all values are equal or relevant and there is no common moral vision. In the past, he claims the “cohesive” (he probably means homogeneous) nature of Canadian society facilitated the existence of, and adherence to, a common belief system.<sup>27</sup> This common belief system, he argues, disappeared when we abandoned our selective immigration policy in 1967. Gairdner further argues that when Canada adopted the point system in 1967 it did not give up discrimination. It gave up control of its borders. Gairdner concludes:

What I call the control policy was designed to ensure that the bulk of Canada's children would grow up among parents and people more or less similar to themselves, who spoke the same language and who were more or less rooted in the same Judeo-Christian religion, Greco-Roman philosophical and legal tradition, and Anglo-European culture. Was it all that unreasonable to want to provide future generations with the same culture and environment that made the nation strong? And if not, why did we change a system that was working so well?<sup>28</sup>

Others might argue that what Gairdner fails to see is that this kind of racial thinking, taken to its extreme, was the root of Jim Crow and delivered Jews to the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. It is this tradition of preference he advocates that drives the anti-immigrant crusade of supremacist organizations seeking to maintain, at all costs, the purity of the white race.

With respect to the immigration points system, Gairdner is appalled that while there are points assigned for education, vocational preparation, occupation, knowledge of official languages among other things, there are no points assigned for culture, race or religion "...even though they are obviously the most important to us, *and to most immigrants...*"<sup>29</sup> With the

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<sup>27</sup>Gairdner, *op. cit.*, p.2.

<sup>28</sup>*ibid.*, p.406.

<sup>29</sup>*ibid.*, p.412.

current points system and the arrival of immigrants from non-European sources. Gairdner argues,

...we surrender our ability to determine the future composition of our nation. Instead, its composition gets decided by the demographic forces of the outside world; by the desires of people quite different from us, who have no intention of changing, whom we pay to remain the same and who may even cherish the day when we become more like them in a kind of demographic capture of Canada.<sup>30</sup>

With respect to refugees, Gairdner quotes an unnamed source from Employment and Immigration Canada as saying that "70% of refugees coming to Canada are bogus".<sup>31</sup> He states that based on the standards used by the UN Convention on Refugees, 85 percent of refugees who entered Canada in 1987 were found to have made false claims. Gairdner dismisses immigrants and refugees as vagrants who live at the expense of hard working Canadians, and he questions whether Canada is admitting "the penny-in-the-pocket type of immigrants that take a chance, work harder than anyone else, and succeed, or spongers and lazybones who come here for the instant benefits of the welfare state."<sup>32</sup> With respect to population growth, Gairdner argues for zero population. Why, he asks, should Canada increase its population through a policy that fuels social dislocation? He goes on to not so subtly blame immigrants for the rise in crime, "After all, the fact is that the immigrants, by and large, are not coming to Canada. They are coming to Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver -- already densely populated and ethnically tense urban centres, *where crime is rising. Why do we want to fan such flames?*"<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p.413.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, p.416.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p.417.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p.418, (emphasis mine).

Gairdner does not pretend to present an objective analysis of the problems facing Canada. His own views shine through loud and clear. His value laden rhetoric labels racial and ethnic mixing as detrimental to Canada's value system, dismisses refugees as bogus claimants taking advantage of Canada's overly generous refugee determination system, and he associates immigrants with crime in urban centres. In his preface, Gairdner states that his purpose in writing *The Trouble With Canada* is to "reach out and touch every reader's feelings, not just to make argument (a dry fare, at best)."<sup>34</sup> This "most complete rendering of the right-wing vision in Canada", notes Neil Bissoondath, must certainly have fueled the fears of many.<sup>35</sup>

Daniel Stoffman's series of articles on immigration which appeared in the *Toronto Star* and the *Ottawa Citizen* in September of 1992 also reshaped the public debate on immigration. This is exactly what he wanted. "Most of all" says Stoffman, "we need to discard the mythology, drop the name-calling, and have a real debate on how to shape an immigration policy for the 21st century."<sup>36</sup> More than Gairdner, it was Stoffman's research, funded by an Atkinson Fellowship in Public Policy that, indirectly, sparked wide debate on immigration. After Stoffman's series of articles appeared in print, the C.D. Howe Institute, a conservative think tank, invited Stoffman to formulate some policy recommendations with the aim of improving our immigration system. His recommendations were published by C.D. Howe's "Backgrounders" in June of 1993. This publication also received a great deal of coverage in the print media and it widely acknowledged that the Reform Party of Canada adopted its immigration platform for

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<sup>34</sup>Gairdner, *op. cit.*, p.viii.

<sup>35</sup>Neil Bissoondath, *Selling Illusions* (Toronto, 1994), p.67.

<sup>36</sup>Stoffman, "Pounding at the Gates," p.6.



the 1993 federal election from Stoffman's recommendations. Stoffman's position has also appeared in *Canadian Business* and *Saturday Night*. While Stoffman and Gairdner address different audiences--Stoffman does not pretend to the same populist appeal of Gairdner--there are two important points on which Stoffman and Gairdner appear to agree. The first is the question of to what extent immigration policy reflected the wishes of Canadians. Gairdner argues that since 1967, while immigration policy failed to discriminate between source countries, the majority of Canadians wished to maintain Canada's ethnic and cultural balance. Thus, Gairdner argues the Government's policy on immigration was directly at odds with the electorate's wishes. He blamed this on the overwhelming power of special interest groups. Stoffman also argued that the three political parties consistently left immigration to "advocacy groups, ethnic communities, and lawyers whose livelihood depends on having a large supply of immigrants to represent."<sup>37</sup> Stoffman and Gairdner attacked immigration policy not just for its flaws, but also for its failure to reflect the 'will of the people'.

The other argument that Stoffman and Gairdner both advanced is that long term changes in the racial balance of immigration would lead to racial problems. Stoffman observed that Canadians are not immune to the backlash against immigration then rocking Europe. He stated that, "It could happen here if the pace of immigration continues to outstrip the country's ability to absorb newcomers."<sup>38</sup> Gairdner suggested essentially the same thing when he argued that an increase in the number of foreigners increases the public sense of threat. Even if this threat was not grounded in reality, Gairdner argued, it is the perception that matters. Racial strife

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<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, p.6.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

increases, argued Gairdner, people move, and “the government creates racism in the people”<sup>39</sup>. If Stoffman and Gairdner are not suggesting that Canada could avoid racism by maintaining a racially selective immigration policy, they do come close to it. This same argument was advanced (although less intensely) in a report prepared for the Economic Council of Canada in 1991 which suggested that rapid increases in the proportion of visible minorities inevitably leads to increased prejudice.<sup>40</sup> The public often hears this argument. It is less exposed to the counter argument as articulated by sociologist Morton Weinfeld:

Policy makers must never forget two central facts. First, immigration and the resulting diversification of the population have *almost always* been associated with conflict, discrimination, and social strain. Second, and not withstanding the first fact, Canada’s ongoing experiment with immigration and diversity has been, in historical and comparative perspective, a resounding success, despite periodic episodes of racism and impatience with remaining inequalities.<sup>41</sup>

It is necessary to further explore the implications of Stoffman's work not only because it reached a large Canadian audience, but also because it also formed the foundation of an argument that would help shape the political debate on immigration during the federal election of 1993. Stoffman advocated both a reduction in immigration numbers and a change in the immigrant’s profile. The root of Stoffman's argument in favour of reducing immigration levels rests almost exclusively on economic grounds. He argues the distinction made between refugees and other immigrants is irrelevant because, “unlike other countries, Canada accepts

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<sup>39</sup>Gairdner, *op. cit.*, p.410.

<sup>40</sup> Neil Swan, “Economic and Social Impacts of Immigration,” A report for the Economic Council of Canada (Ottawa, 1991), p. 133.

<sup>41</sup> Morton Weinfeld, “Immigration and Diversity,” *Policy Options* (July-August , 1993), p.66.

most refugee claims and gives all successful claimants the right of citizenship."<sup>42</sup> Stoffman's discussion of refugees is predominantly about the alleged abuses of Canada's refugee determination system. He uses refugee acceptance rates in other industrialized countries as a yardstick by which to measure the ability of Canada's system to accurately determine who is a genuine refugee. This is a dangerous comparison. It rests on the notion that other industrialized countries, because of apparent congruency in policy, have comparable, fair and accurate refugee determination systems. Because other industrialized countries allow in fewer refugees, Stoffman argues, Canada must be allowing in a high number of false claimants, here to abuse the system and jump the normal immigration queue. Stoffman sends the message that refugee approvals are just another tax on the public purse.

When Stoffman addresses the issue of family class immigrants he is equally concerned that Canada is the loser. He sends the message that many family class immigrants regard the Canadian immigration system as open to abuse and manipulation.<sup>43</sup>

Stoffman claims he is not opposed to immigration per se. Rather, he advocates a stronger focus on independent immigrants who qualify under the point system and more entrepreneurial or investor immigrants. He would welcome a more restrictive policy on family reunifications. However, Stoffman fails to recognize certain facts surrounding the debate over family vs. independent classes. Yet, according to Don Devoretz, a decline in the numbers of family class allowed in would have a serious spin off effect on the very independent and investor class Stoffman advocates encouraging entrance into Canada. Why come to Canada and

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<sup>42</sup>Stoffman, "Pounding at the Gates," p.7.

<sup>43</sup>*ibid.*

invest money in our economy when the government is not prepared to allow us to sponsor our family members? With respect to the investor class, Stoffman suggests they should be told in which economic sectors to invest their money. It is not enough that they bring in money, but, argues Stoffman, "Ottawa and the provinces should identify and direct underfunded sectors of the economy that both need and deserve help and direct immigrant investor capital to these industries."<sup>44</sup> He also suggests that investors, like nannies, should be given landed immigrant status only after they have proven their worth. "Give them a designated period, such as five years, to live up to their obligations. Only then should they become landed immigrants."<sup>45</sup> According to Stoffman, the investor takes all the chances. Canada awards landed status after the investment, successful or not, is fixed in place.

An immigration policy based solely on economic needs, as Stoffman advocates, echoes structuralist or deterministic recommendations of an earlier day. David Corbett in 1957 and Alan Green in 1976 both advanced an essentially structuralist argument with respect to immigration policy. Their positions were based largely on the labour needs of this country. Unfortunately for those policy advocates, their vision proves too narrow a description of Canada's immigration policy priorities. When policy makers design and implement immigration policy, they no doubt take account of economic, social, and, to a less extent, domestic and international concerns. However, they must not neglect the human dimension. Stoffman seems to do exactly that. He ignores the numbers of people who are not only active agents in the decision making process with respect to immigration, but beneficiaries of that process. As

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<sup>44</sup>*ibid.*, p.25.

<sup>45</sup>*ibid.*

stated in the Economic Council of Canada report, "the impact of immigration is not only economic, but also political, social, and humanitarian."<sup>46</sup> Its potential beneficiaries are not just immigrants, they are all Canadians. The benefits are not just to be counted in dollars and cents, but in the enriching of the Canadian social and cultural experience.

Stoffman argues against the need for sustained population growth and suggests that in general, "The truth is that immigration helps some Canadians economically, hurts others and makes little difference to the vast majority".<sup>47</sup> The 'experts' he cites all come from the right-wing camp. They all, in one way or another, advocate decreased immigration and support Stoffman's general position. Stoffman's discussion of the family class vs. the independent class illustrates this fact.

While Stoffman's work may have captured the allegiance of Reform Party policy planners, immigration was not the only issue which came to the surface during the eight month period leading up to the election. The media mirrored these issues and therefore bears a responsibility to present news in a 'fair' and objective manner, to the degree that such a feat is even possible. What material the press, for example, considers newsworthy and how that material is presented plays a critical role in people's perception of events.

This paper does not debate questions of journalistic integrity, nor does it evaluate whether or not media coverage was presented in a 'fair' and objective manner. Rather it describes news reports on immigration and related issues (as cited in the Canadian Newspaper and Magazine Index for 1993) that appeared in several major newspapers across Canada in

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<sup>46</sup> Neil Swan, "Economic and Social Impacts of Immigration", p.131.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, p.5.

1993. Exactly what influence this material might have had on readers is impossible to gauge. But one can assume the press both reflected and helped to shape Canadian views. It is also necessary to keep in mind that most newspaper readers are not exposed to supplementary academic or policy oriented material related to immigration, nor are they likely to seek it out. They rely on television and the print media as the single major source of information.

In the twenty-five major articles about immigration that appeared in 1993, four sub-themes emerge: law and order, increased social welfare costs, net economic drain, and immigration as a positive phenomenon. Under the sub-theme “law and order”, in addition to two articles (one in *The Vancouver Sun* and one in *The Globe and Mail*) which reported on the Hong Kong and Chinese Triad gangs, a lengthy article appeared in *Western Report* in 1987. This article appeared in the ‘Crime and Calamity’ section and was entitled, “The Oriental Mafia: Gangsters threaten Vancouver's Chinatown”. It describes the Chinese mobsters as, “every bit as bloody-minded and intimidating as their more infamous mafia counterparts.”. The article continues:

The July 1, 1997, date for mainland China's takeover of the British colony of Hong Kong is drawing ever closer, and more and more Hong Kong residents are fleeing the prospect of life under communism...Among the existing throng are thousands of criminals equally fearful of communist justice.<sup>48</sup>

Leaving aside this conservative magazine's interpretation of “communist justice”, the magazine suggests the alarming proposition that these criminals will try to get to Canada during the

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<sup>48</sup>“The Oriental Mafia,” *Western Report* (July 13, 1987), p.24.

following two years. A *Globe and Mail* article also warned, "triad members infest every immigration category. If we do not quickly correct the situation, Canadian society could be under assault by a human iceberg of which these cases represent only the tip."<sup>49</sup> The *Globe* article also mentions some of the crimes with which Triad members already in Canada are involved. They include: drug trafficking, gambling, prostitution, money laundering, armed robbery, alien smuggling, and credit card counterfeiting. Similarly, a *Vancouver Sun* article documents details about the different Triads, the crimes each one specializes in, how many triad members are in Canada, and how authorities, despite sophisticated computer system being used to track these criminals, have proven powerless to stop the arrival in Canada of more triad members hoping to avoid the 1997 Chinese takeover of Hong Kong.<sup>50</sup>

The next series of "law and order" articles which appeared in the print media surrounded the well publicized interdiction of 1,400 allegedly 'bogus' refugees. "1,400 illegal immigrants stopped in Canadian crackdown overseas", "Crackdown stops 1,405 illegals short of the border", and "Shortstop II snares 1,405 illegal immigrants" appeared in *The Toronto Star*, *The Calgary Herald*, and *The Montreal Gazette* respectively<sup>51</sup>. The titles of the articles are indicative of their content. All three articles warn of attempts to violate Canadian immigration law that continue to concern police and immigration officials. The articles also mention the opposition of refugee advocacy organizations to these 'crackdowns' on the grounds these restrictive measures prevent bona fide refugees from gaining asylum in Canada. But the voice

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<sup>49</sup>"Triad menace and iceberg, reports warn," *The Globe and Mail* (March 10, 1993), p.A1.

<sup>50</sup>"Computers help to keep tabs on rising tide of Asian gangs," *The Vancouver Sun* (August 27, 1993).

<sup>51</sup>"Crackdown stops 1,405 illegals short of the border," *The Calgary Herald* (March 7, 1993), ppA1-A2.

of refugee advocates seemed too soft hearted in view of the dark threat the press insisted Canada faced.

Finally, the law and order incident that received the most attention in the pre-election period was the movement of the Immigration Department from Employment and Immigration Canada to the new 'super' Ministry of Public Security. Kim Campbell's administrative changes quickly came under fire and the move was slammed in newspapers across the country. What is particularly interesting about this issue is the manner in which it was attacked by immigration and refugee advocates. David Matas, president of the Canadian Council for Refugees, argued that this move could, "incite the public to consider refugees and immigrants as a threat to their security."<sup>52</sup> Mosaic director, Michael Murphy, agrees with Matas, "The impact that this will have in the public mind is that immigrants and refugees are a security problem, that people who are coming to Canada are somehow a threat to other Canadians."<sup>53</sup> While refugee advocates worry that this move will incite a backlash against newcomers, others wonder if this move was not a response to an already existing backlash? Sergio Marchi, Liberal caucus chair at the time, argued that Campbell's move is, "a crass bid to lure back Conservative voters who've strayed into the Reform party fold..."<sup>54</sup> Or, as suggested in an editorial in *The Montreal Gazette*, "by adding immigration to the list of threats the public security minister must fight, and by grouping foreigners with smugglers and other criminals, Campbell calls upon the electorate's baser instincts."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>"Public Security ministry draws fire," *The Calgary Herald* (July 2, 1993), p.A8.

<sup>53</sup>"Transfer of services to new super-ministry assailed," *The Vancouver Sun* (July 3, 1993), p.H20.

<sup>54</sup>"Public Security ministry draws fire," *The Calgary Herald*, *Loc. cit.*

<sup>55</sup>"Xenophobia: Campbell groups foreigners with smugglers and criminals," *The Montreal Gazette* (July 5, 1993), p.B3.



In defense of the move Len Jordan, Director of Control and Intelligence for the Ministry of Public Security, states, "The purpose is to restore the credibility of the system. The whole program suffers if people think it's being abused."<sup>56</sup> "Think" is the operative word. Is the system being abused to the extent that it requires being placed under the auspices of a Security Ministry? Or has it simply been portrayed this way -- in which case the government has responded to a problem that did not exist and, in doing so, has fueled public fears thereby exacerbating an already negative backlash. In this case, the press and Liberal Party claimed it was the Government's move, not the media that sent the public the wrong message.

Two weeks later *The Calgary Herald* reported that government was concerned that crew members of a Pakistani ship docked off the coast of Maine may try to claim refugee status in Canada.<sup>57</sup> The article, "Close eye being kept on docked freighter" was contained inside a text box entitled "Refugee Concern". Following so closely on the heels of the move of some immigration "policing" functions to the Ministry of Security, the ensuing "close eye" being kept makes one question whether leak of the freighter story was not designed to legitimize the need for more vigilance as a properly structured level of response. The press may have attacked the reorganization move, but it was also a vehicle used to validate the reorganization in the eyes of the Canadian public.

The second sub-theme found among the major articles on immigration that appeared in 1993 concerned the issue of increased social welfare costs. In February *The Montreal Gazette* and *The Vancouver Sun* reported on a change to immigration regulation which prevented

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<sup>56</sup>"Immigration move will breed intolerance: critics," *The Montreal Gazette* (July 3, 1993), p.E6.

<sup>57</sup>"Close eye being kept on docked freighter," *The Calgary Herald* (July 13, 1993), p.A2.

refugees from working while their claims were being determined. To get a work permit, a refugee now has to wait until his/her claim has been accepted. This could take years. Without the option of work, many refugees were driven onto welfare rolls. It was already widely suggested that immigrants and refugees were a burden to the welfare system. Indeed, that they did not want to work and preferred welfare. What is unfortunate is that people fail to link the February addendum to immigration regulations to this common perception (or misperception). As Liberal MP Warren Allmand notes, "It is ironic that the federal government is pushing refugees onto social assistance at the very time people are complaining about immigrants on welfare."<sup>58</sup>

In April *The Globe and Mail* reported on the five to six hundred cases added to Metropolitan Toronto's welfare rolls every month as a result of a breakdown in individual family immigration sponsorships. The article related these welfare cases to refugees on welfare.<sup>59</sup> It also referred to a third sub-theme, immigration as a net economic drain. The article mentions the perceived injustice that immigration does to a welfare system funded largely by the provinces and overburdened cities, but mandated by a financially unaccountable federal government. This same sentiment was articulated in two articles which subsequently appeared in *The Globe and Mail*. One lengthy article discussed the problems and high costs associated with teaching English as a second language while a piece by Michael Valpy questioned why the

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<sup>58</sup>"Refugee-law changes forcing people to welfare," *The Montreal Gazette* (February 17, 1993), p.B1

<sup>59</sup>"Metro official criticizes immigrants' welfare costs," *The Globe and Mail* (April 17, 1993), p.A13.

federal government lets in so many people when it is not prepared "to make adequate money available for immigrant integration into Canadian society."<sup>60</sup>

In April the *Globe and Mail* quoted Alberta's Multicultural Minister Dianne Mirosh as saying, "Immigrants are a drain on the taxpayer and Alberta should be able to hand-pick those who speak English and have marketable job skills."<sup>61</sup> When her statement raised protest from the federal government, Mirosh was forced to apologize. However, a year and a half later, when changes to our immigration policy were announced in November of 1994, the federal government proposed changes similar to those Mirosh was chastised for eighteen months earlier.

Finally, the media gave wide coverage to Stoffman's June 1993 C.D. Howe Institute published report which pushed the notion that current immigration levels were a net economic drain and needed to be cut by forty percent.<sup>62</sup> Stoffman is quoted as saying that, "there is no evidence high immigration is of economic benefit to Canada, that it can no longer be supported by Canada's social infrastructure, and that it is straining race relations."<sup>63</sup> Largely because of the high profile press coverage it received, Stoffman's work entered the realm of public discourse. But press coverage was largely accepting of Stoffman's findings (which depict immigration as an economic impediment) and seldom gave voice to the wealth of arguments on the other side.

The fourth sub-theme least often reflected in the press presented immigration as a positive phenomenon. Two excellent articles appeared, one in *The Calgary Herald* and one,

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<sup>60</sup>"Ignoring the concerns about high immigration," *The Globe and Mail* (September 16, 1993), p.A2.

<sup>61</sup> "Alberta minister apologizes," *The Globe and Mail* (April 1, 1993), p.A4.

<sup>62</sup> "Immigration cuts of up to 40 per cent proposed in report," *The Toronto Star* (June 29, 1993), p.A2 and "Immigration should be cut study says," *The Montreal Gazette* (June 29, 1993), p.B1 and "The truth's out on immigration: one million too many," *Western Report* (July 19, 1993), pp. 11-12.

<sup>63</sup> "Call to cut immigration 'unbalanced,' critics say," *The Toronto Star* (July 2, 1993), p.A13.

oddly enough, in *Western Report*, which tried to dispell some of the negative 'myths' about immigration. A *Calgary Herald* article, "Little basis to economic fears", made reference to two studies, one which outlines the economic benefits of business immigration, and the other which found immigrants were underrepresented on Canada's welfare rolls and less likely than Canadian born people to collect unemploymnet insurance.<sup>64</sup> The *Western Report* article highlighted the findings of a number of academic studies published in *The Immigration Dilemma*, a publication of the conservative B.C. based Fraser Institute. On balance, the scholarly "...consensus [is that]...immigration is a boon."<sup>65</sup>

Of special note, the Fraser Institute publication and that by Stoffman for the C.D. Howe Institute both appeared in June 1993. The C.D. Howe's article was overwhelmingly negative and it received wide coverage in most of Canada's major newspapers. The Fraser Institute's publication, based largely on the work of academics, was overwhelmingly positive. It received far less coverage in any of Canada's major newspapers. One is led to ask if the C.D. Howe publicity machine was better than that of the Fraser Institute or whether the C.D. Howe's message was simply more in tune with what the press was then anxious to promote?

In July 1993 the *Vancouver Sun* printed an article entitled, "Fake refugees ruining the system, ex-official says". The article reported on the alleged abuses of the system as witnessed by a former member of the Immigration and Refugee Board who resigned "in disgust". The ex-official had the manuscript of a book he had written based on his experiences. The article lists the chapter titles:

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<sup>64</sup>"Little basis to economic fears," *The Calgary Herald* (May 15, 1993), p.B4.

<sup>65</sup>"The benefits of immigration," *Western Report* (June 28, 1993), p.13.

marriages of convenience, wealthy refugees, student scams, terrorists in Canada, fugitives released from custody, U.S. gangs moving into Canada, imported prostitutes, medically unchecked student refugees, lax security.....business investor scams and plea bargaining that allows criminals to stay.<sup>66</sup>

Much of the manuscript was devoted to so called "bogus refugees" who, according to the author, make-up the majority of claimants. The ex-official/author described an interview he had with a refugee claimant who had a university degree and lots of gold jewelry and refused to work unless he could get a "good job". Another interview was with a "Polish women who made a refugee claim because she couldn't get a large enough apartment in Poland."<sup>67</sup> By accepting the charges at face value, the *Vancouver Sun* left the impression that these cases were typical of the entire refugee determination process. They made isolated incidents look like common occurrences.

The print media is not the only major source of information available to the public. Television is the primary news source for many Canadians. The National Media Archive, a division of the Fraser Institute, studies how the media treats different public policy issues. The findings from a study which analyzed national television coverage of immigration from 1990 through 1992 are revealing. The article opened by posing the proposition that, "The Canadian public has many misconceptions and fears about immigration."<sup>68</sup> They found that the human-interest story was very heavily represented in immigration coverage by the CBC and CTV news (34 percent and 36 percent respectively),<sup>69</sup> while information about the economic effects of

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<sup>66</sup>"Fake refugees ruining system, ex-official says," *The Vancouver Sun* (July 27, 1993), p.A3.

<sup>67</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>68</sup>Kathleen Morrison, *Loc. cit.*, p.2.

<sup>69</sup>*ibid.*

immigration, an area where there are many misconceptions, comprised between two and three percent of immigration stories.<sup>70</sup> While minimal, this coverage of the economic impact of immigration was generally favourable of the immigrant impact on Canadian society.<sup>71</sup> Among the human interest stories, the study found that the negative experiences of immigrants and refugees were highlighted. Over 15 percent of CTV's coverage of immigration was about crime. Of that 15 percent, less than five percent was classified as neutral. The rest was negative.<sup>72</sup> Most of the crime reports followed the same pattern. For example, the print media emphasized problems associated with Asian gangs. Finally, the National Media Archive found that coverage of the social impact of immigration was three times more negative than it was positive.<sup>73</sup> Overall, the findings reported in the National Media Archive's publication, *On Balance*, were that media coverage of immigration over the last three years has been off balance, tending toward a negative image.

What might the public understand from the media coverage? In the period leading up to the federal election of 1993 public discourse on immigration was informed by Daniel Stoffman's work, William Gairdner's, several major stories about immigration in the press, and by television coverage of immigration issues. Stoffman's work clearly had a negative slant, Gairdner's work plays on the public's fears and the National Media Archive suggested that television coverage furthered the myth that immigrants are a burden.<sup>74</sup> Of the more than twenty major stories appearing in major English language newspapers across Canada, only one

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<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, p.7

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, p.5.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, p.7.

emphasized the benefits of immigration. It did so in the context of dispelling myths and unfounded “economic fears”. In 1990, Peter Murphy stated on CTV News that, “Government officials admit the public has many misconceptions about immigrants. There is a belief that they take jobs away from Canadians, are a burden on the social system, and don’t pay their fair share of taxes.”<sup>75</sup> Daniel Stoffman did little to dispell that public view:

More than any other area of public policy, immigration is encrusted with empty rhetoric, emotionalism, exaggerated claims, and quaint, romantic notions that simply don't make any sense. Both those who favour Canada's policy of massive, unselected immigration and those who are against non-white immigration and multiculturalism *rely on a variety of myths* to bolster their arguments.<sup>76</sup>

The degree to which media coverage ignited public debate cannot be known. What is certain is that much of the then current debate on immigration was informed by myth and emotion, and media coverage reenforced the negative side. As a result, the efficacy of Canada’s immigration policy ended up being measured largely by a yardstick of public ignorance.

### **Academic Debate on Immigration**

Even as a public debate on immigration flared--perhaps fed by a negative press coverage of immigration--a second debate was also taking place. An academic debate on immigration proved different from the public debate. It is not my purpose here to review the academic debate on immigration. Rather it is necessary to suggest parallels between the academic and

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<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Stoffman, “Pounding at the Gates”, p.4, (emphasis mine).

public debates. The findings of scholarly research were often at odds with what media coverage seemed to suggest. Unlike the public debate which tends to capitalize on exceptional or dramatic events, the academic debate takes place against the backdrop of scholarly research, peer review of findings and data accessible to the research community. If researchers are not free of bias, their research findings must stand the test of rigorous review.

One issue which attracted both public and academic attention was crime. However the nature of that attention is quite different in the academic sphere than it is in the public one. In the public debate on immigration a fair amount of attention was paid to alleged connection between immigration and rising crime. For example, crime received the second highest amount of coverage on CTV News. In the print media there were several stories about crime, particularly by Asian groups across the country. Media coverage of the federal government's movement of several functions of the Immigration Department to the Ministry of Public Security also serves to suggest that there is a strong, positive correlation between immigrants or refugees and crime. What comes out of an examination of research done in the academic community is that this direct correlation is completely unfounded. Samuel and Faustino-Santos found, with respect to the 1970s and 1980s, that immigrants were underrepresented in Canada's prison population, that the foreign-born were less likely to be recidivists and that those immigrants who were criminally involved were involved in different, less violent, types of crime than native born Canadians.<sup>77</sup> An interesting, if dated, explanation for crime among immigrants was suggested by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration in a 1957 report:

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<sup>77</sup> T.J. Samuel and R. Faustino-Santos, "Canadian Immigrants and Criminality," *International Migration*, Vol XXIX, No.1 (March, 1991), pp.55-56.



Length of residence may also affect criminality among immigrants. The fact that immigrants here for a longer period have a higher incidence of crime relative to the foreign-born in general is attributed to acculturation on the part of these immigrants where older residents are beginning to resemble native Canadians, even in so far as their higher crime rate is concerned.<sup>78</sup>

Derrick Thomas, in a paper prepared for Employment and Immigration Canada entitled, "The Foreign Born in the Federal Prison Population" used more up to date data than did Samuel and Santos. In his introduction, Thomas states that the aim of his paper is, "...to inform the debate and counter some the impressions which may have been created through sensational press reports about individual incidents."<sup>79</sup> Thomas's findings, using 1989 to 1991 data, support those of Samuel and Santos. According to Thomas, immigrants are underrepresented in the federal prison population, are involved in less serious types of crime, are more likely to be held in a minimum security facility, and their rate of recidivism is lower than native born Canadians.<sup>80</sup> Challenging public fears about triads, Thomas states, "Ethnic gangs are not highly organized conspiracies masterminded from abroad. Rather, informal patron-client relationships predominate."<sup>81</sup> Finally, in sharp contrast to what the press and television suggest, Thomas concludes:

...so long as care is taken, these levels of immigration will not contribute to any disproportionate increase in serious crime in Canada. In fact, if our future immigrants show no greater propensity toward crime than those already in the country, the ratio of tax payers to criminals should become more favourable.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, p.59.

<sup>79</sup> Derrick Thomas, "The Foreign Born in the Federal Prison Population," Paper presented at The Canadian Law and Society Association Conference (June 8, 1993), Carleton University, Ottawa, p.1.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, p.20.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, p.23.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, p.25

Academic research also challenged the notion that immigration is a strain on Canada's social welfare system. Census data alone calls this assumption into question. The 1986 Census figures note that while 8.2 percent of immigrants were unemployed, 10.2 percent of Canadian born people were unemployed. The mean employment income was \$20,208 for immigrants and \$18,190 for those who were Canadian born. Therefore not only are immigrants less likely to collect unemployment insurance, but they also pay out more in income tax, thereby contributing more than the Canadian born to the social welfare system. These findings have been supported by academic research such as that of economist Don Devoretz, an immigration specialist, Simon (1992), Percy (1992), and, after the election, by Benjamin (1994).<sup>83</sup> Only Benjamin's findings received media attention. The *Calgary Herald* gave them two short paragraphs.

The final issue that seemed to both widen and narrow the immigration debate was the issue of diversity. The public mood seemed increasingly negative on Multiculturalism. William Gairdner expressed strong sentiments against diversity. He questioned the desirability of diversity as a divisive influence which rewarded self serving ethnic interest groups at the expense of the Canadian people, Canadian unity, and Canadian values. He struck a responsive chord with many. There seemed to be an underlying feeling that Canada's traditions were being challenged and Canadian nationhood put in jeopardy. This view assumes Canada has developed

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<sup>83</sup> Julian Simon, "The Economic Effects of Immigration: Theory and Evidence," and Michael B. Percy, "Macroeconomic Impacts of Immigration," *The Immigration Dilemma*, ed. by Steven Globerman (Vancouver, 1992).

a singular, all inclusive overarching culture that is becoming threatened. However, as McGill sociologist Morton Weinfeld explains, an alternate view of Canadian nationhood presents itself. Rather than see Canadian national identity as fixed, Weinfeld sees it as an identity constantly unfolding. It is "represented by a paradigm of nation-building."<sup>84</sup> Weinfeld argues that there are a number of factors that have made for a dynamically changing identity. He notes that every generation of immigrants to Canada has been an integral part of Canada's nation-building process. As immigration becomes more diverse so will its reflection in the Canadian identity. With increasing global reciprocity, Weinfeld argues, Canadians should regard diversity as an asset, not a liability. In conflict with an almost palatable public concern for the impact of immigration on Canadian society and culture, Weinfeld pragmatically supports increased immigration and encourages a celebration of ethnic diversity on the grounds that, "The realization of Canada's untapped potential, and the exigencies of the nation-building task at hand, are best fostered by a population which is dynamic and growing rather than one which is aging and numerically stable."<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Morton Weinfeld, "Immigration and Canada's Population Future: A Nation-Building Vision," A working paper on social behavior published by the Department of Sociology of McGill University (Montreal, 1988), p.3.

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, p.4.

## **Policy Debate on Immigration**

In addition to the public and perhaps encapsulated within the academic debate on immigration is, as noted, a major policy work released in 1991. The report entitled "Economic and Social Impacts of Immigration," was prepared for the Economic Council of Canada. The specifics of the report are less important than the overall conclusions that immigration was generally positive for Canada. While the authors found that the degree of economic gain is open to debate, they also found that immigrants more than pay for themselves, "in scale economies and in lighter future tax burdens."<sup>86</sup> In the short term, refugees were the exception due to high processing costs. But it was agreed that humanitarian concerns were paramount. Overall, the social impacts of immigration were not found to be negative.

## **Polls - How the Public Feels about Immigration**

We cannot know how any one individual or group of individuals responded to the media debate on immigration issues--one sided as it was--or if the media reacted to rather than shaped opinion. But a series of public opinion polls taken in the lead up to the 1993 federal election give us a snap-shot of the larger public mood on questions relating to immigration. Trends in public opinion were hardly encouraging to immigration and refugee advocates.

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<sup>86</sup> Neil Swan, "Economic and Social impacts of Immigration", p.134.

When stricter immigration regulations were proposed under Bill C-86 in 1993, one observer concluded, “the government’s stand reflects a new, tougher attitude towards immigrants among Canadians.”<sup>87</sup> A CTV/Macleans poll, conducted by Decima Research revealed that roughly one in five respondents welcomed immigration from non-traditional/non-white sources. The remaining 80 percent felt immigration of non-whites was either “a fact of life”, “bad”, or “very bad”. The poll revealed that the higher the level of education, the higher the support for non-traditional immigration. Age was also found to be significant. Older respondents proved less supportive of non-traditional immigration.<sup>88</sup> These findings are not out of line with previous polls. But the degree to which support for pluralism had eroded was new. Support for diversity was found to have declined since 1989. In 1989 40 percent of Canadians felt immigrants should maintain their culture and 57 percent felt they should “blend with the larger society. In 1993 those favouring pluralism dropped to 34 percent and those who would see immigrants assimilate into some fixed notion of Canadian culture jumped to 63 percent.

Another Decima study conducted for the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews supports the CTV/Macleans findings. Seventy-five percent felt that “different ethnic and racial groups should try to adapt to the value system and way of life of the majority in Canadian society.”<sup>89</sup> They also found immigration policy being questioned. A small majority (54 percent) feel that Canada’s current immigration policy allows in, “too many people of different races and cultures...”<sup>90</sup> Perhaps this can be explained by another finding, “In terms of

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<sup>87</sup> “A Reluctant Welcome,” *Macleans* (January 4, 1993), p.26.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, p.26.

<sup>89</sup> Decima Research, “A Report to the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews: Canadians’ Attitudes toward Race and Ethnic Relations in Canada,” (November, 1993), p.8.

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*

impressions of various ethnic, racial, or religious groups. Canadians reserve their highest ratings for Roman Catholics and people of European origin. People of African or East Indian origin and Muslims receive the lowest positive impression scores.”<sup>91</sup>

Although more recent, a survey conducted by Ekos Research in February of 1994 also found that a small majority of Canadians (53 percent) feel that there are too many immigrants (in April of 1993 this number was approximately 48 percent). Ekos found the number questioning Canada’s immigration openness to the world has been steadily rising since 1988 when it stood at only 30 percent.<sup>92</sup> Ekos also concluded that tolerance for immigration was an indicator of broader Canadian tolerance. Eighty-seven percent of those who thought there were “too many immigrants” also felt there were “too many visible minorities”. Ekos findings support other findings that older, less educated people tend to be less tolerant. However, in terms of regional differences, Ekos found Ontario to have the highest levels of intolerance while Gallup/C.I.P.O (Canadian Institute for Public Opinion) found British Columbia and Quebec to have the highest levels of intolerance today.<sup>93</sup> Finally, Ekos, Decima and Gallup/C.I.P.O. polls all revealed similar trends over time; the percentage of people who feel that there are too many immigrants and especially too many non-European immigrants, had been steadily increasing over the previous five years.

Ekos cited cultural conflicts, the sense that “Canada is slipping away”, and culture shock for older Canadians as “key factors” explaining negative findings. They also found that there

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<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, p.9.

<sup>92</sup> Ekos Research Associates Inc. “Setting the Domestic and International Context for Immigration Policy: Changing Societal Perspectives,” Part of a larger study entitled, “Rethinking Government”. Presented at Chateau Montebello, Quebec (March 6, 1994).

<sup>93</sup> Gallup Canada Inc.. “45% Favor Decreased Immigration,” (June, 1994).

were concerns about an increase in crime and abuse of Canada's social safety net. For all this Ekos also concluded that public perceptions and fears of immigration were not based on hard fact. Awareness and knowledge levels about immigration were found to be low. Indeed, statistical evidence did not provide reasons for the numbers the survey gathered.

Ekos constructed a "Typology of Canadian Positions on Immigration". Within this typology there are two continuums, one is Tolerant ↔ Intolerant, and the other is Rational Pragmatic ↔ Ideological Emotional. Ekos's conclusions and the axis/continuums they chose serve to confirm the extent to which myth and emotion dominate the current debate on immigration.

Perhaps Canada has not, as earlier suggested, witnessed a fundamental alteration in the beliefs and value systems of its citizens. Before the federal election of 1993, negativism toward immigrants and reservations surrounding Canada's 'ethnic make-up' were marginalized or relegated to the shadows of discourse. But, as Morton Weinfeld suggested in the summer of 1993, a more public and perhaps divisive immigration debate was building.

*Immigration policy over the next decade will become increasingly controversial. Some Canadians have always feared ( incorrectly) that immigrants steal jobs or add disproportionately to welfare rolls. In the minds of many, immigration is linked with apprehension about the changing ethnic and racial makeup of the population. They fear the effects of immigration on Canadian values, institutions, and national unity.<sup>94</sup>*

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<sup>94</sup>Morton Weinfeld, "Immigration and Diversity" , p.66.

Weinfeld was correct. The controversy he envisioned surfaced in an open public forum during the Canadian federal election of 1993. It has continued to gain steam ever since.

While views on immigration and diversity, to some degree, may well be influenced by the kind of information received, they are also shaped by class, economic position, education, age, larger political views and personal ideology. Perhaps what is most telling about the rise in anti-immigrant sentiment is how it would seem to be outside the loop of scholarly discourse. Fact would seem less important than emotion in shaping Canadians views on immigration and diversity. Each individual's bias, personal philosophy and ideological baggage, saturated with emotion, act to distort the realities about immigration. Perhaps many Canadians are incapable of realizing the value of immigration because of the lens they have on society--a lens that distorts the focus of events and issues to support their baser instincts.

One could argue that Canada has undergone a profound transformation since Confederation. In the area of immigration, race, once the core determinant of eligibility, has been removed as a criteria of immigration. On the other hand, one could listen closely in 1993 and hear stark reminders that Canada is far from being an accepting society. According to researchers and policy makers, immigration has and continues to add to the national strength. If informed about immigration, many Canadians are still unconvinced. Driven by emotion and coerced by myth, they feel that there are too many immigrants and far too many non-white immigrants entering Canada; for them their gut feeling is that immigration is a problem best resolved through considerably lower numbers and much greater selectivity.



## Chapter 2 - Immigration and the Reform Party of Canada

Looking only at the issue of immigration, one might argue on the eve of the 1993 federal election that Canadian society was undergoing a profound ideological transformation. On the one hand, race and ethnicity has largely been removed as a negative mark in access to the civic society. Evidence of this transformation could be seen in the area of immigration where race, once a core determinant of eligibility, has been removed as a criteria of immigration. On the other hand, if one listened carefully in 1993, s/he might have heard stark reminders that Canada was far from being the welcoming society it is often held out to be. According to many respected researchers and policy makers, immigration has and continues to add to the economic strength of Canada. Yet, when asked about immigration many Canadians, remain, at best, unconvinced of its value. In the 1990s, the Reform Party of Canada emerged as a viable, national, mainstream political movement giving popular voice to restrictionist views about immigration. While the previous chapter examined the 'debate on immigration', this chapter seeks to examine how this debate entered mainstream political discourse via the Reform Party platform.

In 1993 the *Toronto Star* printed a series of articles written by freelance journalist Daniel Stoffman. The articles were the result of research into Canadian immigration policy Stoffman completed while on a one year Atkinson Fellowship. Stoffman's research conclusions endorsed a reduction, on economic grounds, of the number of immigrants Canada allows in every year. Stoffman's research and analysis were published as a major C.D. Howe report that drew the same conclusion. It was Stoffman's report, issued by Canada's leading right-wing think tank, that formed the basis for the Reform Party's immigration policy. In *The New Canada*, Reform Party leader Preston Manning states, "we are the only federal party that bases its approach to the constitution, immigration, and culture on *neutral laws and policies not tied to conceptions of race, ethnicity, or ancestry*."<sup>95</sup> Instead, like Daniel Stoffman and the C.D. Howe Institute, Reform adopted an immigration position 'based on the economic needs of Canada.' Manning joined Stoffman in rejecting an immigration policy designed to facilitate population growth. Reform endorsed cutting immigration levels by between one quarter and one half annually.

In spite of Manning's claim that Reform's immigration policy recommendations were strictly predicated on what was economically best for Canada, there is no doubt that the policy rubbed up against ethnic and racial issues, and fed into the ongoing public debate about multiculturalism, fears of welfare abuse, "bogus refugee" claimants, and the breakdown in law and order. Indeed, immigration restrictions has often been the call of those for whom racial fears were paramount.

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<sup>95</sup> Preston Manning, *The New Canada* (Toronto, 1992), p.295.

## History

Western Canada has enjoyed a long tradition of grass-roots populism. In the 1921 federal election the populist western based Progressive Party won sixty-five seats, making them the official opposition in Ottawa. While their party cohesion did not last through the next federal election, populist support expressed itself again in Alberta with the 1935 landslide provincial political victory for the Social Credit party. They would govern the province for the next thirty-six years.

Preston Manning is no stranger to populist politics or the Social Credit movement. His father, Ernest Manning, led the Alberta Socreds for nearly twenty-five years and Preston Manning was infused with the party's conservative message. It should, therefore, not be surprising that there are a number of common themes between the Reform Party's current platform and the Social Credit platform of the past. Western alienation and the desire for a smaller central government with increased powers for the provinces are but two examples. A common philosophical thread running through both parties is advocacy of self reliance and rugged, frontier individualism. The political success the Reform Party has enjoyed in Alberta since its inception in 1987 mirrors the rise of Social Credit in Alberta in 1935 which historian Howard Palmer describes as, "the single most important political and social development in Alberta during the early 1930's".<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Howard Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta* (Toronto, 1982), p.142.

However, not only can the Reform Party trace its historical roots to the Social Credit Party of Alberta, but both parties harboured extremist elements within their ranks. As Sharpe and Braid note, "Populism can have its dark side, as [Preston] Manning knows very well. Alberta Social Credit was often blatantly anti-Semitic, and today there are racists among the Reformers. Manning admits this is a problem..."<sup>97</sup> This is not meant to suggest that either the Reform Party or the Alberta Social Credits were racist or anti-Semitic parties. However, it is clear that both parties managed to attract some right-wing extremists who found their racism compatible with either party's economic and social message. One must recognize that just as current immigration differs from that of an earlier day, extremism expresses itself differently in the 1990s than it did in the 1930s. Today, extremism is tempered by opposition to non-white immigration and to a less extent, anti-Semitism. In the 1930s then grass roots fascism blended with anti-Semitism and nativism fostered opposition to southern and eastern European immigration. While there are differences between the two periods, in both periods right-wing extremism and a strong anti-immigrant bias can be seen as a response to changes in Canada's racial and ethnic make-up. According to anthropologist Stanley Barrett, within the right-wing there exists a strong commitment to notions of white, western, Christian civilization which adherents fear is being threatened by immigrants.<sup>98</sup>

In discussing fascist movements in Canada in the 1930s, Lita-Rose Betcherman argues that, "In Canada fascism was a minor but persistent theme throughout the decade of the thirties.

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<sup>97</sup> Sydney Sharpe and Don Braid, *Storming Babylon: Preston Manning and the Rise of the Reform Party* (Toronto, 1992), p.7.

<sup>98</sup> Stanley R. Barrett, *Is God a Racist? The Right Wing in Canada* (Toronto, 1987), p.5.

Like communism and socialism, it owed its existence to the Depression which hit this country with particular severity."<sup>99</sup> Betcherman focuses on the vehement anti-Semitism espoused by Adrien Arcand and the high level of support he received in Quebec during the 1930s. Betcherman explains that Arcand eventually reached out to William Aberhart while he led Social Credit from 1935 until his death in 1943. However, in explaining the relationship between right-wing fascist groups and Aberhart's Social Credit, Betcherman argues that there was never a strong link between the two. While Arcand may have sought ties with Aberhart, Aberhart's Socreds, "still fitted into the system of parliamentary democracy."<sup>100</sup> Arcand did not. Today, too, right-wing groups like the Heritage Front seek ties with the Reform Party and the Reform Party has publicly rejected their overtures. This does not mean that individual racists have not found a political home in Reform or that racists do not support the Party from outside. Both cases are likely true.

Howard Palmer was guarded in associating nativism with Social Credit in Alberta. Palmer defines nativism as, "an opposition to an internal minority on the grounds that it posed a threat to Canadian national life."<sup>101</sup> But he argues that Alberta's unique character, including its high numbers of Americans, high level of Protestant fundamentalism, and United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) and Socred populist tradition, "did not determine the development of nativism in the province."<sup>102</sup> In fact, Palmer goes so far as to argue that Social Credit inadvertently undercut nativism by attracting communist support, thereby effectively squelching the

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<sup>99</sup> Lita-Rose Betcherman, *The Swastika and the Maple Leaf: Fascist Movements in Canada in the Thirties* (Toronto, 1975), p.2.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*, p.81.

<sup>101</sup> Palmer, *op.cit.*, p.7.

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.*, p.180.

Communist Party which, in turn, served to reduce the source of one strand of labour nativism: anti-radical nativism.<sup>103</sup> He concludes that, "nativism emerged in Alberta not because of the ways in which Albertans differed from other Canadians, but because of the ways in which they were similar."<sup>104</sup>

Palmer does not, however, altogether separate Social Credit from anti-Semitism. He documents the link between American populism, Social Credit, and anti-Semitism. He argues that a dislike for banks and Jews as controlling international finance was common to both the American populists and their Canadian counterparts. Both groups emphasised, "the essential goodness of the common man...a conspiracy theory of history, and the doctrine of the primacy of money."<sup>105</sup> To explain the link between American populism and anti-Semitism, Palmer uses historian Richard Hofstadter's argument that to populist rural Americans, the Jew was seen as a "non-producer" and "a manipulator of money". Palmer concludes that "Partly under the influence of [American] populist assumptions, and partly because of the ideas of Major Douglas, the English founder of Social Credit [and a devout anti-Semite], anti-Semitism emerged among some Alberta Social Crediters."<sup>106</sup>

Palmer likely underestimates the extent to which a conspiracy theory of history is embedded in Social Credit ideology, and subsequently, one might argue, is today present in Reform ideology as well. As noted, it is the individual ethic or, on a religious level, the individual's one to one relationship with God, that is central to both Sacred and Reform

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<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*, p.145.

<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*, p.182.

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*, pp.152-153.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*, p.153.

ideology. Increased freedom for the individual is the aim of both Reform and Socred policies and, in turn, both parties' belief in the conspiracy is what made the individual central to Socred, and by extension, to Reform philosophy. According to John Irving,

In its most developed and complex form, the philosophy of Social Credit includes a monetary theory which both 'explains' the inner workings of the capitalist financial system and offers a remedy for its unsatisfactory functioning in periods of depression and inflation, *a political theory which redefines the role of the individual in the democratic state, and an interpretation of history in terms of a long-existing Judaic plot or conspiracy to secure control of and dominate the world.*<sup>107</sup>

Just as xenophobia cannot exist without foreigners, and Marxism would not exist without capitalism, so must one recognize that Social Credit's conspiracy theory cannot exist independently of the mythical Jewish conspiracy to which it is inextricably linked. In *Storming Babylon*, authors Sharpe and Braid suggest that the Mannings', both Ernest and Preston, dislike of collectivist ideas and their "deep suspicion of socialism springs in part from the Social Credit conspiracy theory....There is a plot to take over world finances, the reasoning goes, so all centralized planning is susceptible to control by the members of this conspiracy"<sup>108</sup> Sharpe and Braid do not mention who the members of this conspiracy are. Rather, they leave that to Ernest Manning himself. When asked in a 1982 interview why anti-Semitism kept creeping into Social Credit, Ernest Manning stated, "I think the reason for that is that so much of Social Credit philosophy zeroed in on monetary reform. This takes you right back to who controls the monetary system of the world. There's no denying that the Rothschilds and others were

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<sup>107</sup> John A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta* (Toronto, 1959), p.5 (emphasis mine).

<sup>108</sup> Sharpe and Braid, *op. cit.*, p.77

prominent Jewish bankers...”<sup>109</sup> The point is not to suggest that Ernest Manning was anti-Semitic. On the contrary. He fought hard against Major Douglas and other anti-Semites in the party. However, just as the conspiracy theory is central to Social Credit, so, too, is some degree of anti-Semitism central to the conspiracy theory of history. Arnold Ages is not far off the mark when he notes that, “The closest that Canada ever came to a mainstream political movement with overtones of anti-Semitism was the early incarnation of the Social Credit party.”<sup>110</sup>

Just as Reform’s roots run back to the Social Credit past in Alberta, so does Reform’s persistent legacy of self reliant individualism—a philosophy that stems, in large measure, from a belief in the conspiracy theory of history. While neither party should be labelled as doggedly racist or extremist, nevertheless, with respect to issues of immigration, race, ethnicity, nativism and anti-Semitism, both the Reform and the Social Credit parties have, for one reason or another, acted as a magnet to extremist elements. In the end, the demise of the Social Credit party has been attributed to its inability to rid itself of its extremist elements, “Without referring directly to anti-Semites and funny-money advocates in the Socred party, he [Ernest Manning] blamed ‘certain extremists’ in Central Canada for ruining its federal prospects.”<sup>111</sup> Preston Manning may be only too aware of falling into the same trap as his father. Preston Manning has tried to shake off racist elements in his own camp. It would appear that he has not found it an easy task.

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<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*, pp.101-102

<sup>110</sup> Arnold Ages, “Antisemitism: The Uneasy Calm,” in *The Canadian Jewish Mosaic*. ed. by Morton Weinfeld, W. Shaffir, I. Cotler (Toronto, 1981), p.388.

<sup>111</sup> “Right-wing populism—by the book,” *The Toronto Star* (April 10, 1991), p.A23.



## Ethno-Cultural Politics of Reform

Since its inception in 1987, the Reform Party has gradually created a national political agenda. The main thrust of Reform's political agenda is comprised of economic and political initiatives geared toward creating an equal federation of provinces with a weaker central government, a higher degree of privatisation in all sectors including health care and education, and a greater reliance on common humanity in order to eliminate the concept of universality from Canada's social welfare system. However, Reform also generated an agenda relating to the ethno-cultural governance of Canada. It is these policies that will be the focus of this chapter.

The most obvious place to examine Reform's ethno-cultural policies is to look at *The Blue Book*, a window to Reform Party policy or Preston Manning's *The New Canada*, which articulates Manning's personal and political vision. Perhaps most telling about Reform's immigration policy were the changes made to *The Blue Book* (actually *The Blue Sheet*) prior to 1991. In mid-1991 the manual said that Reformers "oppose any immigration policy based on race or creed or designed to radically or suddenly alter the ethnic makeup of Canada."<sup>112</sup> William Gairdner advocated precisely the same policy in *The Trouble with Canada*.<sup>113</sup> In a revised edition of the *Blue Sheet* late in 1991 the phrase "or designed to radically or suddenly alter the ethnic make-up of Canada" was expunged. A Reform party spokesman said the last words were removed for fear that certain people may perceive the statement as being racially

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<sup>112</sup> "Reform party tries to shrug racist label," *The Halifax Chronicle-Herald* (June 24, 1991), pp. A1-A2.

<sup>113</sup> Gairdner, *op.cit.*, p.405.

motivated. As well, one Reform constituency's resolution to maintain Canada's current ethno-cultural balance was rejected for the same reason--people might actually label the resolution racist.<sup>114</sup> But if the words were edited out, the mind set that created them is not altered so easily.

While many die-hard Reform party supporters would likely have read both the *Blue Book* and *The New Canada*, the average Canadian is more likely to receive his/her information about Reform Party policy from the media. A July, 1991 article in *The Globe and Mail* provided readers with a great deal of information about the Reform Party's eight point stand on immigration formulated earlier in that year. In the press report, Manning emphasized that immigration per se was not a central part of the Party's platform but, central or not, it was attracting public attention. According to the *Globe and Mail*, Reform Party literature:

speaks of an immigration policy driven primarily by Canada's economic needs, of restricting sponsorship privileges to members of immediate families, of deporting bogus refugees upon entry into Canada, of giving fewer legal protections to those who are neither landed immigrants nor citizens, of not setting immigration levels to solve the problem of a declining birth rate.<sup>115</sup>

If the tone of *The Globe and Mail* seems tilted against Reform's position, an earlier and more sympathetic article in *Western Report* also offers an analysis of the place of race and ethnicity in Reform's immigration platform:

On immigration: the Reform party supports an immigration policy based on the economic needs of the country, without regard to race or creed. It rejects using

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<sup>114</sup> "Reform party tries to shrug racist label." *The Halifax Chronicle-Herald* (June 24, 1991), pp. A1-A2.

<sup>115</sup> "Manning plays down immigration policy." *The Globe and Mail* (July 15, 1991), p.A6

immigration to maintain population levels and supports acceptance of genuine refugees as defined by the United Nations Convention.<sup>116</sup>

A number of articles in newspapers and magazines from across Canada appeared between 1990 and 1992 which serve up negative commentary on Reform's immigration agenda. One article implied that, like their Social Credit counterparts, Reformers "also appeal to the 'antis' and 'outs' of the West--those who are anti-immigrant, anti-French, and (mostly) anti-Eastern establishment."<sup>117</sup> Another article, describing Reform's rise to power, explained how Reform's timing was right and many middle-class Canadians were ready for a change. It noted that Reform Party supporters,

are tired of paying for programs they neither asked for nor want, such as multiculturalism, official bilingualism, foreign aid to repressive countries...They don't want to apologize anymore for making a decent living;..., and wishing feminists, gays, peaceniks, AIDS activists and ethnic minorities would leave everybody alone.<sup>118</sup>

A *Vancouver Sun* article discussed how Reform has become the party of the right and was picking up people "disillusioned with the present leadership".<sup>119</sup> This was often said about Reform. But one must ask what it is people were disillusioned with--was it the present government's political, economic, or social policies?

In a *Maclean's* article from 1991 Sheila Copps described a letter she received from a self-described Reform supporter. It stated "I don't like troublemakers, and Quebeckers, native

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<sup>116</sup> "The moderate Reform party," *Western Report* (April 29, 1991), p.15.

<sup>117</sup> "The Manning trilogy: A matter of too much Presto!," *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* (May 1, 1992), p.B3.

<sup>118</sup> "Why the Reform Party is catching fire," *The Toronto Star* (June 8, 1991), p.D5.

<sup>119</sup> "Reforming the right," *The Vancouver Sun* (March 7, 1992), p.B3.

Indians, blacks and Asians are all troublemakers and a problem for this country”<sup>120</sup> Did the letter writer represent the fringe of Reform supporters or its mainstream? And finally the right-wing voice of Canada, *Western Report*, itself questioned the racial and ethnic agenda of many Reform Party supporters. The overall theme of the article pertains to Reform’s attempt to moderate its image in order to become more attractive to dissidents from all three mainstream parties. But, University of Alberta political scientist Allan Tupper asks, “How could any NDPer, even if attracted to the Reform environmental policies, live with its seeming anti-bilingualism, anti-immigration stands?”<sup>121</sup> Regardless of how economically determined and non-racist Reform’s stand on immigration claimed to be, it was not viewed in that light by the majority of the mainstream media prior to the 1993 election. The word ‘anti-’ has become common parl  when describing Reform’s immigration policy.

The Reform Party has also received a fair bit of publicity as a result of its stand on multiculturalism. A *Western Report* article explains Reform’s position “that new Canadians be integrated into the mainstream. The party is not opposed to multicultural programs, as some critics suggest, but supports the right of groups or individuals to maintain their own cultural links without financial support from the government.”<sup>122</sup> This position was attacked by journalists who claimed Reform was trying “to institute a WASP Canada which would ‘freeze out the multi-hued, multi-tongued people who have enriched the Canadian culture’...”<sup>123</sup>. Agreeing with Reform’s position on multiculturalism, one Reformer summed up his

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<sup>120</sup> “Judgment Day,” *Maclean’s* (December 16, 1991), p.13.

<sup>121</sup> “Reformers look leftward,” *Western Report* (February 19, 1990), p.17.

<sup>122</sup> “The moderate Reform party,” *Western Report*, *loc. cit.*, p.15.

<sup>123</sup> *ibid.*

understanding of Reform when he commented that no more money should be given to "black lesbians from Dartmouth"<sup>124</sup> This statement was made by Reform Party senator Stan Waters, elected by landslide in a bizarre political turn of events that left Brian Mulroney no choice but to appoint the Alberta 'favourite'.<sup>125</sup> If Manning was not so shrill in opposition to official Multiculturalism, his pledge to end federal government support for multiculturalism at a Reform rally attended by eight thousand people received front page coverage in *The Toronto Star*. In the article Manning is quoted as saying, "Instead of promoting a cohesive Canada, the federal government has encouraged a ghettoization of our society and promoted hyphenated Canadians".<sup>126</sup> Thus while Manning maintained that multiculturalism was peripheral to Reform's platform, one senses that he knew the populist buttons he was pushing by charging that language and heritage programs should not be federally funded.<sup>127</sup> While Manning repeatedly said he was not pandering to racist sentiment, he must have known that just playing the race card brought him much needed press coverage.

Manning could always get a round of applause and cheers from supporters by claiming he would cut the drain on the public purse by cutting multiculturalism. He never said that the policy costs less than one dollar per capita, the majority of which goes to funding for anti-racism programs, not heritage language programs. In *The New Canada*, Manning says that the road to the old Canada is

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<sup>124</sup> Sharpe and Braid, *op. cit.* p.32.

<sup>125</sup> *ibid.*, p.38.

<sup>126</sup> "Manning criticizes multicultural funding," *The Toronto Star* (June 13, 1991), p.A1

<sup>127</sup> "Funding multiculturalism 'minor' Reform issue," *The Globe and Mail* (December 2, 1991), p.A5.

marked by constitutional signposts that say Founding Peoples, Official Bilingualism, Government-Supported Multiculturalism, and Special Status...The Reformers' road, by contrast, is marked by signs that say Federation of equal provinces, Freedom of Speech, Unhyphenated Canadianism, and Equality for all Canadians.<sup>128</sup>

However, according to *Storming Babylon* author and respected *Calgary Herald* political columnist, Don Braid, "The problem is that when you say let's declare everybody equal, you attract people who want to preserve the status quo and who say that's a dandy way to keep this or that group down because there won't be any special help for them."<sup>129</sup> Alberta Francophone Association president, France Levasseur-Ouimet was not so subtle in her critique of Reform's policy on multiculturalism which, she says, panders to "the politics of hate and anger"<sup>130</sup>

In examining Reform's stand on immigration and multiculturalism, one must also revisit the relationship that exists between Daniel Stoffman, William Gairdner and the Reform Party. As has already been mentioned, Daniel Stoffman's immigration critique, after being adopted by the C.D. Howe Institute, was reworked into the Reform Party platform. Fingerprints from Stoffman's recommendations are all over the *Blue Sheet's* stand on immigration. The *Blue Sheet* echoes Stoffman in advocating an economically based immigration policy that accepts genuine refugees only as defined by the U.N. Convention. It suggests cuts to the family class and suggests that, "immigrants should possess the human capital necessary to adjust quickly and independently to the needs of Canadian society and the job market."<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Preston Manning, *op. cit.*, p.298.

<sup>129</sup> "Reforming .ne right," *The Vancouver Sun* (March 7, 1992), p.B3.

<sup>130</sup> "Reform platform under attack," *The Calgary Herald* (October 31, 1989), p.A10.

<sup>131</sup> "Canada's economic needs stressed," *The Globe and Mail* (July 15, 1991), p.A6

In *Canadian Business*, Stoffman states that "The current [immigration] program is admitting...too many refugees who are not refugees as that term is understood everywhere in the world outside Canada."<sup>132</sup> With respect to skills, Stoffman suggests: "lower the numbers to 150,000 and bring in people who are skilled and educated..." Here he comes out in favour of analytic skills that will enable immigrants to "contribute to an advanced, fast-changing economy..."<sup>133</sup> In *Pounding at the Gates*, Stoffman also favours reducing the number of family class immigrants. Each of these points was transferred to the official Reform Party policy.

Stoffman also argued that the three mainstream political parties have consistently left immigration to

...advocacy groups, ethnic communities, and lawyers whose livelihood depends on having a large supply of immigrants to represent...The reasons the self-selected immigrant has displaced the selected are political. Organized ethnic groups, refugee advocates and immigration lawyers have fought hard to expand family immigration.<sup>134</sup>

Similarly, in an article in the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* which discusses Reform's commitment to abolish multiculturalism and create an immigration policy based on economics, not race, a Reform spokesperson is quoted as arguing that, "Federal immigration policy has drifted away from economic criteria to a racial element...It's a vote-buying scheme."<sup>135</sup> Not only do Stoffman and Reform criticize the power of special interest groups, but joining them in *The Trouble with Canada*, William Gairdner also claimed that Canada's immigration policy fails to

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<sup>132</sup> Daniel Stoffman, "Canadians Wanted: No Skills Necessary," *Canadian Business* (August, 1993), p.29.

<sup>133</sup> Stoffman, "Pounding at the Gates," *loc. cit.*, p.24.

<sup>134</sup> *ibid.*, pp.6-8.

<sup>135</sup> "Reform party tries to shrug racist label," *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* (June 24, 1991), p.A1.

represent the wishes of Canadians and only reflects the immense power of ethnic groups and other special interest groups.<sup>136</sup>

A common belief in the power of special interest groups is not the only thing that binds the Reform Party and author William Gairdner. In *The New Canada*, Preston Manning mentions that in late 1990, when planning for the Party's April 1991 assembly meeting, he invited Senator Stan Waters, the bane of black lesbians from Dartmouth, and author Bill Gairdner to speak at the assembly.<sup>137</sup> Six months later, describing a typical Reform Party meeting, a *Toronto Star* article states that the meeting begins with "a pep talk by one of the founders of the party or a high-profile Reform sympathizer, (Bill Gairdner, author of *The Trouble with Canada*, is the current favourite)."<sup>138</sup>

But the outspoken Gairdner may gradually have proven too much for Manning. On June 24, 1991, *The Halifax Chronicle-Herald* reported that Preston Manning and Reform were trying to disassociate themselves from Gairdner saying that Manning, "doesn't agree with his views on immigration and didn't even know what they were" until recently.<sup>139</sup> A *Western Report* article, also from June 24, 1991, reported that massive anti-Reform protests at meetings in Toronto and Ottawa following Gairdner pep talks left Reform leaders unsure as to whether or not they should disassociate themselves from Gairdner. The article suggested that "The author has spoken at his last official Reform party function."<sup>140</sup> Within a year, Manning's *The New Canada* was published with William Gairdner referred to as "Bill Gairdner" throughout. A year later, in

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<sup>136</sup> William Gairdner, *op. cit.*, p. 400.

<sup>137</sup> Preston Manning, *op. cit.*, p.262.

<sup>138</sup> "What Manning's party really stands for," *The Toronto Star* (June 9, 1991), p.B1.

<sup>139</sup> "Reform party tries to shrug racist label," *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* (June 24, 1991), p.A2.

<sup>140</sup> "Battling the racist threat," *Western Report* (June 24, 1991), p.17.



early 1993, *The Globe and Mail* printed a front page story entitled “Stores reject popular book” and subtitled, “B.C. chain won’t stock work by Reform Party hero”.<sup>141</sup> The book was William Gairdner’s latest, *The War Against the Family*. Just how close were Gairdner’s and Manning’s views? As noted, Gairdner believes that racial and ethnic mixing is detrimental to the Canadian value system. He freely associates immigrants with crime, and he openly espouses reducing non-white immigration to Canada. As one *Western Report* article states, Gairdner is “an extreme libertarian with strong nativist sentiments and an aversion to Asian immigration.”<sup>142</sup>

How well did Preston Manning know ‘Bill’ Gairdner, the man who addressed a series of Reform meetings? More importantly, one must question whether Preston Manning, an avid reader, amateur historian and astute politician, had not read ‘Bill’ Gairdner’s *The Trouble with Canada*--a book Manning refers to in *The New Canada* and a book often sold at Reform rallies?

### **Effects of Reform’s Ethno-Cultural Policies**

Given that Reform never considered its policies on immigration and multiculturalism to be any more than marginal to its overall party platform, the amount of media attention the two issues received is indicative of the intense controversy these policies generated. The effects of Reform’s ethno-cultural policies were twofold. First, Reform faced widespread criticism

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<sup>141</sup> *The Globe and Mail* (January 20, 1993), p.A1.

<sup>142</sup> “Battling the racist threat,” *Western Report* (June 24, 1991), p.17.

emanating from pro-immigration and more moderate groups. Second, members of different extremist groups tried to carve out a place for themselves as Reform members.

The accusation that Preston Manning and his Reformers were racist was not a subtle subtext of political rhetoric (not that the word racist can ever really be subtle). It has been splashed across the pages of many of the country's largest newspapers. Critics saw Reform's call to cut the number of immigrants as code for more deeply held racist views. While Reform talked about immigrant numbers and skill levels, not race, many dismissed this as a code for a return of racial selectivity to Canadian immigration policy. In the minds of many, the issue was not how many but who comes to Canada, and the less of "them" the better. The most vocal critic of Reform's immigration policy was deputy Liberal leader Sheila Copps. In a well publicized series of attacks on Reform in April and November of 1991, Copps called Reform "racist, sexist, and elitist"<sup>143</sup> and compared Manning to former Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard David Duke, who was defeated in the Louisiana gubernatorial race in October of 1991.<sup>144</sup> Sheila Copps was not the only one to label Reform's ethno-cultural policies racist; if letters to the editor are any measure of public sentiment, many others came to the same conclusion. Before long, many of Manning's public speaking engagements were marred by anti-racist protesters. Rather than focus on the Party's other agenda items, journalists demanded Manning to respond to the wave of racist charges levied against Reform. Manning scrambled to divorce himself and Reform from the racist label.

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<sup>143</sup> "If it squawks like a chicken...Sheila Copps turns her practiced invective on the Reform party," *Western Report* (April 1, 1991), p.16

<sup>144</sup> "Manning denies he's a racist," *Montreal Gazette* (November 24, 1991), p.E8.

But even as Manning tried to distance himself and his Party from the racist charges, Reform's policies attracted a number of extremists into the party. The earliest reported case occurred in 1988 when Vancouver columnist Doug Collins sought the Reform Party nomination in a Vancouver riding. Collins had built a name for himself as a controversial writer and journalist who "often slams Canadian immigration policy...calling for Ottawa to get tough with refugees and insist[ing] that western Europeans be favoured over immigrants from the Third World". Whether or not Collins was a racist, his beliefs were widely regarded as such by pro-immigration groups. In light of Collins strong views, Manning offered him the option of running as an independent, unopposed by Reform. When Collins refused, Manning asked him if he would sign a declaration rejecting racial discrimination. Collins again refused. Manning refused him the nomination and was subsequently booed by Collins supporters for his actions.<sup>145</sup>

The incident that received more publicity was Reform's expulsion of several Heritage Front members and an executive member of the Toronto Reform Association who invited them to join Reform. On March 11, 1992 news of the expulsions appeared in *The Vancouver Sun*, *The Calgary Herald*, *The Globe and Mail*, *The Montreal Gazette*, and *The Winnipeg Free Press*. Some of the headlines read: "Reform cleanses its ranks of racists", "Reform kicks out suspected racists", "Reform Party expels four", and "Reform Party heave-hoes five more radicals" appeared in *Western Report* two weeks later. One month earlier a *Globe and Mail* article mentioned how problems in Reform's membership screening process allowed many extremists to hold Reform party memberships and positions in local riding executive committees. These

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<sup>145</sup> "Manning hangs tough," *Western Report* (November 7, 1988), p.10.

extremists include Holocaust deniers, anti-immigrant activists like Wolfgang Droege and “several people in the Metro Toronto area who have been associated with the neo-Nazi Western Guard or the racist Nationalist Party...”<sup>146</sup> Two days later *The Toronto Star* reported that more than twenty Heritage Front members were card carrying Reform members. Not denying that the racists were in the Party, Manning suggested it was all a plot to discredit Reform. Manning wondered whether “other political parties, in an attempt to discredit Reform, are in some way behind the recruitment and then leaking the information to the media.” A promise by Manning to purge Reform of the racists was greeted by Wolfgang Droege, then Imperial Dragon of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, with a declaration that he would not resign.<sup>147</sup>

One year later in April of 1993 the Heritage Front was still claiming it had active members in the Reform Party, many of whom attended a recent Reform nomination meeting. Reform seemed flustered by the claim. The Party protested that Heritage Front members could not have voted because they had “ferretted [sic] out” any known members. However, according to Wolfgang Droege, then leader of the Heritage Front, the extremist group still had many members within the Reform Party and, as he explained to the press, while “we don’t care for the [Reform’s] leadership, it’s still the party that most closely reflects the beliefs of our organization.”<sup>148</sup> Finally, an article in *The Canadian Jewish News* about the same incident revealed that the Heritage Front members were apparently not asked to leave the nomination meeting. According to Michael Lublin, members “were allowed to circulate and talk casually

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<sup>146</sup> “Manning fears plot behind racist infiltration of Reform Party,” *The Globe and Mail* (February 27, 1992), p.A7.

<sup>147</sup> “No room for racists, Reform chief says,” *The Toronto Star* (February 29, 1992), p.A9.

<sup>148</sup> “While-supremacist Front claims Reform party link,” *Winnipeg Free Press* (April 2, 1993), p.A2

and warmly with members of the Reform Party and distribute their literature...[which] implies that they are readily accepted in this party.”<sup>149</sup>

Michael Lublin provides an odd case himself. In February of 1992 an article appeared in *The Vancouver Sun* entitled, “All racial groups welcome, Jew says”. The article mentioned thirty-one year old Michael Lublin’s attempts to forge a good relationship between Reform and other ethnic groups. Lublin, an orthodox Jew, and Reform Party member, defended Preston Manning against Sheila Copps’ racist charges and said that “the Reform party, contrary to some allegations, welcomes people of every race, color and creed.”<sup>150</sup> The Reform Party accepted Michael Lublin as a champion of the Party’s tolerance and hoped he would effectively squelch the charges that Reform was intolerant, if not racist. Unfortunately for Reform, they soon lost their champion. In June of 1992, articles appeared in *The Toronto Star* and *The Canadian Jewish News* entitled “Jewish supporter quits in Reform ‘racist’ row” and “Racism cited in resignation”. Michael Lublin said he was leaving Reform “following a series of disagreements with Reform members which, he alleges, stem from ‘racial intolerance’”<sup>151</sup>. Lublin revealed that he had experienced repeated frustrations over the year which came to a head in June when “he was asked for identification and ‘harassed’ before entering a nomination meeting in Waterloo.”<sup>152</sup> *The Canadian Jewish News* article claimed that Lublin complained to Party leaders that Reform’s “undefined” policies on multiculturalism and immigration were dangerous. He also complained about “routine” anti-Semitic and racist remarks from Reform

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<sup>149</sup> “Heritage Front supports candidate,” *The Canadian Jewish News* (April 8, 1993), p.3.

<sup>150</sup> *The Vancouver Sun* (February 13, 1992), p.A4

<sup>151</sup> *The Toronto Star* (June 17, 1992), p.A16.

<sup>152</sup> *ibid.*

members and Party organizers. Most damaging, Lublin told the *Canadian Jewish News* that in August 1991 he discovered that several members of the Heritage Front were Reform members. When he brought the matter to the Party leader's attention nothing was done and "it was not until the media broke the story last March that four members of the Heritage Front...were expelled from Reform."<sup>153</sup>

Where did all this leave Reform? If Reform's policies on immigration and multiculturalism generated criticism and attracted right-wing extremists to the party, Preston Manning and the Reform Party went on the defensive. When Reform exploded as a western based political movement, Preston Manning repeatedly reiterated that Reform's core agenda included equal federation of provinces, Senate reform, and economic conservatism. By 1990-1991, with criticism of Reform mounting, Preston Manning increasingly found himself defending the Party by explaining what it was not, i.e. racist or extremist.<sup>154</sup> Scrambling to cast off the racist label, Preston Manning sought out appointments to meet with members of the Jewish community in an attempt to convince them that Reform was not a bastion of right-wing extremism. Manning gave assurances that while Reform, being a grass-roots party, could not always control who joined, the Party would not tolerate racism. Manning promised that means would be found to ensure Reform remained free of extremists.<sup>155</sup>

The degree to which Reform was forced to moderate its ethno-cultural policies in order not to appear racist and to appeal to the mainstream was particularly evident by Manning's fifth

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<sup>153</sup> *Canadian Jewish News* (June 18, 1992), p.5.

<sup>154</sup> Preston Manning, *op.cit.* p.295

<sup>155</sup> "Reform Party no haven for racists, anti-Semites," *The Canadian Jewish News* (July 25, 1991), p.3. "Manning reaches out to Jewish community," *The Canadian Jewish News* (December 19, 1991), p.2. and "Reform leader gives reassurances to Jews," *The Canadian Jewish News* (January 21, 1993), p.1.

address to the Jewish community. *The Canadian Jewish News* reported that "Reform is 'pro-immigration' but feels immigration policy should **not** be used to preserve any ethnic balance."<sup>156</sup> This is exactly the reverse of what Reform's *Blue Sheet* advocated up until 1991. Reformers "oppose any immigration policy based on race or creed or designed to radically or suddenly alter the ethnic makeup of Canada".

Critics have said that Manning, in an effort to prove that Reform was not racist, also attempted to bring ethnic minorities into Reform. A *Vancouver Sun* article entitled "Would-be Quandra candidate hit of Reform convention" is appropriately subtitled: "Young female immigrant perfect to dispel image of redneck member"<sup>157</sup> The candidate was Diana Hu. In another *Vancouver Sun* article a year later, a Vancouver refugee lawyer observed that "Reform is very conscious of being labelled racist so they welcome and probably try to recruit some ethnic minorities. So they can say 'look, we're not racist we have Diana Hu'. I don't think that simply having an ethnic minority is proof of not being racist."<sup>158</sup> With respect to the Jewish community, Manning openly admitted that this was exactly what he was trying to do. In one of his many addresses to the Jewish community he "asked Jews to get involved in Reform to 'innoculate us against the viruses of extremism, racism, and anti-Semitism.'"<sup>159</sup> The *Toronto Star* article that covered Manning's address to the Jewish group noted that Manning's comment upset many leaders who resented his attempt to attract Jewish support for the sole purpose of buffering Reform from charges of racism. Others were threatened by Manning's suggestions

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<sup>156</sup> *ibid.* (Emphasis mine)

<sup>157</sup> *The Vancouver Sun* (April 8, 1991), p.A8.

<sup>158</sup> "Reforming the right," *The Vancouver Sun* (March 7, 1992), p.B3.

<sup>159</sup> "Reform leader gives reassurances to Jews," *The Canadian Jewish News* (January 21, 1993), p.1.

that Jews abandon their heritage in favour of an Anglo-Saxon heritage. Some felt that Manning's introduction, given by a black Oakville Reformer, was "too slick".<sup>160</sup> In *The New Canada*, Manning extended the welcome mat to all ethno-cultural minorities. He states, "To those of you who are of neither French nor English extraction, I especially say, 'You are not only welcome in the Reform Party, your presence and support is essential to 'tip the balance' of Canada toward a new constitutional and political order.'"<sup>161</sup>

So far we have outlined Reform's policies on immigration and multiculturalism--policies Reformer's claimed were egalitarian and free of racism. Yet, we have also found that these same policies were vehemently attacked by critics for being racist, and sanctioning intolerance. Reform's ethno-cultural policies, as Wolfgang Droege exemplified, have also served to attract a number of right-wing extremist groups to Reform. As cases of extremist infestation of Reform became public, Preston Manning and the Reform Party hurried to rid the party of extremists and allay public fears about Reform's hidden agenda. Why have Reform's seemingly egalitarian ethno-cultural policies turned the party to such grief? Perhaps Reform authored its own pain for not understanding that, whatever the Party's actual agenda, it was making race and ethnicity issues of political discourse as no other party--right or left--had done for more than a generation.

As one Reform supporter states in an opinion piece in *The Vancouver Sun*:

It is not racist to want racial considerations and criteria to be removed from all government actions relating to multiculturalism, immigration and the Constitution. It is not racist to believe that the preservation of language and culture belongs to individuals and private associations and not to the federal government. It is not racist to believe the

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<sup>160</sup> "Jews worried by Manning's talk on racism," *The Toronto Star* (January 14, 1993), p.A9.

<sup>161</sup> Preston Manning, *op.cit.*, p.354.



role of the federal government it to preserve the *individual* rights of all Canadians: regardless of race, language or culture.<sup>162</sup>

This denial found few buyers. What some like Sheila Copps might argue is that if one 'read between the lines' and carefully deciphered the 'code words' implicit in Reform's message, one could not help but conclude that if Reform's policies are not overtly racist, "they reach out to people...[who] are intolerant."<sup>163</sup> Perhaps not all would agree with Sheila Copps, however, many Canadian would not disagree with her claim that "Reform policies and those espoused by David Duke 'are pushing a number of similar buttons'".<sup>164</sup> A pointed article in *The Toronto Star* also suggested that a careful reading of Reform's performance is necessary in order to decipher its message. The article offered a description of a typical Reform recruitment meeting: "People listen attentively, catching one another's eye, applauding occasionally. (The idea of killing bilingualism and multiculturalism always goes over well.)" At the end of the meetings most people go away feeling good, "Their fears that the Reform party might turn out to be a collection of racists and rednecks are allayed." But, the article encourages readers to "strip away the packaging" in order to see what these policies are really about--read between the lines of the *Blue Sheet*. In doing so, one would find:

The party's approach to immigration is not as xenophobic as its critics claim. But neither is it as inoffensive as Reformers claim. They [Reformers] would willingly admit immigrants with 'the human capital necessary to adjust quickly and independently to the needs of Canadian society and the job market.' But those who need a helping hand--language instruction, job training or social services--would get a chilly reception.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> "Reform welcomes all races," *The Vancouver Sun* (July 22, 1991), p.A9

<sup>163</sup> "Copps believes Reformers 'not aware' on race policies," *The Vancouver Sun* (November 21, 1991), p.A4.

<sup>164</sup> *ibid.*, and "Judgment Day," *Maclean's* (December 16, 1991), p.13.

<sup>165</sup> "What Manning's party really stands for," *The Toronto Star* (June 9, 1991), p. B1.B7.

For Reform supporters there was likely little doubt about just who those needing “a helping hand” were. In a *Western Report* article Preston Manning explained that despite and amidst all of the criticism aimed at Reform and its social policies, people have to “make up their own minds about the party on the basis of its stated policies and principles”.<sup>166</sup>

Recognizing that his attempts to interpret Reform’s ethno-cultural policies in egalitarian terms and his attempts to expel high profile racists from the party failed to satisfy those who had already concluded Reform was racist, Manning repeatedly asked people to ‘make up their own minds about the party’. But Manning was unprepared to take his own advice. In *The New Canada*, he observed:

If there is a lesson to be learned from the Social Credit experience, it is that an ounce of prevention is worth ten pounds of cure. If a new political movement can prevent extremism of any kind, particularly racism, from taking root in the first place, it will save itself and members of minority communities an infinite amount of trouble later on.<sup>167</sup>

If Manning had taken his own advice, would he have been left to repeatedly engage in damage control on the race issue? Had he taken his own advice, would he have been forced to weed out extremists? If Manning was genuinely committed to a party free of extremists then he might have been more cautious from the beginning and he might have looked at what it is about Reform that attracts extremists. Perhaps it was all unavoidable. With some justification, B’nai Brith of Canada noted that Reform’s policies and their “stance on immigration and multiculturalism is what attracts these [radical right] elements of the population.”<sup>168</sup> Any party

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<sup>166</sup> “Battling the racist threat.” *Western Report* (June 24, 1991), pp.16-17.

<sup>167</sup> Preston Manning, *op.cit.*, p.24.

<sup>168</sup> “Reform searches for racists,” *The Calgary Herald* (February 29, 1992), p.A2.

that embraced Reform's angle on immigration and multiculturalism was bound to attract those who saw these policies not as economic initiatives, but as long overdue racial common sense.

An article in *The Montreal Gazette* entitled, "Why does Reform draw racists like moths to a porch light" discussed the problem Reform had in dismantling the charges of racism. It dismissed Manning's open door to Jewish membership in Reform as misguided. If this open invitation were truly sincere, and "If Manning wants to display Reform's racial tolerance to the Canadian people, he would have more success by creating a party platform that is unequivocally tolerant". The article suggested that Reform should ask why extremists were attracted to their party, not why Jews are not, and try to change that. "Clearly these people see something in the Reform Party that does not exist in the Conservative, Liberal and New Democratic parties." While the article allowed that Reform might be the victim of racist stereotyping, it also noted that, "stereotypes are never created out of whole cloth, they always have some basis in fact..." The article continued, "It is something of a leap of logic to interpret these policies [on bilingualism, multiculturalism and immigration] as racism. But it's an even longer leap to present them as ethnically egalitarian or, for that matter, tolerant."<sup>169</sup>

Fully aware of the problems extremists had caused his father's Social Credit party, and if he was openly committed to tolerance, Preston Manning should well have articulated his policies in a way that was candidly unprejudiced. Instead of trying to accommodate Doug Collins's party nomination and explain away his explicitly intolerant views, Manning might

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<sup>169</sup> *Montreal Gazette* (January 26, 1993), p.B3.

well have refused Collins's nomination outright. The same can be said for Manning's association with 'Bill' Gairdner. Gairdner's social views as outlined in *Trouble with Canada* were well known to many Canadians. His book enjoyed several months on *The Globe and Mail's* bestseller list. Instead of distancing himself from Gairdner, Manning had Gairdner address numerous Reform party meetings and conventions where *The Trouble with Canada* was available for sale. Only when questioned about Gairdner's views did Manning attempt to distance himself and the party from Gairdner. Instead of establishing Reform's commitment to racial and ethnic tolerance, Manning maintained associations and advocated policies that lay somewhere in obscurity, between tolerance and intolerance.

Manning might have done well to read his own book, *The New Canada*. In the book Manning quotes American anthropologist Ashley Montagu who points out that, "The only measure of what you believe is what you do. If you want to know what people believe, don't read what they write, don't ask them what they believe, just observe what they do."<sup>170</sup> What did Manning and his Reform Party do? They knowingly or unknowingly articulated policy options within a value laden framework which spawned racial extremists. When confronting the consequences--predictable or not--he opted for damage control rather than honestly addressing his party's problem. In the end, one might be tempted to conclude that damage control with the media was more politically astute than rethinking or re-articulating divisive policies on immigration and multiculturalism. Perhaps Manning understood that beyond the editorial pages of the national media and the pointing fingers of liberal, pro-immigration advocacy groups, there

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<sup>170</sup> Preston Manning, *op.cit.*, p.101.

was a large constituency of voters that appreciated Reform's right-wing populism. They appreciated it not in spite of its seemingly racist agenda, but because of it.

Despite the controversy that has surrounded many of the Reform Party's social policies, or because of it, as a political movement Reform continued to grow. During the three year period up to 1991 the Reform Party more than doubled its membership annually. From three hundred members in 1987, it had over one hundred thousand members by the end of 1991.

The immigration debate outlined in chapter one, characterized largely by a growing public unease, seemed to have found a political home in Reform. As debate built up a head of steam preceding the federal election of 1993, the Reform Party, with its 'egalitarian' platform on immigration and multiculturalism, emerged as a serious vehicle for political realization of immigration restructuring--a vehicle that seemed to embody this growing public unease.

## Chapter 3 - Fertile Ground

How does the Canadian public feel about the Reform Party of Canada? Preston Manning frequently confronted the hostile poem "Racist, Sexist, Anti-Gay, Preston Manning Go Away" when he stepped off his campaign bus. The acronym Reform: "Racist Elitist Fundamentalist Oppressive Right-Wing Movement" appeared on a banner that was held high during a speech Preston Manning gave to a group of York University law students at Osgoode Hall in Toronto. But this anti-Reform sentiment did not derail Reform's electoral campaign. Winning eighteen seats in the House of Commons on October 25, 1993, the Reform scored a stunning achievement. What does all this mean? If Reform was racist, harboured racists, or had a racially tinged agenda, enough Canadians either did not know, care or found this reason in and of itself to vote for Reform.

When the 1993 federal election was called, immigration discussion was already rumbling under the surface. While politicians, with the exception of Preston Manning, seemed to publicly steer clear of the issue, Canada's major newspapers and magazines gradually picked up on public discontent over immigration. This discontent seemed to intensify throughout the

course of the campaign, and eventually broke through the political sound barrier and entered political discourse from the right. Reform was its sharpest voice.

Every election campaign is characterized by a certain amount of mud slinging. In the past two decades campaigning has become increasingly negative. More and more emphasis is placed on discrediting the opponent and less and less on addressing policy issues. The election of October 1993 was no exception. Much of the mud was directed at Preston Manning. The allegation that Preston Manning and his Reformers were racist was not subtly slipped into campaign rhetoric. Rather, in the latter half of the campaign it was splashed across the pages of many of the country's largest newspapers.

If one listened to the campaign debates and remembers Bill C-86, s/he could have little doubt as to exactly where the Liberals, Conservatives and Reform stood on the issue of immigration during the election. We know the Stouman report, published by the C.D. Howe Institute, formed the basis for the Reform Party's immigration policy. Reform declared its aim to cut immigration levels by as much as 50 percent. During the televised debates, Jean Chrétien responded to questions about immigration by trumpeting Canada's humanitarian obligation. "Canada is a very rich country and we have a responsibility in the world." The incumbent Conservatives, who recently passed Bill C-86 and shifted several of the Department of Immigration's key responsibilities into a new Ministry of Security, told Canadians that issues of immigration were in hand and, if elected, the Conservatives would stay the course.

But if Liberal and Conservative leaders tried to side-step the immigration issue, Reform did not. Nor was Reform content to just call for a cut in immigration numbers. The Party talked of selecting the "right kind of immigrants" which many understood to mean white immigrants.

Opponents of Reform saw Reform's stance on immigration as racially motivated and they did not hesitate to say so. They charged that the proposed cuts were not simply designed to limit numbers but, more importantly, they were designed to make race a factor in immigration selection. All discussion of immigration, critics charged, incited racial anxieties. It is important to remember that since 1971 the majority of Canada's immigrants were people of colour and by the early 1990s non-white immigration reached close to seventy percent of admissions.

Print media picked up on the issue of code words. In a *Vancouver Sun* article from October 1993, Saskatoon based author Murray Dobbin noted that Manning used the word 'balanced' to mean the kind, not the number of immigrants we need. As Dobbin put it, "if you or I aren't concerned about immigration the word 'balanced' sounds soothing. But for those who want to keep out people of colour, 'balanced' is a code word for stopping immigration from Asia and other places."<sup>171</sup>

Marshall McLuhan understood this kind of symbolic public discourse. In *Understanding Media*, McLuhan argues that what is said in the media, and how it is said, is largely irrelevant. Instead we must look at the medium through which it is expressed--"the medium is the message"<sup>172</sup> McLuhan argues that we must look at the effects of what is in the media rather than the words used to fill the page. It is precisely because the same information might affect different people in different ways that Reform's so called 'egalitarian' policies on multiculturalism and immigration came under attack. Critics argued that we must look closely

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<sup>171</sup> "Old-line parties put spin on losses to Reform by portraying upstart party as far-right-wing," *The Vancouver Sun* (October 14, 1993), p.A4

<sup>172</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (New York, 1964), p.7.



at who Reform's message appealed to. An opinion piece in the *Calgary Herald* during the election argued that while Reform articulates equality for all Canadians--a principle important for most Canadians--and "while these principles may seem attractive at first glance, questions need to be asked about what Preston Manning and his Reform party really mean when they talk about equality".<sup>173</sup>

One final note is necessary on the impact of code words. In a discussion of communication theories that emerged during the Cold War era, it was suggested that communication is not a simple "thought transference", nor could it produce a predictable response. Communication was described as "a sharing of mutually understood cultural symbols. Further, the greater the volume of the mutually understood symbols in the dialogue between persons, the more effective would be the communication process between those persons."<sup>174</sup> While this refers specifically to dialogue between persons in which the media serves as intermediary, the same is also true of 'cultural symbols' in political rhetoric. Just as 'cultural symbols' fill the media, so do they fill the rhetoric of political leaders and Preston Manning is no exception. Issues of race, bigotry, and cultural intolerance were inextricably tied to media discussion of immigration in the federal election of 1993. In September and October of 1993, immigration and the Reform Party agenda exploded in the media. In just forty-five days, more than two hundred news stories about Reform and immigration appeared in six major English language newspapers across Canada. In this forty-five days, the media cranked up the heat on a discussion that mainstream politicians had hitherto been loath to address.

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<sup>173</sup> "Reform must clarify meaning of 'equal'," *The Calgary Herald* (October 20, 1994), p.A4.

<sup>174</sup> Walter C. Soderlund et. al., *Media and Elections in Canada* (Toronto, 1984), p.30.

## The Dynamics Of Media

The federal election was officially called on September 8, 1993. More than two weeks into the campaign, on September 25, two articles entitled "Immigration: Too hot to handle" and "Immigration goes undiscussed" appeared in the *Toronto Star* and *Globe and Mail* respectively. Previously, little was found in the print media regarding immigration as an election issue. These two articles opened the flood gates as article after article focused on immigration. But why did these two articles suddenly appear? Were these articles reflective of public concern over the issue of immigration or did these articles incite discussion of immigration as an election issue? This seems to be the plaguing question.

In *Media and Elections in Canada*, Walter Soderlund points to the "gatekeeping" and "agenda-setting" role of the media. When information passes from a source to a receiver it is said to pass through a gate. The gatekeeper or journalist controls the volume of information coming through and the information that does pass through the gate will take on the characteristics of the "gate through which it passes".<sup>175</sup> This assumes a heavily biased slant in many news stories. Two journalists who witness the same event will undoubtedly write somewhat different stories about that event. Why is that? Journalists are shaped by their own value systems and perceptions, and as individuals they are also judgmental. The journalists' perceptions and value systems (and indeed those of other individuals with input into a story) can

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<sup>175</sup> *ibid.*, p.32

cause the story to be altered or aspects of the story omitted entirely. In *The Bias of Communication*, Harold Innis argues that just as historians may distort the past by placing undue emphasis on sensational events, so do newspapers present information which distorts reality.<sup>176</sup> By doing so the media creates another reality.

Not only is there a tremendous amount of bias that journalists, editors, and publishers bring to a story, but the reader also introduces his/her own biases. For example, a story about vicious crime may appear in the newspaper on any given day. Let us assume that the story identifies the alleged perpetrator is of African descent. Three people read the story; the first person may hold prejudiced views about blacks, the second person is unconcerned with issues of race, and the third person is deeply concerned about the volatile state of race relations. The first person may read the story and walk away having reconfirmed that blacks are violent, prone to crime, and this crime could not have been committed by a white person. The second person will read the story and be sickened by yet another violent crime committed in his/her city. The third person will read the story and be upset that the alleged perpetrator happened to be of African descent because s/he worries that it will fan racial fears. One person read a story on black violence, another person read about the dangers of living in a big city, and the third person read a story exemplifying the mass media's biased coverage of events. All three of these people read the same story. This hypothetical example is not far fetched. According to Wilbur Schramm, "...people tend to select from the media what will reinforce their existing predispositions".<sup>177</sup> Human agency therefore plays a pivotal role in the dissemination and reception of information

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<sup>176</sup>As quoted in J. Edward Gerald, *The Social Responsibility of the Press* (Minneapolis, 1963), p.137.

<sup>177</sup> Wilbur Schramm, *Responsibility in Mass Communication* (New York, 1957), p.53.

via the media. Soderlund defines gatekeeping as “any social institution, social context, activity or thing that has, as a consequence of its characteristics or behaviour, the effect of modifying media content.”<sup>178</sup> He cites cultural environment, type of medium, and organizational framework as 'Macro-gatekeepers', while 'Micro-gatekeepers' are the individuals/guidelines that perform or exist within these larger environments, for example editorial decision makers, print layout and design, institutional constraints, or policies and regulations. What is important to keep in mind is that the media is not neutral either in terms of how information is conveyed, or in terms of how it is received by the public.

This brings us back to a previous question. Does the media serve to create issues, or does the media simply respond to issues? This is a good place to turn to the agenda setting function of the media as it reveals something of the relationship between the media and the public. According to Shaw and McCombs:

This impact of the mass media--the ability to effect cognitive change among individuals, to structure their thinking--has been labelled the agenda-setting function of mass communication. Here may lie the most important effect of mass communication, its ability to mentally order and organize the world for us.<sup>179</sup>

Shaw and McCombs are in line with Noam Chomsky who also argues that the elite media “determine, select, shape, control, and restrict in order to serve the interests of the dominant elite groups.”<sup>180</sup> Chomsky sees this system of shaping and controlling as marginalizing the public and ensuring they do not get in the way of elites determined to govern without interference.

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<sup>178</sup> *ibid.*, p.33

<sup>179</sup> *ibid.*, pp.34-35

<sup>180</sup> from Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent* (National Film Board of Canada, 1992).

These arguments may be viewed as extreme in that they allow tremendous power to the media to shape public opinion. But, Chomsky rejects claims that his "institutional analysis" is a conspiracy theory not borne out by facts.

The other, less extreme, side of the media coin is outlined in *Public Opinion and American Democracy*. In this work V.O. Key revisits Institute for Social Research data that was the main source in the seminal study on voting behaviour, *The American Voter*. In looking at the impact of mass media, its use, and other variables such as level of voter education, participation in and knowledge of an election campaign, Key concludes that:

The flow of messages of the mass media is rather like dropping a handful of confetti from the rim of the grand canyon with the object of striking a man astride a burro on the canyon floor. In some measure chance determines which messages reach what targets.<sup>181</sup>

Key argues that interpersonal communication and group membership are factors "blunting the impact of media messages". Wilbur Schramm's view about the impact of mass communication is similar to Key's. Schramm argues that mass communication alone does not bring about changes in people's attitudes. Rather, "it works in a long, slow rhythm, and in combination with the audiences individual predispositions and group norms..." Schramm says that a good metaphor for explaining the effects of mass communication is one that,

...works like a creek. It feeds the ground it touches, following the lines of existing contours but preparing the way for change over a long period of time. Sometimes it finds a spot where the ground is soft and ready, and there it cuts a new channel. Sometimes it carries floating material...which helps to change the appearance of the

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<sup>181</sup> As quoted in Walter C. Soderlund et. al., *Media and Elections in Canada* (Toronto, 1984), p.37.

banks of the stream. Occasionally, under most favourable conditions and in time of flood, it washes away a piece of ground and gives the channel a new look.<sup>182</sup>

Whether or not the media hopes to set an agenda and, if so, to what extent the media is successful remains a moot point. Perhaps the most workable response to this question is the moderate one that sees the media playing “a potentially crucial role in *amplifying* forces working for change”<sup>183</sup>. How did this play in the two immigration stories that appeared simultaneously in the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail*? At most, those two stories served to confirm immigration as an election issue in the minds of many Canadians. Reflecting the moderate position, those stories served to re-enforce concerns about immigration and elevate immigration to a position of increased importance in politicians’ minds. This is in line with Wilbur Schramm who argues that “Mass communication provides ammunition and information...It helps provide a common background of knowledge...When a message comes to one member or more, it often bounces around the group. It is discussed with the influentials, squared with the group norms”.<sup>184</sup>

Allan Thompson, reporter for the *Toronto Star* who wrote “Immigration: Too hot to handle,” feels that stories like his on immigration can, and often do, play a role in intensifying certain issues during the campaign. There was a multiplier effect when “Immigration goes undiscussed...Immigration lurks as a potential campaign issue” by Kirk Makin appeared in the *Globe and Mail* on the same day as Allan Thompson's *Star* article. What prompted Makin to

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<sup>182</sup> Schramm, *op. cit.*, p.57.

<sup>183</sup> Soderlund, *op.cit.*, p.39, (emphasis mine).

<sup>184</sup> Schramm, *op. cit.*, p.56.

write the article? He recalled that in a conversation with his editor it came up that people were talking about the issue of immigration. Most politicians were not. The issue of whether or not Reform had a hidden agenda was also discussed as was the feeling that the traditional paternalistic 'motherhood thing' that Canadians have historically celebrated in immigration was no longer the reality on the street. Reporters visited two or three ridings around Metro that had absorbed a large, recent influx of immigrants to see how voters felt. They unearthed a great deal of prejudice and unease. Immigrants were accused of "bleeding the system" and taking away "our" jobs. Some voters reportedly told ethnic minority candidates that their 'white heritage' prevented them from voting for a minority member.

Makin agreed that, to a certain extent, journalists "think like a pack". With the appearance of two simultaneous front page stories in two key English language dailies, in the latter half of the campaign, media attention focused on immigration exploded. But did all the stories about immigration play a role in guaranteeing immigration's place as an election issue? Makin responded in the affirmative. He said that it is easy for reporters to forget the impact their stories can have. In retrospect, he was amazed how an off hand idea for a story can have such a far reaching influence on public policy or, in the case of an election, redirect public opinion and political behaviour. This was especially so during an election. Makin said that depending on how the dynamics play out, stories can reshape campaign issues. Indeed, he said, during an election reporters and editors are often looking to define the issues or, at least, define public priorities.

In the case of his immigration story, Makin was surprised and upset when his story was viewed by some as an attempt to incite a backlash against immigrants. Nevertheless it is quite

possible, even probable, that Makin and Thompson both, however indirectly, fed negative immigration sentiment.<sup>185</sup>

Zuhair Kashmeri, senior editor of *Now Magazine*, disagreed with Makin and Thompson's assertion that the journalist/editor can influence or even shape policy or public opinion. Instead, Kashmeri favours Chomsky's conspiracy theory. Having previously worked for the *Globe and Mail*, Kashmeri now largely rejects the mainstream media. Kashmeri believes that the dynamics of the media is such that it does not set its own agenda. "The front page is set in Ottawa, Queen's Park, City Hall, or on Bay Street." They decide what reports they are going to leak, they design their leaks and therefore set the agenda. According to Kashmeri "to think the media will actually set policy is really dreaming."<sup>186</sup>

## **The Media and the Campaign**

### **I. Methodology / Framework for Analysis**

In order to study the clash between immigration (and all of the related spin-off issues), the Reform Party, and the media, I have carefully reviewed a regional sample of English language newspapers from across Canada. The major daily newspaper from Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax was analyzed, as was Canada's self styled national newspaper, the *Globe and Mail*. Articles cited have been classified as "Minor" - signifying that

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<sup>185</sup> Interview with Kirk Makin, (telephone) January 5, 1994.

<sup>186</sup> Comments made by Kashmeri at a panel discussion on The Media and Immigration held by the Immigration and Citizenship Law Section of the Canadian Bar Association, (December 15, 1993).



the main thrust of the article did not focus on immigration specifically, but had one or two lines devoted to the subject, "Medium" - signifying that the article was about a number of things including immigration which received more than a brief mention, and "Major" - signifying that the article was about immigration as it related to the election. These classifications apply to editorials, opinions, letters to the editor as well as political cartoons.

Tables I and II offer a breakdown of all of the stories about issues having to do with immigration which appeared during the election period. These stories will be looked at in four different, historically linear time frames. The election was called on September 7, 1993 and coverage began the following day. The first time period (Period A) runs from the date the election was called (September 8) to just before Thompson's and Makin's articles appeared (September 24). The second period (Period B) runs from September 25 until the day of the English language televised debate (October 4). The third period (Period C) runs from October 5 until the day before John Beck was dismissed as a Reform Party candidate for anti-Semitic statements he made regarding immigrants and Jews to *Excalibur*, the York University newspaper (October 13). The final period (Period D) runs from the October 14 until election day (October 25).<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Precise numbers in each article classification are not the focus of this paper and the classifications of "Minor", "Medium", and "Major" are being used only to illustrate the visibility of immigration issues in the print media during the campaign. It is enough to know that while a "Minor" article would have to be carefully read to see its comments about immigration, a "Major" article would likely stand out by its headline. We are more concerned with overall trends than exact numbers. For these reasons, no inter-rater reliability was in the classification of these articles.

## II. Discussion

Table I indicates the number, and classification of articles appearing in each of the four periods by newspaper. Table II gives the same information for all of the newspapers combined.

Please note most letters to the editor were counted as "Major" because they were exclusively about immigration. Comments from the "Vox Populi" section of *The Globe and Mail* were counted as "Minor" because each person's comment was only one of four comments and therefore only constituted a fraction of the entire article.

Table I - Stories Classified by Newspaper

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Minor Story</b>	<b>Medium Story</b>	<b>Major Story</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>The Calgary Herald</i>	<b>A</b>	5	3	0	8
	<b>B</b>	0	1	3	4
	<b>C</b>	1	5	0	6
	<b>D</b>	6	9	9	24
				<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>
<i>The Halifax Chronicle-Herald</i>	<b>A</b>	1	3	0	4
	<b>B</b>	0	2	0	2
	<b>C</b>	1	0	0	1
	<b>D</b>	0	5	4	9
				<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>
<i>The Montreal Gazette</i>	<b>A</b>	2	6	1	9
	<b>B</b>	0	1	0	1
	<b>C</b>	1	1	2	4
	<b>D</b>	2	8	9	19
				<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>
<i>The Globe and Mail</i>	<b>A</b>	7	3	0	10
	<b>B</b>	2	2	1	5
	<b>C</b>	3	2	3	8
	<b>D</b>	2	1	10	13
				<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>
<i>The Toronto Star</i>	<b>A</b>	2	1	0	3
	<b>B</b>	0	1	3	4
	<b>C</b>	1	2	5	8
	<b>D</b>	2	2	15	19
				<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>
<i>The Vancouver Sun</i>	<b>A</b>	2	2	0	4
	<b>B</b>	2	1	1	4
	<b>C</b>	3	0	1	4
	<b>D</b>	3	2	17	22
				<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>

**Table 2 - All Stories Classified by Period and Importance**

	Period	Days	Minor Story	Medium Story	Major Story	Total
<i>All Newspapers</i>	A	17	19	18	1	38
	B	10	4	8	8	20
	C	8	10	10	11	31
	D	11	15	27	64	106
					<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>

In terms of total overall coverage by each of the individual newspapers, the average number of stories on immigration carried by each daily during the election period was 32.5. Four out of the six dailies were within four of the average. *The Calgary Herald* carried more stories than the average (42) while *The Halifax Chronicle-Herald* carried far fewer stories about immigration than the others (16). Perhaps an explanation for this may be found by looking at the variations in immigrant settlement patterns across Canada. In twenty-five Canadian cities immigrants, on average, represent 16.1 percent of the population. Immigrants made up almost 40 percent of Toronto's population in 1991. With the exception of Halifax, all of the other cities whose daily newspaper was examined were also above the Canadian average. Only seven percent of Halifax's population is made up of immigrants which may account for the low number of stories its daily newspaper carried.<sup>188</sup>

With every newspaper examined, the highest number of stories on immigration appeared in period D, the eleven day period immediately prior to the election. As well, the most "Major"

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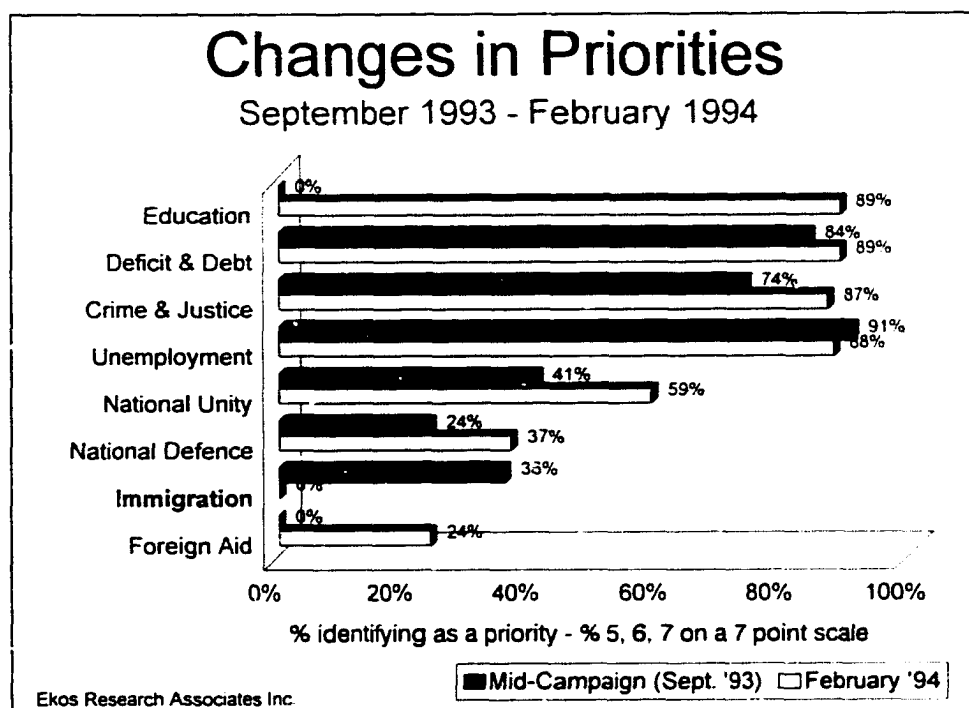
<sup>188</sup> Morton Weinfeld, "Immigration and Diversity," *Policy Options* (July-August 1993), p.70.

stories on immigration were also found in this period. Finally, with the exception of *The Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, each daily contained more "Major" stories in Period D than they did stories of "Minor" or "Medium" importance. In other words, as the campaign went on more and more attention was paid to Reform and the Party's immigration policies by all major dailies across Canada.

If we look at Table II which aggregates all of the findings, we see that 106 out of 195 (approximately 54 percent) stories appeared in the final period of the election campaign. And of the 106 stories appearing in period D, 60 percent were of "Major" importance. If we compare this to the first period of the campaign, period A, we see that with the exception of one "Major" story, all of the other thirty-seven stories were either of "Minor" or "Medium" importance. During the middle two periods we see a decline in the total number of "Minor" and "Medium" stories and an increase in the number of "Major" stories denoting that throughout the campaign we witness increasing attention paid to Reform and, also, to Reform's relationship to 'immigration' issues.

The findings of an Ekos Research study entitled "Setting the Domestic and International Context for Immigration Policy: Changing Societal Perspectives" are interesting in light of earlier discussion. In looking at the change in peoples' priorities between September '93 (mid-campaign) and February '94 (just five months later), Ekos identified the percentage of people who identified certain issues as a priority during each of the two periods. In both periods between 41 percent and 89 percent of people identified National Unity, Unemployment, Crime and Justice, and Deficit and Debt as a priority. With the exception of Unemployment, all of

Figure 1



these issues were given higher priority in February 1994 than they were mid-campaign. The issue of immigration occupied a special place. During the campaign, 36 percent of people identified immigration as a priority; however, just five months later immigration was not identified as a priority by anyone.<sup>189</sup> This dovetails with earlier arguments: first, that during the campaign the issue of immigration increasingly presented itself in the media. Second, (and perhaps consequent) the media, to some extent, both shapes peoples perspectives **and** reflects their concerns. Coverage of immigration escalated during the campaign and we know that 36 percent of people surveyed during this same period (but not after) considered immigration a priority.

<sup>189</sup> Ekos Research Associates Inc., "Setting the Domestic and International Context for Immigration Policy: Changing Societal Perspectives".

What position did each daily take with respect to Reform and immigration? With the exception of appeared between 1990 and 1992. *The Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, which had markedly less coverage of Reform and immigration than did any of the other dailies examined. Each paper had one or two editorials exclusively devoted to Reform and Immigration. While a news story is intended to offer balanced analysis and present 'both sides of the story', the editorials are decided by the editorial board and are intended to represent the views of the newspaper. There is no pretence of objectivity. The editorial board functions completely independently of the news room.<sup>190</sup>

*The Halifax Chronicle-Herald* did not run an editorial on Reform and immigration. As we move west, *The Montreal Gazette* ran an editorial on the debates. It was less than flattering of Preston Manning, "...he of the irritating whine and condescending manner". The paper saw no brave voices on the immigration issue, "...That all five parties are apparently scared stiff of white, mainstream backlash: in English they danced around the question of immigration (with Mr. Manning making the most obvious pitch for keeping immigrants out)".<sup>191</sup> While the *Gazette* failed to offer a detailed editorial discussion of Reform, it is important to note that Reform did not run candidates in the Province of Quebec.

Moving west *The Toronto Star*, long identified as a liberal pro-immigration paper, had two feature editorials, back to back, on immigration. Both came out strongly in favour of maintaining current immigration levels. Both editorials challenged the assumption that 250,000

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<sup>190</sup> Interview with Lou Clancy (telephone), April 24, 1995. Information supplied by Lou Clancy, Managing Editor of the *Toronto Star*, and substantiated by Warren Clements, Editor of the commentary page for the *Globe and Mail*. Interview with Warren Clements (telephone), April 25, 1995.

<sup>191</sup> "Not much light was shed," *The Montreal Gazette* (October 6, 1993), p. B2.

immigrants a year is too high at a time when there are few jobs, that we accept too many bogus refugees, that newcomers strain our already overburdened social safety net, that they defraud welfare and UI and that they commit too many crimes. The *Star's* editorial argued that a careful examination of our immigration record suggests the opposite and that "No studies have reached any such conclusion."<sup>192</sup> In the second editorial the *Star* argued that "Reform party leader Preston Manning may talk of a "colour-blind" policy, but many of his supporters reserve their lustiest cheers for his call to reduce immigration".<sup>193</sup> Perhaps what best represents the *Star's* opinion about Reform and immigration is their conclusion from the first editorial: "Anti-immigration feelings always rise during economic downturns and recede once the economy bounces back. A sound long-term policy would not be based solely on one passing phase of public sentiment. But that's precisely what Manning is proposing--and without any credible economic basis".<sup>194</sup>

*The Calgary Herald*, a Southam owned daily like *The Montreal Gazette*, was very up front about its view on Reform's immigration policy. Its key editorial on Reform and immigration, "Below the party line", held back no punches.

Like so much of the Reform Party programs, it's not the official line on immigration policy that many find alarming, but the questions it begs. The proposal to cut immigration from 250,000 to 150,000 annually seems innocuous enough. However, the number of immigrants is not the issue; it's the process of selecting them that rings alarm bells....To be blunt, there is a fear that immigration would be for sale to the highest bidder with the right skin color....Reform's opposition to government-supported multiculturalism also invites questions. Is it simply a cost issue, or something more fundamental?...Reform's philosophy suggests that it's not only the cost of the programs

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<sup>192</sup> "Honest debate on immigration," *The Toronto Star* (October 16, 1993), p.C2.

<sup>193</sup> "Whisper campaign against immigrants," *The Toronto Star* (October 17, 1993), p.H2.

<sup>194</sup> "Honest debate on immigration," *loc.cit.*



that is under attack, but the very philosophy behind it. And that is why Reform has not convinced many voters that its immigration program is as benign as it seems at first glance.<sup>195</sup>

Many at *Western Report*, a staunchly conservative and widely read weekly magazine in Western Canada, expressed concern that the *Calgary Herald* was far too negative when it came to Reform. A week prior to the above *Calgary Herald* editorial *Western Report* came to Reform's defence and ran the story "'Balanced' coverage, Southam-style"<sup>196</sup> in which it accused the *Herald* of anti-Reform Party bias both at the editorial and news coverage level. Their criticism came in the wake of a front page story on September 30, 1993 that suggested a Klu Klux Klan endorsement by a Reform candidate<sup>197</sup> and an opinion piece by Catherine Ford, the *Herald's* associate editor. In her column, Ford wrote, "His [Preston Manning's] party is the smooth and practised voice of the frightened right, who mask their agenda of revenge and retaliation in the bland exterior of change, accountability and freedom." Ford went on to conclude that:

To use the words and concepts that the core of the Reform party will understand-- because you cannot see the Devil does not mean he doesn't exist. Because Reform has the language of change down pat doesn't mean that you, too, aren't a target. Just as long as you stay happy, healthy, white, anglophone, employed and Canadian, Reform will speak your language.<sup>198</sup>

While both the *Montreal Gazette* and the *Calgary Herald* are owned by Southam Inc., their coverage and commentary on the Reform Party varied greatly. In Montreal, because there were no Reform candidates, Southam had neither public sentiment to influence nor represent;

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<sup>195</sup> "Below the party line." *The Calgary Herald*, (October 17, 1993), p. A6.

<sup>196</sup> "'Balanced' coverage Southam-style," *Western Report* (October 11, 1993), p.11.

<sup>197</sup> "KKK reference fails to faze Reformer," *The Calgary Herald* (September 30, 1993), p.A1.

<sup>198</sup> "Reformers hiding behind a mask," *The Calgary Herald* (September 30, 1993), p.A4.

however, in Calgary, the hotbed of Reform support. Southam saw a much clearer role for itself both in responding to public sentiment and, judging by its editorial comments, hopefully contributing to it.

The *Calgary Herald* was not the only western daily to take a strong stand against Reform's ethno-cultural policies. The *Vancouver Sun* ran an editorial entitled, "On immigration, parties are clear". The editorial supported the notion that immigration is the resounding unspoken issue in this election. "Immigration has been the great simmering issue of this election. It is, to some extent, one of the few policy areas on which the parties hold clearly different positions."<sup>199</sup> The *Sun* went on to present the different policies espoused by each party but was careful not to criticize Reform. They did, however, state that Reform's suggestion to cut immigration to 150,000 has "given rise to allegations of an underlying racist agenda."<sup>200</sup> The *Sun* also carefully outlined the Tories' seemingly racist rewriting of the nanny program that would "make it almost impossible for poor Third World women to qualify". Finally, the editorial acknowledged Jean Chretien's guarded benevolence with respect to immigration, which he revealed during the English televised debate when he stated that Canada is a rich country with a responsibility in the world. The editorial ends by gently endorsing the Liberals, "So, whether you would stay the course with the Tories, open your arms with the Liberals, or close the door with Reform, on immigration the choice is clear".<sup>201</sup> Perhaps the tone of the *Vancouver Sun's* editorial was muted in the wake of an editorial cartoon that appeared two days

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<sup>199</sup> "On immigration, parties are clear," *The Vancouver Sun* (October 22, 1993), p.A18.

<sup>200</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>201</sup> *ibid.*

earlier. The cartoon, which caused a protest outside the newspaper's office, depicted a large screen in which a hole had been cut in the shape of Klansman and a sign saying "STEP THIS WAY". The caption read "Reform Candidate Screening Process". The senior editor in charge of the editorial page stood behind the cartoonist who claimed the cartoon was a response to the expulsion of Reform candidate John Beck for his racist and anti-Semitic remarks.

Canada's self-styled national newspaper, *The Globe and Mail*, also had editorial comment on Reform. Theirs, however, was more favourable than that of the other dailies. In an editorial that appeared immediately after the English language debates, the *Globe* ripped into one critic who suggested that Manning's final plea in the debate for voters to vote their conscience was code for implying racial quotas and assaulting the poor, a message the *Globe* said "is nowhere stated, implied, or decipherable in the Reform program, even if they used invisible ink."<sup>202</sup> The editorial went on to grant Reform political legitimacy (something the other dailies thus far had refused to do) when it stated: "Mr. Manning did not have a good debate. But merely by appearing on the stage with the other leaders, he will have *confirmed* Reform's arrival as a legitimate choice for those fed up with the traditional parties..."<sup>203</sup>

Perhaps a better window into the *Globe's* views can be gained from an "Opinion" by William Thorsell, Editor-in-Chief of the *Globe*. Thorsell correctly argues that "The new parties (particularly Reform) are posing new questions--questions that have languished in the wings despite considerable public interest in their content."<sup>204</sup> Thorsell goes on to list the issues

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<sup>202</sup> "Reform in their sights," *The Globe and Mail* (October 6, 1993), p.A20.

<sup>203</sup> *ibid.*, (emphasis mine).

<sup>204</sup> "New parties bring overdue scrutiny to controversial questions," *The Globe and Mail* (October 9, 1993), p.D6.

requiring discussion, present a few facts about each issue, and pose some of these 'new questions'. On immigration, the facts Thorsell presents are as follows: Canada accepts immigrants and refugees at more than twice the rate of other industrialized countries which translates into roughly one percent of our population annually, over represented in major cities. Most come from very different cultures and are visible minorities. The questions Thorsell goes on to ask are:

What effect might this have on Canadian society *as we have known it*? Are the problems with *assimilating* new, non-European immigrants different from those of old? Are recent immigrants and refugee claimants over represented in crime statistics? If so, which ones and what can be done? What are the implications of this immigration for our education and political systems? What are the economics?<sup>205</sup>

Thorsell concludes that, "A repressive consensus has enveloped the main-line parties on many issues...New answers to chronic problems receive almost no airing, and new questions about old wisdoms rarely make the agenda. That's what is changing through the arrival of new parties. It's inevitable and fundamentally healthy". What is inevitable and fundamentally healthy? By the very "information" Thorsell provided and the questions he asked, he suggested strongly that immigrants are over represented in the criminal population, are not easily integrated and are a tax on our social system--three of the most common charges levied against immigrants.

*Maclean's* magazine was not so quick to endorse Reform. Instead, *Maclean's* urged voters to think carefully before giving their vote to the Reform Party. In an October 18 note from the editor, the electorate was warned not to think so much about what Reform's ethno-

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<sup>205</sup> *ibid.*, (emphasis mine).

cultural policies are, but to think of them "...in the emptiness of the rhetoric of campaign '93, it is difficult to be assured that the consequences of so many simple solutions have been fully explored."<sup>206</sup>

With the exception of the *Globe and Mail*, none of the dailies sympathized editorially with the Reform Party and their stance on immigration. However, there did appear to be consensus as to the muted nature of the debate on immigration. William Thorsell of the *Globe* argued that "A repressive consensus has enveloped the main-line parties on many issues."<sup>207</sup> *The Toronto Star* noted that, "Anxiety over immigration is on the rise, yet most Canadians remain reluctant to discuss it publicly for fear of fanning intolerance. Reflecting this sentiment, most political leaders have shied away from the issue."<sup>208</sup> The *Vancouver Sun* acknowledged that, "Immigration has been the great simmering issue of this election....And yet the major party leaders have worked so hard to evade the issue that it has never become central to the campaign."<sup>209</sup> As the *Toronto Star* so poignantly reminded its readers, the effect of this muted and long overdue discussion is that, "...such self-imposed silence robs us of a needed debate and cedes ground to polemicists. It also erodes public support, and democratic legitimacy, for a policy so vital to our past and future development."<sup>210</sup>

It was not only the editorial boards that acknowledged this apparent lack of discussion about immigration--an issue important to many. Both the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* carried a feature article on immigration as the phantom issue in this election on the same day

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<sup>206</sup> "Note from the editor," *Maclean's* (October 18, 1993), p.2.

<sup>207</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> "Honest debate on immigration," *The Toronto Star* (October 16, 1993), p.C2.

<sup>209</sup> "On immigration, parties are clear," *The Vancouver Sun* (October 22, 1993), p.A18.

<sup>210</sup> "Honest debate on immigration," *The Toronto Star* (October 16, 1993), p.C2.

(September 25). For that reason I have chosen September 25 as the cut off for the first period of analysis (period A).

### **Period A - The Date the Election is Called - September 24**

During this seventeen day period after the election call, a total of thirty-eight articles appeared in all of the dailies analyzed. However, only one story could be considered "Major". All of the rest were either of "Medium" importance (18), or "Minor" importance (19). The one "Major" article during this period appeared in the *Montreal Gazette*. The article was about Manning's displeasure with the national print media for its emphasis on two remarks made to him by callers to a Vancouver phone-in radio show. Manning claimed that during the radio show he discussed the debt, deficit, immigration, jobs, fisheries, and other issues, but the media unfairly picked up on only two particular callers, one who "chided Reform for adopting a policy four years ago opposing turbans in the RCMP."<sup>211</sup>

The "Minor" and "Medium" articles covered comments or questions about immigration, multiculturalism or turbans in the RCMP that were made by Preston Manning or others at Reform rallies. For example, when asked by high school students in Calgary about his lack of support for turbans in the RCMP, Manning's explanation that, "If you are going to alter the uniform of the RCMP for religious or cultural convictions, you ought to do it for everyone...if you can't do it for everyone, you ought not do it for any". According to the *Montreal Gazette*,

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<sup>211</sup> "Manning upset at media coverage of racism charges." *The Montreal Gazette* (September 15, 1993), p.A12.

Manning received thunderous applause.<sup>212</sup> The same incident was cited in the *Toronto Star*, the *Vancouver Sun*, the *Calgary Herald* and the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* on the same day. There were also "Minor" reports that Manning's plans to cut immigration and multicultural funding were cheered and applauded in Penticton, BC and Orillia, Ontario.

### **Period B - September 25 - October 4**

The second period ran from September 25 to October 4, the day of the English televised debate. In this ten day period a total of twenty articles appeared in all of the dailies analyzed. Much like the first period, there was an average of two stories per day in this period; however, the ratio between "Minor", "Medium" and "Major" stories during the second period was radically different. Of the twenty stories appearing, only four were considered "Minor", while eight were considered "Medium" or "Major". Two "Major" stories appeared on September 25, the already noted articles in the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail*. Both articles confronted, head on, the strange absence of political discourse on immigration during the election campaign to date. The *Globe and Mail* article began with a jolt:

Glancing theatrically around him as if he were John Wayne scanning the hills for wild savages, Philip Marshall lowered his voice and addressed the question of immigration. 'Just ask a lot of us WASPs--or white people...I was born and raised here. It's a great country. But our immigration laws stink. You just have to read the newspaper to see the crime. Where are these people coming from?'

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<sup>212</sup> "You'll pay our debts, Manning warns students." *The Montreal Gazette* (September 16, 1993), p.A8.

Any election campaign is bound to have concealed issues, subjects that aren't discussed because they make people uncomfortable or are absent from political agendas. Front and centre is immigration and refugee policy.<sup>213</sup> The article argued that sentiments like Mr. Marshall's were widespread. Darrell Bricker, vice-president of the Angus Reid Group said people's anxiety over the issue stems from concern or "fear about the rate of change in society"--a fear that is exacerbated in periods of economic downturn.<sup>214</sup> The article also pointed out that of the twenty-five voters interviewed in three of Toronto's surrounding communities--Markham, Brampton, and Pickering--all but two people expressed serious concerns about immigration, "The dominant theme was that immigrants and refugees exploit the welfare system and take scarce jobs".<sup>215</sup> Finally, Allan Rock, then Liberal candidate in a Toronto suburb, claimed that this "hot" doorstep issue is based squarely on misconceptions.

"Immigration: Too hot to handle?" appeared in the *Toronto Star* on the same day. The article discussed how difficult economic times and the changing face of society worked to harden opinions about immigrants and refugees. The article also pointed out the reluctance on the part of the established political parties to discuss the issue. Reform was filling the gap. Manning told a crowd at an Orillia rally that "You can't propose alternative linguistic , cultural or immigration policies without being called a racist and a bigot"--the crowd "roared in approval".<sup>216</sup> One women in the audience at the rally asked Manning what he was going to do "about immigration into our country of people who are coming in and raping our society and

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<sup>213</sup> "Immigration goes undiscussed," *The Globe and Mail* (September 25, 1993), p. A1.

<sup>214</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>216</sup> "Immigration: Too hot to handle?," *The Toronto Star* (September 25, 1993), p. B1.



raping our money and taking from us the Canadian people when we haven't got enough to go around". When asked about that exchange by Allan Thompson, Manning said:

You've got to be careful with the public because often people are not used to expressing themselves and when it blurts out it sounds wrong, extreme, emotional and irrational... A lot of these people are inarticulate, ordinary citizens who are trying to say 'I don't like what's going on' I think the public's instincts on that are in the right direction...Surely we ought to be able to discuss alternatives without having names thrown at you.<sup>217</sup>

On September 27, two days after Thompson's article appeared, *Toronto Star* columnist Frank Jones wrote an article entitled "Immigration policy is out of control" in which he stated that we are "swamping this region with more newcomers than it can **peacefully** accommodate".<sup>218</sup> He concluded that Canada must stop letting in so many immigrants. Doing so, he argued, only serves to exacerbate white resentment thereby increasing the likelihood that white supremacist movements will emerge. Like author William Gairdner, Jones suggested Canada should appease white supremacists and cut immigration levels. In other words, Canada should capitulate and surrender to the demands of racists. Needless to say, Jones's article generated a number of letters to the editor. Because these letters appeared on October 5, they have been counted in period C.

On September 30 the *Calgary Herald* ran a front page article which discussed the portrayal of Preston Manning and his reformers as Klansmen in a pamphlet produced by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, and distributed by an anti-free trade group. This article described the pamphlet which featured a picture of a KKK member in traditional garb decorated

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<sup>217</sup> *ibid.*, p.B1,B4

<sup>218</sup> "Immigration policy is out of control," *The Toronto Star* (September 27, 1993), p. E1 (emphasis mine).

with a green Canadian flag. The caption beside the picture read "Preston Manning's 'New Canada'". Apparently, a Reform candidate for Calgary Centre defended the anti-free trade group's right to freedom to speech.<sup>219</sup>

Finally, during this second period the *Calgary Herald's* "Ask the Leaders" section of its campaign coverage asked, "Do you intend to reform Canada's immigration policy? If so, what manner will you implement any changes and for what reasons?" While Jean Chrétien's and Audrey McLaughlin's answers contained phrases such as "humanitarian considerations" and "Rather than a policy which targets and scapegoats immigrants...", Preston Manning started out by saying, "The Reform party supports a *balanced* immigration policy that has as its focus Canada's economic needs..." Kim Campbell's answer was remarkably similar to Preston Manning's. She said, "We are working to ensure our program is more *balanced* and effective and that our laws are obeyed..." Manning indirectly referred to immigration as a net economic drain and Campbell implied that a link between crime and immigration.<sup>220</sup>

One of the other two "Major" articles appearing in period B was a letter to the editor of the *Vancouver Sun*. It was an angry response to those who called a Vancouver phone-in radio show to talk with Manning and charged that Reform was anti-immigrant and racist because of its stance on turbans in the RCMP.<sup>221</sup> The other was a small article in the *Calgary Herald* which reported that the words "Hate Party" were spray painted on a downtown Toronto Reform Party office.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> "KKK reference fails to faze Reformer," *The Calgary Herald* (September 30, 1993) p. A1.

<sup>220</sup> "Ask The Leaders," *The Calgary Herald* (October 1, 1993), p. A10 (emphasis mine).

<sup>221</sup> Letter to the editor, *The Vancouver Sun* (September 25, 1993), p.A14.

<sup>222</sup> "Reform office hit," *The Calgary Herald* (September 27, 1993), p.A6.

### Period C - October 5 - October 13

The third period runs from October 5 to October 13, the day before Reform candidate John Beck was dismissed for racist and anti-Semitic remarks he made regarding immigrants and Jews to *Excalibur*, the York University newspaper. In this nine day period a total of thirty-one articles appeared in all of the dailies analyzed. The number of articles about Reform and immigration, and the extent to which those articles focused specifically on Reform and immigration increased over the previous period. While the first two periods featured an average of two articles per day, with more “Major” articles in the latter period, the third period averaged more than three articles per day split evenly between the “Minor”, “Medium”, and “Major” categories. Until the televised debates Preston Manning was, for the most part, not acknowledged as a viable political alternative. Irrespective of coverage it received on the immigration issue, after the debate, Reform generated more coverage and was increasingly regarded as a political force. According to an opinion piece in the *Montreal Gazette* by McGill University Chancellor, Gretta Chambers, “Manning, sounding more reasonable than his program or followers suggest, gave Reform a legitimacy well beyond its protest-movement roots. The party and its leader enter the last lap of the campaign ahead of where they were before Monday’s debate”.<sup>223</sup>

Of the eleven “Major” articles that appeared during period C, several demand comment. An article in the *Montreal Gazette* stated that Fo Niemi of the Centre for Research-Action on

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<sup>223</sup> “Campbell’s faux pas in the election debate will haunt her,” *The Montreal Gazette* (October 7, 1993), p.B3.

Race Relations “senses a deep undercurrent of xenophobia and hostility toward new, non-white Canadians. Even as the ‘Tories try to out-Reform the Reformers,’ other parties...have been too reluctant to speak out strongly against racism, and in favour of immigration and multiculturalism.”<sup>224</sup>

Another article, written by freelance journalist Andrew Cardozo for the *Toronto Star*, appeared on October 5. Cardozo argued that as the Conservatives follow Reform’s lead and the Liberals say nothing, Reform is ‘setting the agenda on immigration’. Cardozo argued that, except for Reform, few politicians are talking about immigration:

For the Reform party, it is central to what the movement is about--restoring Canada to the mythical age of a British North America. But even Reform’s attack on immigration is coded, the message conveyed through an attack on multiculturalism--the policy that prevents every immigrant from being moulded into Reform’s vision of the real Canadian. The attack also conveys the message that we are becoming too multicultural, too fast. Read: too many colored immigrants.<sup>225</sup>

Cardozo supported the notion that the debate on immigration, which he felt was completely one-sided because of Reform’s propensity and the Liberals reluctance to discuss the issue, was rooted in misconceptions and plays on people’s fears. Cardozo argued that “Reform and the Tories are practising the politics of backlash, where reality has little currency”.<sup>226</sup> In the end, Cardozo commented on the need for an open, informed public debate on immigration so “Canadians could vent their frustrations, examine the reality of the situation and seek solutions to the problems”.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> “Ethnics believe Liberals can halt Bloc in some ridings,” *The Montreal Gazette* (October 12, 1993), p.A9.

<sup>225</sup> “Reform quietly setting agenda on immigration,” *The Toronto Star* (October 5, 1993), p.A23.

<sup>226</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>227</sup> *ibid.*

In "Fear and loathing hit the campaign trail" the *Globe and Mail* suggested that since the debates and Reform's resulting popularity gains, increased (usually negative) attention was being given to Reform. The article stated that "As fast as Reform gains support in parts of the country...it is being hit by charges that its conservative 'populism' is a mask for an intolerant, Right-Wing ideology that would seek to remake Canadian society".<sup>228</sup> The article went on to outline the origins of Reform and their policies as outlined in the 'Blue Sheet'. In terms of who the party appeals to the article stated that, "Reform tapped into a resentment of the modern welfare state, unease about how immigration was changing the face of Canada and fear of crime".<sup>229</sup>

On October 9 the *Vancouver Sun* carried an in-depth piece about Reform and immigration. The premise of the article questioned whether or not immigrants are an economic drain on Canada. The conclusion, a resounding 'no'! The article criticized Reform's stance on immigration. While Reform claims to be 'pro-immigration', or the right kind of immigration, the article suggests Reform's logic is flawed. Reform says that the number of immigrants should be cut by 100,000 and that immigrants should be selected based on whether or not they have the 'necessary human capital' that will benefit Canada; "A fundamental part of that policy is the unspoken insinuation that most immigrants are a drain on the economy".<sup>230</sup> Like several others, this article also advocates an informed public debate on immigration.

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<sup>228</sup> "Fear and loathing hit the campaign trail," *The Globe and Mail* (October 8, 1993), p.A1.

<sup>229</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>230</sup> "Reform breaks ranks on immigration," *The Vancouver Sun* (October 9, 1993), p.A6.

In period C the *Montreal Gazette* reprinted an editorial from the October 5 *Edmonton Journal*. The editorial began by saying that, "The Reform Party is so anxious to use immigrants as scapegoats...that it's either tripping over facts or ignoring them." This statement was in reference to Manning's then recently announced plan to end the sponsorship provisions for uncles, grandparents and cousins--something the Tories abolished a year earlier. The editorial quoted a Yellowknife Reform candidate who said that "People can come to this country provided they're not a burden on our society". The editorial ended by saying that, "Manning complains incessantly the 'the old parties' are engineering a smear campaign to portray Reformers as bigots. The truth is he's got a grassroots problem on his hands."<sup>231</sup> It was also in this period that William Thorsell's opinion piece about new parties bringing overdue scrutiny to certain issues appeared in the *Globe and Mail*.

Finally, in this period the *Toronto Star* printed four responses to Frank Jones's September 27 article "Immigration policy is out of control". Three of the letters opposed Jones's point of view as racist. They argued that Canadians should celebrate our diversity instead of suppress it. One letter, which agreed with Jones, argued that public discussion of immigration has been squelched and gives "Kudos to Frank Jones for braving the wrath of the politically correct crowd and speaking out for the silent majority...". The letter went on to point out many 'facts' about our immigration policy including: the alarmingly high rate of unskilled family class immigrants coming to Canada who "would not qualify for immigration under the point system"; the overburdening of our educational system because over 50 percent of new

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<sup>231</sup> Editorial from the October 5th *Edmonton Journal* as quoted in *The Montreal Gazette* (October 10, 1993), p.B2.

immigrants cannot speak English: schools that are “more concerned with multiculturalism than with imparting skills and knowledge”; and finally, she pointed out that “Refugees, legal or otherwise, receive better health care than the working people and middle class people”. She concluded by stating that “It should not be surprising to anyone that Canadians are fed up; not racist, just tired of being second-class citizens in their own country.”<sup>232</sup>

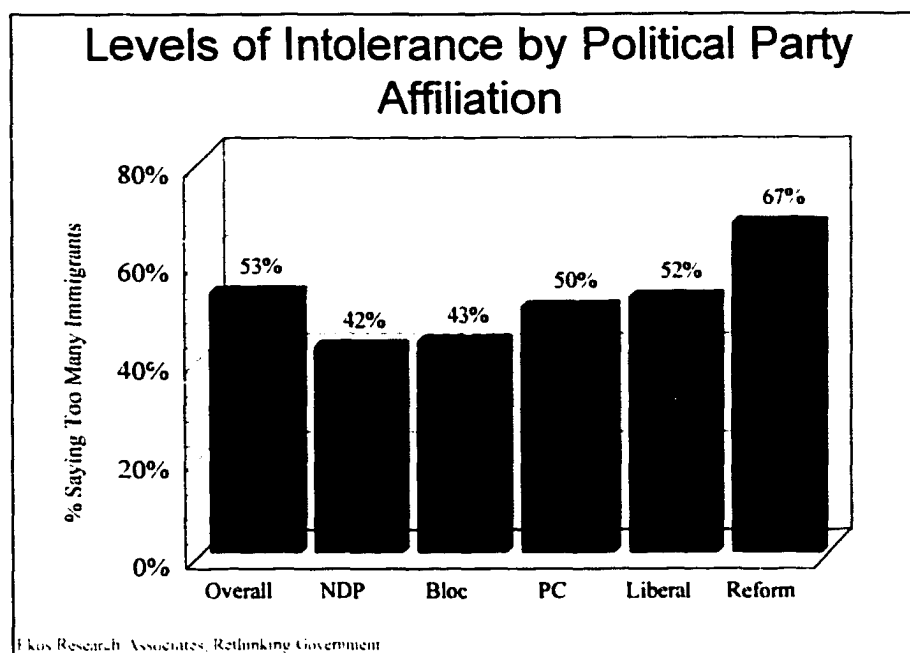
While most politicians attempted to steer clear of the issue of immigration in this third period of the election campaign, discussion of the issue in the print media became increasingly boisterous, and acrimonious. Even as many Canadians remained silent on immigration, others began to openly express their views. The tone of the debate was often nasty.

In February of 1994, just four months following the election, Ekos research examined patterns of intolerance by political party affiliation (see figure 2). Their findings revealed that a considerably higher percentage of Reform Party affiliates felt that there were “too many immigrants”. The average across all of the major parties was fifty-three percent. For Reform, sixty-seven percent felt there were “too many immigrants”--fourteen percent higher than the national average. On October 14 one Reformer, certainly among this sixty-seven percent, publicly revealed not only his feeling that there are “Too Many Immigrants”, but also that “they bring death and destruction” to Canada. This Reformer happened to be more than a party affiliate; he was candidate John Beck in the Toronto riding of York-Centre.

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<sup>232</sup> “Canadians are fed up not racist,” *The Toronto Star* (October 5, 1993), p.A22.

Figure 2



Prior to October 14 and John Beck's comments, increased attention was already being given to the Reform Party in the print media. Reform was gaining in popularity and its place as a political force in Ottawa was becoming a certainty. But with increased popularity and attention Reform also had to endure a revisiting of its darker side. Past statements were dredged up and Reform was attacked as a racist party that "doesn't want ethnics"<sup>233</sup>. Manning was said to appeal to "anti-French, anti-immigrant sentiment"<sup>234</sup>. Critics of Reform called its 'color-blind' immigration policy "veiled racism". A letter in the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* said that Reform's immigration policy is discriminatory and borders on racism.<sup>235</sup> A former BC premier

<sup>233</sup> "Combative campaigners engage in verbal slugfest," *The Montreal Gazette* (September 14, 1993), p. A6.

<sup>234</sup> "Reform and Bloc drain Tory votes from Right," *The Toronto Star* (September 23, 1993), p.A25.

<sup>235</sup> from "Voice of the People," *The Halifax Chronicle-Herald* (September 8, 1993), p.C2.



even went so far as to call Reformers “a bunch of Right-Wing wackos”<sup>256</sup>. And on October 9 the *Calgary Herald* printed an article entitled “Reformers prepare for mass attacks” which stated that central Canada was painting the Reform party as “a Right-Wing rump party for rednecks”.<sup>237</sup> Thus, prior to October 14, and before our final period of analysis, Reform’s policies on immigration and multiculturalism, in addition to opening the debate on immigration, began to elicit charges that Reform was the seat of racism and intolerance.

### **Period D - October 14 - Election Day**

The final period of the campaign ran from October 14 until election day (October 25). During this period, largely as a result of the statements made by Reform candidate John Beck, there was an explosion in the number of newspaper stories that dealt with immigration and accompanying issues. A total of one hundred and six stories appeared during this period, sixty-four of which were “Major”, twenty-seven “Medium”, and fifteen “Minor”. In the first three periods there were only two to three stories per day; however, in this last period there were ten stories per day, more than half of which fell into the “Major” category.

On October 14, 1993 all of the major newspapers across Canada carried a story about Reform candidate John Beck. Beck was quoted as saying “You have a \$150,000 guy there coming to buy a citizenship into Canada to create a job, fine, he’s bringing something to Canada. But what is he bringing? Death and destruction to the people.” Beck also said that he

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<sup>236</sup> from “On the campaign trail,” *The Calgary Herald* (October 7, 1993), p.A8.

<sup>237</sup> “Reformers prepare for mass attacks,” *The Calgary Herald* (October 9, 1993), p.A1.

feels like a minority speaking English, that immigrants are "overpowering" Canadians, and that when an immigrant gets a job, "he is taking jobs away from us, the gentile people, white people".<sup>238</sup> Beck allegedly labelled "immigrants as criminals" and said: "Anglo-Saxons need to reassert themselves".<sup>239</sup> Finally, Beck told the *Toronto Star* that, "I feel we have lost control of our country here...It seems to be predominantly Jewish people who are running this country".<sup>240</sup> When his remarks became public Beck was immediately turfed from the party. According to a Reform spokesperson, Beck's riding of York-Centre was in disarray at a very late stage in the campaign and therefore Beck seemed to have evaded Reform's 'stringent' screening process. According to broadcaster and political commentator Dalton Camp,

The important truth about Beck and his oddball, abhorrent racist-tainted views is not that he escaped the notice, until now, of his party superiors, but that there are many more just like him out there, babbling on about foreigners, people of color, queers, those who need hanging and the sublime consolations of remaining forever unilingual. Preston Manning is the leader of the party, but John Beck is the party.<sup>241</sup>

Oddly enough, in spite of, if not as a result of earlier charges by *Western Report* that Southam News failed to offer 'balanced' coverage of Reform, the *Calgary Herald* was the only daily in which the Beck story was not headline news. In the *Herald* the Beck story was seven sentences long tucked away on page eighteen of the first section.

As we know, after the debates, Reform's popularity increased tremendously. Fearing Reform's new found political legitimacy, critics dredged up old charges of racism and

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<sup>238</sup> "Reform candidate resigns amid allegations of racism," *The Montreal Gazette* (October 14, 1993), p. A6.

<sup>239</sup> "Tories hunting flawed Reformers," *The Globe and Mail* (October 15, 1993), p. A1.

<sup>240</sup> "Reform candidate who resigned slipped by screening, officials say," *The Toronto Star* (October 15, 1993), p.A16.

<sup>241</sup> "Conduct unbecoming," *The Toronto Star* (October 17, 1993), p.H3.

intolerance against Reform. According to the *Globe and Mail*, the Beck incident caused the Conservatives. "in a desperate bid to turn back the Reform tide, [to] launch an all-out hunt for more of the party's candidates they can saddle with a racist or sexist epithet."<sup>242</sup> While the Progressive Conservatives may have had the best reason to go after Reform, they were not alone in doing so. For two days following the uncovering and ousting of John Beck, the country's newspapers were littered with lists of Reform candidates who held questionable views about immigrants, ethnic minorities, and women. A front page story in the *Globe and Mail* started out by saying that "The Reform Party of Canada has one face it is selling the voters--that of Leader Preston Manning. But behind that image is a team of outspoken candidates whose personal views stretch well beyond the official party policy he articulates on the campaign trail."<sup>243</sup>

Who are these "bad apples" as Manning himself described them? Doug Christie, defence lawyer for Holocaust denier Ernst Zundel and founder of the separatist Western Canada Concept, was a Reformer.<sup>244</sup> Ted White, a Vancouver area Reform candidate was also a member of the separatist Western Canada Concept.<sup>245</sup> Hugh Ramolla, a Reform Candidate in Burlington, Ontario was quoted as "jokingly" telling a fellow Reformer to hit a female candidate. Apparently Ramolla's nomination a year earlier led to the resignation of several members of the riding executive because, in addition to Ramolla's sexist comments, he also made racist comments at an earlier nomination meeting.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> "Tories hunting flawed Reformers," *The Globe and Mail* (October 15, 1993), p. A1.

<sup>243</sup> "Reform Party's many faces," *The Globe and Mail* (October 14, 1993), p. A1.

<sup>244</sup> "Tories hunting flawed Reformers," *The Globe and Mail* (October 15, 1993), p. A4.

<sup>245</sup> "Manning fights to restore lustre to Reform's tarnished image," *The Halifax Chronicle-Herald* (October 15, 1993), p. D13.

<sup>246</sup> "Reform dogged by controversy over candidates," *The Montreal Gazette* (October 15, 1993), pp. A1,A12.

The *Toronto Star* printed a story that contained information about Reform candidates they obtained from faxes circulating throughout the country. Some of the comments contained in the article were:

- "It is a mistake to meet immigrants at the boat or plane and offer them a grant to preserve their culture"--Preston Manning
- "If you're a woman, colored and a lesbian, you're laughing all the way to the bank"--Thunder Bay Reform candidate Colyne Gibbons
- "They also happen to be very heavy in the drug scene in Toronto. They're working and not producing"--B.C. Reform candidate Keith Radatz referring to non-whites in Toronto.
- "We're a derivative of white European culture, this is our identity. Immigration should not (be allowed) to destroy it with excessive numbers of Asians and Blacks...Canada as we know it would disappear."--Former V.P. of the Peterborough Reform party executive, Rex Welbourn.
- "You know, we are letting in too many people from the Third World, the low blacks, the low Hispanics. They're going to take over the province."--Reform party official Alice White.
- "I don't think there is any doubt (the Reform party would limit non-white immigration). But that's a perfectly reasonable position for people to take, and it's accurate."--Reform party lecturer John Abbott.
- "Under the Reform party government, refugees would not be entitled to all of the provisions of the Charter (of Rights and Freedoms) just because they managed to get a foot on Canadian soil."--Preston Manning.<sup>247</sup>

However, the Reform Party candidate most heavily scrutinized in the media was Simon Fraser University economics professor, Herb Grubel. Grubel was quoted as saying that for their first fifteen years in Canada immigrants are a net burden on the economy. In a published paper in *The Immigration Dilemma*, Grubel suggested Canadians are largely opposed to non-white immigration.<sup>248</sup> One of the sources Grubel cited as opposed to Canada's present immigration

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<sup>247</sup> "Manning on defensive over racism charges," *The Toronto Star* (October 16, 1993), p.A19.

<sup>248</sup> "New immigrants a burden, Reform candidate says," *The Globe and Mail* (October 15, 1993), p. A8.

policy was Doug Collins, the Vancouver journalist Manning had to deny a party nomination because of his refusal to ‘sanitize’ his views. Grubel also “garnered objections for statements that appear to slide from economic theory into sexism or racism”.<sup>249</sup> According to economist Marjorie Cohen of the political science department at Simon Fraser University, “He [Grubel] out-right-wings the right wing...He’s outrageous in his anti-feminism and he’s a dangerous man with his views on minorities.”<sup>250</sup>

What was Preston Manning’s response to this storm of criticism? On October 15 Manning was quoted as saying that the “fear mongering” Liberals and the other political parties are, “...making unstable people opposed to immigration come to us by unfairly labelling us as racists...”<sup>251</sup>. Manning tried to explain that every party has its “bad apples”. In a *Montreal Gazette* article Manning was quoted as saying that “...these are the growing pains of a populist movement, not an indication of the character of the movement.”<sup>252</sup> After the uncovering of Beck, Manning changed course to mirror the strategy he used in previous years when Reform was dogged by charges of racism--Manning went on the defensive. At a Reform rally in Pickering, Ontario attended by four thousand people Manning “denounced racism and said extremists would be removed from [sic] his party.” He went on to say that Reform “invites all Canadians who deplore racism and extremism to help keep Reform free of such abuses”.<sup>253</sup> And Manning had his media defenders. In the *Globe and Mail* Kenneth Whyte, the western editor of

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<sup>249</sup> “Candidate: objective economist or extreme right-winger?” *The Vancouver Sun* (October 16, 1993), p.A9.

<sup>250</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>251</sup> “Liberals driving racists to Reform, Manning says,” *The Toronto Star* (October 15, 1993), p.A16.

<sup>252</sup> “Racists in Reform Party? That’s just ‘growing pains’,” *The Montreal Gazette* (October 17, 1993), p.A4.

<sup>253</sup> “Reform victim of extremists of political correctness, Manning says,” *The Vancouver Sun* (October 20, 1993), p.A4.

*Saturday Night*, argued that the attention given to Reform and John Beck during the last two weeks of the campaign was unfair and he blamed the Conservatives and their "all-out hunt" for extremists and bigotry in the Reform Party".<sup>254</sup> Whyte went on to compare the presence of John Beck to the infractions and criminal deeds of Mulrone's Conservatives as well as the "anti-Christian bigotry" of Sheila Copps and Dorothy Dobbie who called Preston Manning racist. Whyte even pointed out that Ernst Zundel once challenged Pierre Trudeau for the Liberal leadership.

In the last ten days before election day a great deal of attention was lavished on the Reform Party in general, and their policies on immigration and multiculturalism in particular. As a result of John Beck's comments, this final ten day period witnessed renewed discussion about code words, backlash, and who exactly the Reform message attracts. Academic experts were unanimous in their response. Most had a unifying theme. A letter to the editor in the *Globe and Mail* from historian Tony Hall at the University of Lethbridge took issue with historian David Bercuson's characterization of Reform as an extension of Diefenbaker's "One Canada" vision. In his letter, Hall argued that:

The truth is the Reform Party's deepest roots lie not in Canada but in the Right-Wing politics in the United States. Mr. Manning and his Reform Party colleagues are simply giving a Canadian voice to a worldwide current of ideological extremism that draws sustenance from the scapegoating of immigrants, native people and linguistic minorities. Let us not forget where these politics of intolerance once took the world, plagued as we are by bad economic times.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> "The bells of bigotry ring true in more parties than Reform," *The Globe and Mail* (October 23, 1993), p.D2.

<sup>255</sup> "The roots of Reform," *The Globe and Mail* (October 22, 1993), p.A30.

Hall argued that Reform emerged as part of the conservative backlash epitomized by Richard Nixon's 'silent majority'. York University political science professor James Laxer concurred. He argued that, "The Reform party gives a voice to a societal reaction against the complexities of the modern world. Over the past century, in Europe and North America, there have been recurrent waves of reactionary politics, of a more or less virulent character."<sup>256</sup> Laxer went on to explain that these movements traditionally appeal to white, middle aged males, "...trying sincerely to address concerns they have with a system which no longer serves their interests."<sup>257</sup>

In a *Vancouver Sun* article Simon Fraser University political scientist Bruce Foster argued that Reform policies "stem from a visceral unease" with social changes that have taken place since the 1950s, "You have to look at Reform as the revenge of the previous generation. They represent people for whom Canada meant white, middle-class Christian values and self-reliance."<sup>258</sup> A Southam news 'Analysis' piece in the *Montreal Gazette* stated that, "...[Manning's] program obviously is a vehicle for a backlash against many of the elements right-wingers associate with a too tolerant, liberal society...Manning's sincere image and anti-establishment mindset have tremendous appeal to an angry public."<sup>259</sup> A *Maclean's* article from October 18 expressed a sentiment similar to Foster's. The article explained that contrary to being about a "New Canada", Reform is about "a very old Canada when European immigrants settled the plains. They were then at the very forefront of Canadian civilization, gathering

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<sup>256</sup> "Manning: Reactionary cat among conservative pigeons," *The Toronto Star* (October 17, 1993), p.H3.

<sup>257</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>258</sup> "Old-line parties put spin on losses to Reform by portraying upstart party as far-right-wing," *The Vancouver Sun* (October 14, 1993), p.A4.

<sup>259</sup> "Despite Manning's protests, Reform attracts intolerant Canadians," *The Montreal Gazette* (October 19, 1993), p.A11.

bountiful harvests from the new land. They have long since lost their pre-eminence. The Reformers' politics is a cry from the heart, a protest against a contemporary world they never made."<sup>260</sup>

Allowing that these are the 'roots' of Reform, many argued that Preston Manning and Reform party policies spoke in 'code words' which attract the quintessential, rugged male, longing for mythical days gone by. Author Murray Dobbin argued that "human capital" is a code word for "immigrants [who] should be able to fit in right away. What he is talking about is English-speaking white people but he doesn't say English-speaking white people."<sup>261</sup> James Laxer didn't feel that Manning was any more subtle. In discussing the televised leadership debate, Laxer argued that Manning carefully asked the leaders what immigration level they favoured. The response from everyone was the same; one percent of the population or approximately 250,000 annually. Laxer went on to state, "Then in Orwellian fashion, while claiming that he was 'pro-immigration,' Manning said 'our position is that it should be lowered to 100,000 from 150,000.'" Moments later, Manning stated that he favoured "the automatic deportation of non-citizens convicted of serious crimes". Laxer argued that Manning put out an "unmistakable message". To those Canadians who feel that we have too much immigration into Canada and that immigrants are largely responsible for much of our violent crime, argued Laxer, "the only party to vote for is Reform".<sup>262</sup> *Toronto Star* columnist Michele Landsberg picked up on the same message when she stated that "You have to wonder how straight-arrow a guy really

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<sup>260</sup> "This election needs a touch of magic," *Maclean's* (October 18, 1993), p.58.

<sup>261</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>262</sup> "Manning: Reactionary cat among conservative pigeons," *The Toronto Star* (October 17, 1993), p.H3.



is when he can look right into the camera, say, 'We're a pro-immigration party,' and then explain that he'd cut immigration in half, carefully mentioning 'refugees' and 'crime' in the same sentence."<sup>263</sup>

Another comment made by Preston Manning during the televised leader's debate also raised the issue of code words. In his closing remarks Manning warned listeners that the media will attempt to choose the defining moment in the campaign. Instead, he asked listeners to ignore the media clips and "let the defining moment in this election be when you go into the polling booth alone, without TV, without radio, without newspapers, and vote with courage of conviction for what is right for yourself, for your children, and for your country".<sup>264</sup> This comment generated criticism from Tory advisor Hugh Segal. Segal argued that the suggestion to follow one's conscience was really "Reform 'code' for race-based immigration quotas and spending cuts aimed at the poor". But, this message, according to the *Globe*, was "nowhere stated, implied, or decipherable in the Reform program, even if they used invisible ink"<sup>265</sup>.

A *Vancouver Sun* article about Herb Grubel and Ted White argued that Reform attracted many "stealth candidates with a hidden agenda who hide behind code words, especially on sensitive issues such as immigration and cultural diversity".<sup>266</sup> The article quoted Alan Dutton of the B.C. Organization to Fight Racism as saying "The main point is that this whole thing about cutbacks in immigration is really feeding into an anti-immigration hysteria."<sup>267</sup> The Reform Party tapped into a "hysteria" that is very real. According to the February 1994 *Ekos*

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<sup>263</sup> "Thank students for exposing Reform racists," *The Toronto Star* (October 19, 1993), p.C5.

<sup>264</sup> "Preston provokes the pundits," *Western Report* (October 18, 1993), p.13.

<sup>265</sup> "Reform in their sights," *The Globe and Mail* (October 6, 1993), p. A20.

<sup>266</sup> "Anti-Racism group targets two Reform candidates," *The Vancouver Sun* (October 15, 1993), p.A1.

<sup>267</sup> *ibid.*

Research study (four months after the election). 53 percent of Canadians said there were “too many immigrants compared to 48 percent in April of 1993 (four months before the election). As well, Ekos found a high correlation between tolerance for immigration and tolerance for visible minorities—87 percent of people who felt there are “too many immigrants” also felt there are too many visible minorities.<sup>268</sup>

Crime and immigration were not the only issues subtly melted together by Reform according to critics. Reform openly advocated tightening up on government spending and eliminating welfare payments to certain groups. Immigrants and welfare fraud became instant election issues when news that Somali strongman Mohammed Farah Aidid’s wife was collecting welfare hit the front page four days prior to election day. Then, on October 20 many papers carried front page allegations about Somali refugees making multiple welfare claims and using the money to buy arms for warlords in Somalia. A front page story in the *Vancouver Sun* carried news that 80-90 percent of the Somali community are on welfare, with the average person making two claims, and some individuals making as many as five or more claims. Apparently, one Somali was convicted last year of making nineteen claims totalling \$12,500 per month. Finally, four days prior to election day, the article estimated that the amount of Canadian welfare dollars going to Somalia “could easily be several million dollars a month”.<sup>269</sup>

On October 23rd the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* repeated this same allegation. In an article about how a highly visible soldier, major-general Lewis Mackenzie, was attracted to

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<sup>268</sup> *Setting the Domestic and International Context for Immigration Policy: Changing Societal Perspectives* Ekos Research Associates Inc.

<sup>269</sup> “Welfare scam ‘buying arms for Somalia’,” *The Vancouver Sun* (October 20, 1993), p.A1.

Reform, Mackenzie was quoted as saying, “[Reform] has hit the refugee button and we know in Ontario we have [Somalian warlord] General Aidid’s wife, and second wife, and six brothers and sisters and a whole bunch of kids on welfare. So that strikes a chord.”<sup>270</sup>

Perhaps James Laxer was correct when he concluded that Manning played to the current public backlash. According to Laxer, Manning is “the cat among the pigeons” with “a perfect ear for picking up animosities, magnifying them and transmitting them back to the populace”.<sup>271</sup>

One of these animosities is evident from a letter to the editor of the *Toronto Star* on October 24. The letter suggested that Canadians correct “some obvious abuses of the immigration and welfare system” by only making welfare payments to Canadian citizens, creating an immigration policy based on mandatory sponsorship by citizens “personally liable for the care and welfare of immigrants and refugees...with no tax relief given”. The list went on.<sup>272</sup>

In two different issues of *Maclean’s* during the campaign there was a chart with each party’s stands on five different issues. While neither chart contained immigration as one of the five issues, Manning’s not so subtle message on immigration came through loud and clear. Reform mentioned immigration in both charts. In the first chart under the issue “Crime and Punishment” Manning said, among other things, “He wants to...ensure that non-citizens, other than refugees, who are convicted of indictable offences face deportation...”<sup>273</sup> In the second chart which appeared on October 18, “Crime and punishment” was not one of the issues tied to immigration. This time, under “Jobs and the economy” Manning said, among other things, that

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<sup>270</sup> “Ex general ‘warm’ on Reform invite,” *The Halifax Chronicle-Herald* (October 23, 1993), p.A2.

<sup>271</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>272</sup> “Immigration, welfare abuses need fixing,” *The Toronto Star* (October 24, 1993), p.B2.

<sup>273</sup> “Ready, Set, Go!” *Maclean’s* (September 13, 1993), p. 21.

“until the economy improves, the number of immigrants that Canada accepts each year should drop from 250,000 to between 100,000 and 150,000.”<sup>274</sup>

If, as many critics suggested, Reform had its roots in the right-wing conservative backlash of the past few decades, and it used ‘code words’ and less subtle means to appeal to Canadians, exactly who are those Canadians who sign on to Reform’s message? Activist Andrew Cardozo argued that “The core value of the Reform party has been the issue of fear”. He felt that John Beck plainly demonstrated Reform’s appeal to racists.<sup>275</sup> Southam News was just as harsh in their criticism of who Reform appeals to when it noted that “While it [Reform] is careful to couch its statements in non-inflammatory rhetoric, Reform appears to be a magnet for Canadians with intolerant views about non-whites...for those who are anti-immigrant, Reform makes it clear enough that fewer immigrants and refugees would be coming into the country if Manning ran things.”<sup>276</sup> James Laxer, in addition to arguing that Reform appeals to white, middle-aged males who feel the government no longer cares about their interests, argued that there “can be no doubt that the Reform party also attracts the hard-core haters in our society who are openly racist.” Laxer argued that in France the ultra-right-wing Jean Marie Le Pen’s National Front “feeds on the same fears as the Reform party.”<sup>277</sup> Perhaps less bold was Michele Landsberg who spoke more in terms of what Reform appealed to rather than to whom. She stated that “Manning has appealed to Canadians’ worst instincts: to blame and fear ‘others’ in a

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<sup>274</sup> “Where the major players stand,” *Maclean’s* (October 18, 1993), p.28.

<sup>275</sup> “Immigration policy defended,” *The Calgary Herald* (October 16, 1993), p.A11.

<sup>276</sup> “Despite Manning’s protest, Reform attracts intolerant Canadians,” *The Montreal Gazette* (October 19, 1993), p.A11.

<sup>277</sup> “Manning: Reactionary cat among conservative pigeons,” *The Toronto Star* (October 17, 1993), p.H3.

time of crisis.”<sup>278</sup> NDP leader Audrey McLaughlin asked about Reform’s agenda and said “I’ve always believed that we should appeal to the best in people.”<sup>279</sup> implying that Manning and Reform do the opposite.

In the final period before the election, newspapers also carried many letters to the editor representing a wide range of opinions Canadians held about Reform and immigration. Amidst all of the criticism of Reform as racist, a letter in the *Vancouver Sun* stated, “Thought I’d just pitch this to the “pigeon-holers” out in left field. I just happen to be young (oooooooooh!). I also happen to be an immigrant (aaaaaaaah!) and very female (eeeeeeek!). But now the clincher. I’m voting Reform! Anyone got the smelling salts?”<sup>280</sup> A writer to the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* criticized the media, academics, and political elites for ‘discovering Reform’ and bringing on “The usual array of unsubstantiated anti-right wing epithets and personal attacks on the leader, Preston Manning [which] are being thrown about in the middle of another national vote”.<sup>281</sup> The *Calgary Herald* randomly selected six readers to contribute to “The Local View” throughout the campaign. On election day, when these six people expressed their views on the parties, two women, both describing their occupation as “Home-maker” came out in favour of Reform. One women argued that because the other parties could not attack Reform on its policies they resorted to a smear campaign, “First they dismissed Reform as nothing more than protest votes. Then they tried to have us believe Reformers were racist, anti-French women haters...”. The other women was disgusted with the Tories personal attack on Jean Chrétien and

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<sup>278</sup> “Thank students for exposing Reform racists,” *The Toronto Star* (October 19, 1993), p.C5.

<sup>279</sup> “McLaughlin targets Reform’s immigration policies,” *The Montreal Gazette* (October 20, 1993), p.A10.

<sup>280</sup> Letter to the Editor, the *Vancouver Sun* (October 23, 1993), p.A17.

<sup>281</sup> Letter to the Editor (“Democratic Victory”), *The Halifax Chronicle-Herald* (October 21, 1993), p.C2.

felt that the “Liberals were no better with their fear and racial attacks on Reform”.<sup>282</sup> The *Globe and Mail*, acknowledging that statistics from opinion polling do not always reflect the depths of people’s feelings, printed comments from Canadians who participated in a *Globe/ComQuest* election poll. A forty-four year old teacher from Sudbury said, “I more or less made my decision to vote Reform on the policies. They are more Right-Wing--getting rid of multiculturalism and reducing welfare” he further said that he wouldn’t change his vote to Liberal unless they adopt policies similar to Reform on these issues and that: “It’s too early to decide if Preston Manning is a good leader. But I like the Reform Party’s stance to abolish multiculturalism and work towards abolishing bilingualism”.<sup>283</sup>

While all these comments signal the swing to Reform, the media carried many more letters that were anti-Reform. Likely in an effort to show balance or neutrality, many pro-Reform letters were offset by anti-Reform ones. But it was hard to maintain balance when the majority of letters mailed to newspapers were hostile towards Reform. Even some of those supportive of Reform painted an unflattering portrait of Reform or its leader. The same *Globe and Mail* “Election voices” section mentioned above carried a comment from a Toronto area nurse who was going to vote Reform “because she thought the party was new and it had interesting policies. But I looked at the Reform Party’s immigration policy. I think he [Preston Manning] is a racist”.<sup>284</sup> The “Local View” in the *Calgary Herald*, offset two comments supporting Reform with a comment from a twenty-seven year old student, “[The Reform

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<sup>282</sup> “The Local View,” *The Calgary Herald* (October 24, 1993), p.A10.

<sup>283</sup> “Election voices,” *The Globe and Mail* (October 18, 1993), p.A6.

<sup>284</sup> *ibid.*

Party's] name was consistently used to justify and confirm a whole range of frighteningly intolerant views...the Reform Party is becoming indistinguishable from its followers. Which is the excuse and which is the problem? Since bigotry and lack of compassion do not figure on my list of Christian values, I for one will stand up and vote "No" to Reform on Oct. 25".<sup>285</sup> A letter in *The Halifax Chronicle-Herald* protested that, "Preston Manning's appeal to the intolerant and the extreme right has been clearly demonstrated by rhetorical questions to him regarding the elimination of social benefits for women and the reduction of the number of immigrants entering Canada".<sup>286</sup>

Both the *Toronto Star* and the *Vancouver Sun* carried letters expressing dismay at the lack of compassion in the immigration debate. A *Vancouver Sun* letter told the story of a long overdue (20 years) family reunification that had recently taken place but warned that under Preston Manning, this reunification might not have been possible. "It seems to me that whether we are discussing immigration or taxes or poverty, the real deficit is not in our accounts, but in our compassion for those amongst us who are not as lucky as we are".<sup>287</sup> Perhaps even more telling was a letter from one reader acknowledging that immigration has been the 'phantom issue' in this election. The writer remarked disappointedly that "Lost amidst this 'non-discussion' is the vital importance of refugee protection. At a time when human rights violations continue to devastate countries throughout the world, it is tragic that no political

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<sup>285</sup> "The Local View," *The Calgary Herald* (October 24, 1993), p.A10.

<sup>286</sup> Letter to the Editor ("Selling our soul"), *The Halifax Chronicle-Herald* (October 21, 1993), p.C2.

<sup>287</sup> "Manning's immigration policy low on compassion," *The Vancouver Sun* (October 20, 1993), p. A14.

leader is strongly and publicly reaffirming the critical importance of Canada's commitment to refugee protection".<sup>288</sup>

Two other letters are worth noting, both of which expressed the need for an open public debate on immigration. One, in the *Toronto Star*, responded to an editorial explaining the benefits of immigration. The writer complained that he was "sick and tired" of rhetoric from politicians and the media about how immigration does not lead to unemployment, increased crime, or larger welfare roles. If true, he wanted to see the proof--a feat he felt was impossible because of the police department and welfare departments refusal to compile 'racial' statistics. Finally, the reader wanted to know "the percentage that are not Canadian citizens, and also how many refugees, legitimate or otherwise, are presently being housed, clothed, fed and receiving medical benefits, courtesy of the Canadian taxpayer".<sup>289</sup> This person seemed to already have his mind made up about the 'benefits' of immigration; however, his demand for valid information poignantly reminds Canadians of the need for an open debate on immigration. If immigration is a benefit to Canada, he argued, present the evidence. "Secrecy will always spawn mistrust."

The *Globe and Mail* printed a letter from Andrew Cardozo, a response to *Globe* Editor-in-Chief William Thorsell's opinion that Reform opened debate on unspoken issues like immigration. Cardozo argues that Thorsell only raised questions about the potential and perceived problems associated with immigration, and that these were "Good questions that should be answered more clearly if only because the answers are not at all as dour as some

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<sup>288</sup> "Refugee protection tragically ignored," *The Toronto Star* (October 24, 1993), p.B4.

<sup>289</sup> "If immigration isn't the problem let stats speak for themselves," *The Toronto Star* (October 24, 1993), p. B2.



would have us believe”.<sup>290</sup> Cardozo presented his list of what immigration has done for science, business, and culture in Canada and he pleaded for an “open and stimulating debate on immigration which will focus on past, present and future--positive and negative--of immigration”.<sup>291</sup>

The *Calgary Herald* contained a letter from a senior and war veteran who claimed “no allegiance to any political party”. The gentlemen argued that both *The New Canada* (“Manning’s political bible”) and the Reform party *Blue Book* were “sanitized to be acceptable to mainstream Canadians”. He went on to say that he asked many of his contemporaries why they joined Reform and:

whilst the finding may be considered anecdotal rather than scientific, the first three reasons in order of importance are an expressed dislike for the French and/or Quebec, the idea that immigrants are ruining the country and the desire to support anyone other than the existing political parties.<sup>292</sup>

Another letter in the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* also suggested Canadians look carefully at Reform’s *Blue Sheet*, “The Reform party’s policies on native affairs, multiculturalism and immigration , in their Blue Sheet, appear...to be racist in form and substance”.<sup>293</sup> The letter finished by saying that before Canadians vote they should take a careful look at the damage Reform would do to the “emerging struggle against racism. We should cherish the present and

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<sup>290</sup> “Looking at Reform,” *The Globe and Mail* (October 21, 1993), p.A18.

<sup>291</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>292</sup> “Manning’s writing ‘sanitized’,” *The Calgary Herald* (October 23, 1993), p.A5.

<sup>293</sup> “Celebrate Diversity,” *The Halifax Chronicle-Herald* (October 20, 1993), p.C2.

future Canadian mosaic of 'hyphenated Canadians,' as Reform terms them, and celebrate diversity, not attempt to destroy it".<sup>294</sup>

Finally, in the ten day period prior to the election, a few articles appeared that dealt less with Reform and charges of racism than they did with the issue of immigration itself, but the articles could not help but play with Reform's hands. Six days before the election the *Calgary Herald* and the *Vancouver Sun* reported on research findings from DRI/McGraw Hill, an economic research company. The headline on the front page of the *Calgary Herald* on October 19 read "Immigration: Population rise adds to burden". A company senior analyst concluded that increased immigration in the early 1990's, just prior to the recession, exacerbated the unemployment rate by 3.5 percent, and concluded that increased immigration in hard economic times complicates the immigrant integration process. The analyst did admit that he had not taken into account increases in employment that some immigrants generate. Nevertheless, he warned that in the first five years after arrival immigrants have higher unemployment rates than Canadians. Overall, he suggested that immigration levels were raised at the worst possible time and with the recession, immigrants are having an unusually difficult time integrating and succeeding. While the *Vancouver Sun* carried a similar story, the story was not carried in the other dailies, not even in Toronto where DRI/McGraw Hill is based. Perhaps that is all for the best as far as the analyst is concerned. One of his final comments referred to the fact that

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<sup>294</sup> *ibid.*

immigration was the “silent issue” in this election. He stated that immigration “is a topic that goes ‘where many fear to tread’”<sup>295</sup>.

Another immigration story appeared in three dailies under three different headlines. A few days before the election an opinion piece by Ken MacQueen of Southam News titled “Canada’s changing face,” “New Complexion: Immigration has changed Canada’s face for the better,” and “Immigration a ‘doorstep issue’ in B.C.” appeared in the *Vancouver Sun*, the *Montreal Gazette*, and the *Calgary Herald* respectively. The article explained that immigration had become a ‘doorstep issue’ in British Columbia because of the discomfort associated with the increasingly ethnically diverse nature of the provincial population and the increased number of ridings traditionally held by people with names like Turner and Campbell now being “contested by a newer wave of immigrants named Tao, Wan or Dhaliwal”<sup>296</sup> Arguing that these changes are occurring more dramatically in B.C. than elsewhere, MacQueen concluded “Immigration is a doorstep election issue here and a prime reason that Reform, with its policy of cutting immigration levels, may carry two thirds of the province”<sup>297</sup> If MacQueen was correct and immigration was the predominant reason for Reform popularity in B.C., then his only miscalculation was in terms of just how popular Reform would prove to be. Three days after the MacQueen piece appeared, Reform won not seventy-five percent, but one hundred percent of British Columbia’s seats in the House of Commons.

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<sup>295</sup> “Population rise adds to burden,” *The Calgary Herald* (October 19, 1993), p.A1. Also cited under the heading “Unemployment” was “Immigration a two-edged sword,” *The Vancouver Sun* (October 19, 1993), p.A8.

<sup>296</sup> “Canada’s changing face,” *The Vancouver Sun* (October 22, 1993), p.A19, “New Complexion: Immigration has changed Canada’s face for the better,” *The Montreal Gazette* (October 22, 1993), p.B3 and “Immigration a ‘doorstep issue’ in B.C.” *The Calgary Herald* (October 25, 1993), p.A3.

<sup>297</sup> *ibid.*

A *Globe and Mail* article took the suggestion of immigration as a 'doorstep issue' one step further. The article looked at immigration not as the preserve of white, middle Canada, but also as a doorstep issue for new immigrants as well. The idea was not a new one. One of the major ironies about the traditional backlash against immigrants is that even recent immigrants are not above joining the backlash. Indeed, more established immigrant groups might well oppose the immigration of new groups on the same grounds that British Canadians once opposed their immigration. Hong Kong born PC candidate Ben Eng commented that, "What plays very heavily at the door is concern about people who abuse the immigration system. A lot of immigrants who have come to Canada the right way express concern about fellow countrymen who have come the wrong way". A Reform candidate noted that when immigration discussion "does surface...it's usually brought up by people who have been through the immigration system and now think it is getting too soft".<sup>298</sup> Nevertheless, traditionally the preserve of the Liberal party, the ethnic voters did not abandon the old line parties for Reform. They might have reservations about the current wave of immigrants but by generally rejecting Reform as a viable political alternative, they obviously harboured greater reservations about Reform and its agenda.

### **The Western Point of View**

No examination of the press, immigration and the Reform Party in the 1993 election would be complete without reference to *Western Report*. On balance, analysis of daily

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<sup>298</sup> "Some new citizens would shut door," *The Globe and Mail* (October 21, 1993), pp. A1-A2.

newspapers and *Maclean's* magazine showed a profoundly anti-Reform bias. With the exception of the *Globe and Mail*, all of the media examined ran news coverage critical of Reform's policies just as they did editorially. *Western Report's* coverage of the election was just the opposite-- fiercely pro-Reform. *Western Report* is staunchly, proudly and irreverently right-wing. Articles with titles like "Just plain homos" and "Another blow to taxpayers and family responsibility: Edmonton expands from subsidised baby-sitting to free food" are not unusual. The inside cover of the magazine often has a full page, striking pro-life advertisement. Careful examination of the roughly ten election campaign issues of *Western Report* reveals that it was homophobic, almost to the point of being consumed with harassing the gay community. It also echoed the Christian fundamentalist line and welcomed the opportunity to serve as a mouthpiece for the Reform Party of Canada.

Starting on September 6, even before the election was called, *Western Report* printed "Article # 1" in the series "Party Policy '93". The article was entitled "Toughen immigration, demands the RPC". It is necessary to point out three things about this article. First, the article was accompanied by a photograph of people at the airport under a sign that read "Immigration du Canada" with the caption reading "New Arrivals, 250,000 a year: Equal, in fact, to the number of new Canadian jobs".<sup>299</sup> As a letter to the editor which appeared in a later issue noted, the caption was profoundly misleading for it assumed that all immigrants that come to Canada are of working age; the majority are not, and it ignored the fact that immigrants do not only take jobs, they also create them.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> "Toughen immigration, demands the RPC," *Western Report* (September 6, 1993), p.6.

<sup>300</sup> "The immigration numbers game," *Western Report* (September 27, 1993), p.5.

Not only was this caption misleading, but the article also contained two 'facts' that were grossly exaggerated. The second paragraph claimed that: "In Canada...most attempts to raise the issue of immigration are quickly rebuffed and any criticism of the country's current policy branded racist. Meanwhile, Canada continues to admit more than 250,000 immigrants a year, better than half that number in refugees,..."<sup>301</sup> This paragraph is wrong on two accounts. In recent years Canada has not reached its 250,000 target and less than 20 percent of arrivals are refugees. In a 1993 article in *Policy Options*, sociologist Morton Weinfeld stated that "Immigrants fall into three broad groups: independents, such as skilled workers, business immigrants and assisted relatives; family class; and refugees. In 1991 the immigrant intake broke down to 37 percent, 37 percent and 26 percent respectively, with projections through 1995 aimed at keeping a roughly similar mix."<sup>302</sup> Weinfeld broke the refugee numbers down even further and showed that of all the refugees who came to Canada in 1991, 10,348 were asylum refugees, 17,333 were privately sponsored refugees, and 7,665 were Government sponsored refugees for a total of 35,346 refugees, nowhere close to the 150,000 implied in the article.

The second factual error contained in this two page article surrounded the amount of money spent on federal multiculturalism. The article stated that Ottawa spends nearly \$250 million "on multicultural groups and programs". However, according to a *Maclean's* article on how Ottawa spends its money, \$53 million goes to "multicultural programs"<sup>303</sup>-- a figure many still considered to be inflated by salary costs of public servants among other things. *Western*

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<sup>301</sup> "Toughen immigration, demands the RPC," *Western Report* (September 6, 1993), p.6.

<sup>302</sup> "Immigration and Diversity," *Policy Options* (July-August 1993), p.67.

<sup>303</sup> *ibid.*

*Report* did not report the source of its inflated and inflammatory numbers which most certainly could be used to feed the growing immigrant backlash.

*Western Report*'s 'angle' becomes clearer when we look at some other stories appearing during the election. A September 13 article "Crack down on punks" discussed crime and the leniency of the Young Offenders Act as well as Reform's stand on capital punishment. The last column of the article contained the opinion of a Reformer who felt that special status for disadvantaged groups such as women, racial and ethnic minorities and homosexuals is unfair and should be abolished. How this opinion, out of right field, related to the main thrust of the article, crime, was not explained.<sup>304</sup>

An article in the next issue argued that an increase in school violence was the inevitable result of "non-assimilation policies"<sup>305</sup>. The article mentioned conflicts between Asian and Lebanese students in Calgary and said that because the government would not break down criminal statistics by race, Canadians cannot be sure if these incidents are rising. But, the article concluded, "with current annual immigration levels running at about 250,000 individuals, many from lands with very different conceptions of law and order, the potential for ethnic clashes is clearly rising".<sup>306</sup>

When John Beck was discovered, *Western Report* carried an article entitled "Swift action against racists". The article explained away the presence of John Beck as a loose cannon not representative of a Reform constituency. After all, the article pointed out, Ernst Zundel was a

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<sup>304</sup> "Crack down on punks." *Western Report* (September 13, 1993), p.7.

<sup>305</sup> "Reaping the multicultural harvest: School violence may be an inevitable result of non-assimilation policies," *Western Report* (September 13, 1993), p.38.

<sup>306</sup> *ibid.*

Liberal (more recently, however, he happened to be a Social Creditor) and in 1977 Quebec Tory candidate, Roger Delorme, had ties to the Klu Klux Klan.<sup>307</sup>

An October 18 opinion piece was further revealing of the magazine's views about pluralism. The piece began with an open endorsement of Reform and stated that: "Government has so widened our 'tolerance' for other cultures that we have lost all concept of our own, so now the consensus of values that must underlie any society no longer exists".<sup>308</sup> The notion that Canadian values have somehow been undermined by large scale immigration and multiculturalism was a recurring theme in anti-immigration attacks. On October 4, 1993 *Western Report* had an article describing how the Lethbridge RCMP Veterans Court Challenge Committee, bolstered by \$150,000 raised in the summer, would challenge the legality of turbans in the RCMP, a decision made in March of 1990.<sup>309</sup> The article contained only the opinions and arguments of those who felt the law should be overturned on appeal. A *Macleans*'s opinion piece about the election saw the appeal differently. It stated that, "No matter how much Manning denies it, his party represents the kind of racist rednecks who are currently raising \$350,000 around Lethbridge, Alberta to finance a court battle against the RCMP allowing its members to wear turbans".<sup>310</sup> Same position. Different slant.

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<sup>307</sup> "Swift action against racists," *Western Report* (October 25, 1993), p.7.

<sup>308</sup> "Dave Barrett put the case for the Reform party in a nutshell," *Western Report* (October 18, 1993), p.52.

<sup>309</sup> "Headed to court over headgear," *Western Report* (October 4, 1993), p.36

<sup>310</sup> "This election needs a touch of magic," *Macleans*'s (October 18, 1993), p.58.



This chapter examined the relationship between immigration, the Reform Party and the media during the Canadian federal election of 1993. Through the course of the election and particularly as election day drew closer, increasing print media attention was paid not only to the Reform Party, but also to its policies on ethno-cultural issues like immigration and multiculturalism. There are a combination of factors which shaped this increased attention: several misguided Tory manoeuvres, the worst of which involved an ad mocking Jean Chretien's physical attributes; an unexpectedly impressive campaign by Preston Manning; Manning's credible performance in the televised debates which helped Reform attain a previously unenjoyed level of political acceptability; previously unmeasured levels of support for Reform that threatened the mainline parties; and on the darker side, Reform candidate John Beck caused renewed criticisms of Reform as racist.

The relative importance of these factors aside, for forty-five days during the 1993 election campaign, a public 'debate' on immigration took place with racial overtones. Discussion, such as it was, proved more an unconstructive, angry, altercation than a reasoned debate. Respected, and usually temperate conservative political commentator Dalton Camp was not to be outdone. He described Reform as "a party populated by bigots, racists and haters and led by a charismatic authoritarian,"<sup>311</sup> Peter C. Newman from *Maclean's* was no less harsh when he said that Reform represents "the kind of racist rednecks" that would challenge turbans in the RCMP.<sup>312</sup> A less venomous description of Reform said it draws its strength from "frustrated middle-class conservatives and others who feel threatened by rising crime,

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<sup>311</sup> "Conduct unbecoming," *The Toronto Star* (October 17, 1993), p.H3.

<sup>312</sup> "This election needs a touch of magic," *Maclean's* (October 18, 1993), p.58.

immigration and the forces of economic and social change".<sup>313</sup> And the *Globe and Mail*, ever the voice of moderation, described Reform as "Main Street, middle-class, silent majority conservatives who feel exploited and bullied by a Montreal-Toronto-Ottawa elite that for the past thirty years has controlled the political levers of power and has, over the heads of ordinary Canadians, defined the nation's political orthodoxy".<sup>314</sup>

Whether or not the Reform Party is filled with "a bunch of Right-Wing wackos" or simply attracted a white middle-class feeling dispossessed by the national elite, what is important is that Preston Manning set the agenda on immigration in this federal election. Because immigration is not in and of itself a vote winning issue in any election and politicians are "scared stiff of white, mainstream backlash"<sup>315</sup>, perhaps, as *Maclean's* suggested, Manning's success came from his willingness to openly discuss issues like immigration that "other leaders [were] loath to address".<sup>316</sup> Manning knowingly or unknowingly played on fears implicit in this middle class backlash. In doing so, he exacerbated, if not created, the divisive discourse on immigration and related issues in this election.

Manning was not alone in setting the emotional agenda on immigration. The media helped. The media not only gave wide coverage to the racially loaded fringe, it tended to legitimize their position. Discussion once limited to the margins of acceptable discourse took centre stage and, too often, uncritically so. But if discontent found a public voice, a truly informed public debate on immigration failed to take place. In *The Social Responsibility of the*

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<sup>313</sup> "Where the major players stand," *Maclean's* (October 18, 1993), p.28.

<sup>314</sup> "Main Street, middle-class, silent majority conservatives on the march," *The Globe and Mail* (October 22, 1993), p.A30.

<sup>315</sup> "Not much light shed," *The Montreal Gazette* (October 6, 1993), p.B2.

<sup>316</sup> *Maclean's* (October 11, 1993), p.18.

*Press*, J. Edward Gerald suggested how the media **should** function in a pluralist society. He said that, “In systems that try to reconcile diverse groups and their different concepts of social function, the press is the agency by which the constituent groups in society become aware of their differences and are brought to accept intercourse based on the principle of toleration”.<sup>317</sup> In its run-in with Reform and Reform’s immigration agenda in the federal election of 1993, the print media fell short of meeting this measure of social responsibility.

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<sup>317</sup> J. Edward Gerald, *op. cit.*, p.8.

## **Conclusions**

In Canada, prior to the federal election of 1993, there emerged growing public anxiety over issues such as immigration, multiculturalism and employment equity. However, up to this point these volatile issues were publicly ill-defined. As debate built up a head of steam preceding the federal election of 1993, the Reform Party, with its ultra-conservative ideology of self reliance and rugged individualism and its 'egalitarian' platform on immigration and multiculturalism, emerged as a serious vehicle for political realization of immigration restructuring.

Preston Manning claimed that Reform's immigration policy recommendations were strictly predicated on what was economically best for Canada. There is no doubt, however, that the policy rubbed up against ethnic and racial issues and fed the ongoing public debate about multiculturalism, fears of welfare abuse, "bogus refugee" claimants, the breakdown in law and order, and an overall feeling that the Canadian identity and symbols of the Canadian heritage were disappearing.

Reform's willingness not only to address but also to champion an issue as explosive as immigration during a federal election campaign fed the media whose responsibility it is to cover election issues. During the election campaign, immigration and related issues, the Reform Party, and the media collided to produce a ground swell of angry discussion over Canada's ethno-cultural policies. In just forty-five days more than two hundred news stories about Reform and immigration appeared in six major English language newspapers across Canada. In these forty-five days the media cranked up the heat on immigration and race in a way mainstream politicians had hitherto been loath to do.

In the post-election period we can see more clearly the powerful effects of the collision which took place between rising anti-immigrant sentiment, the Reform Party and the media during the federal election campaign of 1993. Less than one year after the election, in addition to Ekos research revealing that levels of intolerance were on the rise, Sergio Marchi introduced Bill C-44 (the Just Desserts Bill). It was introduced in response to a brutal act of random violence perpetrated by a Jamaican-born criminal in Canada. The criminal had resided in Canada since childhood and a deportation order had been stayed. Marchi's decision was admittedly tempered by "public concern that needs to be articulated in this debate".<sup>318</sup> Also, one year after the election, the government launched their new immigration regulations, less generous than in the past with a more restrictionist shift from family class to independent immigrants. *Globe and Mail* columnist Jeffrey Simpson remarked on CBC's "Sunday Report"

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<sup>318</sup> "Debating Marchi's plan to eject 'foreign criminals'," *The Toronto Star* (September 6, 1994), p.A18.

that the general public was in favour of the changes and "there is no doubt the Reform Party has had some influence on the government..."<sup>319</sup>

Other residual effects of the immigration discussion and the election can be seen in the public reception to two books that emerged in the immediate election aftermath. One is *Selling Illusions* by Trinidadian-born Canadian Neil Bissoondath. Bissoondath, himself an immigrant, comes out strongly against Multiculturalism and stops just short of advocating outright assimilation. The other book is *The Bell Curve* by Americans Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein. *The Bell Curve*, coming very close to preaching the tenets of scientific racism, received immediate notoriety for its suggestion that learning curves differ greatly between blacks and whites. Both *Selling Illusions* and *The Bell Curve* sold out immediately upon release and were widely reviewed as trendsetting books.<sup>320</sup>

The anti-immigration and anti-multicultural zeal has also hit home for me. In the year period since the election two comments were made to me regarding my research that stand out in my mind. They help to illustrate the increased comfort now associated with immigration bashing. In one case, when a neighbour (whom I had only met once before) asked what I did, I explained I was interested in immigration and that I was looking at it in the context of the last federal election. She immediately piped up and said "Oh good! Maybe they'll listen to you and stop letting so many immigrants into this country!". I grinned and responded that I was not

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<sup>319</sup> As quoted in CBC's *Prime Time News-Sunday Report* from 30th October, 1994.

<sup>320</sup> Neil Bissoondath, *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada* (Toronto, 1994) and Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* (New York, 1994).

advocating a decrease in immigration levels. Needless to say, I have never been invited to her home for a dinner party.

Several months later, around the time that the \$965 fee was announced for processing immigrants, I was on the plane on my way back from Florida. I was sitting beside a woman around the age of seventy-five. She asked me what I was studying and I told her. She then asked me if I thought "that \$965 was enough?" I responded that I actually thought it was too much. She remarked that "most of them pay the \$965 and then go on welfare anyway." I responded the only way you can to someone who thinks that way. I said nothing.

The mood which licensed these events has given policy makers, writers, and the public at large license to continue openly attacking immigration in the post election period. Is this too a sign of Reform's power and influence? Stephen Harper, Preston Manning's senior policy advisor defines power "as having an agenda and seeing it adopted rather than necessarily getting into power."<sup>321</sup> The rise of Reform just may signify the declining hegemony of liberal intellectual forces. According to an observer writing in *Canadian Policy Options* after the election:

The visceral antipathy to Reform from the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, from ethnic groups, and from French language minority organizations outside Quebec underlines the extent to which cultural conflict over contending life styles now has explicitly entered partisan federal politics...[This cultural conflict is not new to politics]... What is new is that explicit opposition to the direction of recent state policy is now expressed with a degree of ideological consistency and coherence by a major party that appears to speak for a sizeable, hitherto relatively underrepresented constituency.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> "Canada's new party of conscience," *Western Report* (May, 1993), p.18.

<sup>322</sup> Alan C. Cairns, "Election 1993," *Canadian Public Policy*, Vol. XX no.3 (September, 1994), p.230.

A closer look at the collision that took place between growing public anxiety over immigration, the Reform Party and the media during the election campaign reveals that being accepted as a national political entity and a loud populist voice, Reform told those Canadians experiencing anxiety over immigration and diversity that they were not alone. It told them that their views, fears, and anxieties were acceptable and legitimate. Reform brought the immigration debate out of the shadows of private discourse and provided an open forum for debate where people could vent their anxieties. Reform provided Canadians with a place to park their fears. For many Canadians, Reform promised a return of the social cohesion that had been disappearing for too long. Reform represented a return to traditional family values and Canadian ideals. Reform gave voice to the anxieties other parties refused to address.

Where Reform failed to reach those attune to its message, the media helped. By paying so much attention to Reform's ethno-cultural policies and the incidents of racism that dogged the Party during the campaign, the media made Reform a gathering place for those with common views and gave a political home to those previously afraid of expressing anti-immigrant views. The media said: if you are racist, intolerant, or even tired of immigrants and multiculturalism, if you associate immigrants or refugees with crime or welfare fraud then your fears are sound and Reform is your party.

By the third stage of the media campaign, McGill Chancellor Gretta Chambers had described Reform as having "legitimacy well beyond its protest-movement roots". Reform and the media had unwittingly worked hand in hand to help Reform earn this legitimacy. Whether Reform created the media response or the media response created Reform is a moot point. By the third stage of the election, Reform was held up as the party reflecting issues others would



not touch. And in the end it did not much matter whether the media coverage of Reform was positive or negative, the important thing was that it was there. As communications theorist Marshall McLuhan argues in *Understanding Media*, and as previously noted, what is said in the media and how it is said is largely irrelevant. It is enough that it is said. We must look at the medium through which it is expressed--“the medium is the message”<sup>323</sup> We must look at the effects of what is in the media rather than the words used to fill the page. Although the coverage of Reform was overwhelmingly negative, the effect of the media was to validate Reform for many Canadians.

In the end, the collision between immigration, Reform and the media in the federal election of 1993 served to legitimize both Reform and anti-immigrant sentiment. Perhaps what is most telling about the rise in anti-immigrant sentiment is how it would seem to be outside the loop of scholarly discourse. It is my hope that public anxiety or uneasiness over immigration will turn out to be the result of misconception, myth, emotion, or perhaps fear, and not the result of deep seated racism. Misconceptions can ultimately be clarified. Racism, however, stems from the core of ideology and is not so easily eradicated. In all likelihood the conservative wave Canada is currently experiencing stems from neither misconception nor racism, but rather from misplaced anxiety and intolerance to the direction and rapidity of change. Among the myths about immigrants are that they are the cause of numerous societal ills such as unemployment, crime, welfare fraud, gang violence and many others. This fits well within Lise Noel's theoretical framework of intolerance. Noel argues that “As the repository of a secret power at

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<sup>323</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (New York, 1964), p.7.

work down through the ages, the oppressed are perceived as being engaged in a long endeavour to undermine existing institutions...<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> Lise Noel, *Intolerance* (Montreal, 1994), p.14.

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