

A Critical Analysis of the Term Barbaric Cultural Practices

Through An Examination of the S-7 Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act and the Harper Conservatives' Discourses

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ABSTRACT: In 2014, Canada's Conservative government introduced the Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act (Bill S-7), intending to protect Canadian women and girls, especially Brown and Muslim women, against gendered-based violence that uses culture as an excuse. However, in the context of the war on terror and anti-Muslim discourses during the Harper years, the title of Bill S-7 appears contradictory to its intended goal. The Conservative government engaged in activities that appear to ignore the interests of women, especially minority women in Canada (Olwan 2013). Through a critical discourse analysis of Conservative Ministers' Parliamentary Hansards during the debates for Bill S-7, this paper finds that the conservatives' mobilization of the term barbaric cultural practices has three functions: Bill S-7 sends a strong message that Canada will not tolerate barbaric cultural practices; the Government has a responsibility to pursue a humanitarian immigration system; Bill S-7 would protect all women and girls from gender-based violence that uses culture as an excuse. Using Sara Farris' femo-nationalism framework, this paper argues that Bill S-7's three functions advance Conservatives' nationalist and neoliberal interests through the enforcement of a type of "patriotic neoliberal citizenship," which promotes Canadian values as militarism, close ties with the British Crown, and economic independence over multiculturalism, among others (Abu-Laban 2018).

KEYWORDS: Africa, China, economic investment, foreign policy, international relations, non-interference

Introduction

During the Harper years from 2006 to 2015, Conservatives utilized Orientalist tropes to mobilize the term barbaric cultural practices to describe gender-based violence perceived to occur in Brown and Muslim communities (Olwan 2013, 544-545). In this period, the Conservatives used the term in conjunction with narratives of championing women's equality for Muslim communities through managing and expelling these barbaric practices in Canada through securitizing Canada's immigration practices (Dobrowolsky 2017, 206). The most significant of these management approaches being the Act to Amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Civil Marriage Act and the Criminal Code, otherwise known using its short title the Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act (Bill S-7) introduced in 2014. The Conservatives promoted Bill S-7 with the aim to protect Canadian women and girls, especially Brown and Muslim women, against gendered-based violence that uses culture as an excuse. Meanwhile, Bill S-7's shorthand title indicates that Canada will not tolerate any form of barbaric practices within its borders (Government of Canada 2014).

Bill S-7 became an essential topic of debate during the 2015 Federal election. In addition to Bill S-7, the Conservatives concurrently proposed policies targeting Brown and Muslim communities, like the barbaric practices tip line. These policies' political rhetoric was debated and discussed in Parliament, generating media attention to political parties before the 2015 election (Firtová 2019, 18). However, the Conservatives' gender-oriented social policies appeared to not align with the aims of Bill S-7. The Conservatives defunded multiple organizations meant to serve Canadian women who were victims of gender-based violence (Olwan 2013, 548-549). I will argue that the primary aim of the Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act (Bill S-7) was not necessarily to protect Canadian women and girls from gender-based violence. Instead, the discourses constructed in promoting Bill S-7, especially the discourses of Brown and Muslim women needing saving, advances Conservatives' nationalist and neoliberal interests through the enforcement of a type of 'patriotic neoliberal citizenship.'

In this paper, the narrative of the supremacy of Canadian human rights constructed through discourses of managing, regulating, and protecting Brown and Muslim bodies characterizes the Conservatives' nationalist interests (Stonebanks 2019). Meanwhile, the strategy to "stimulate economic growth" through a selective immigration system, where "undesirable" migrants are refused entry to Canada characterizes neoliberal interests (Gaucher 2020, 83).

This paper is divided into three sections. The first section is a literature review on Orientalist tropes in Post 9/11 discourse in Canada during the Harper years (2006 – 2015). This section establishes the influence of the "war on terror" discourse in animating racist stereotypes targeting communities perceived as Muslim, such as Arab and South Asian communities, in the Harper Conservatives' immigration discourse. The next section is a critical discourse analysis of Conservative Ministers' Parliamentary Hansards during the debates for Bill S-7. A critical examination of Conservative speeches exposes how the primary goal of Bill S-7 is not necessarily to protect Brown and Muslim women. Instead, Bill S-7 functions to advance the Conservatives' political interests. The final section focuses on how the term barbaric cultural practices in the context of Bill S-7's aim to protect Brown and Muslim women advanced the Conservatives' nationalist and neoliberal interests using Sara Farris' femonationalism framework. Femonationalism (Farris 2017a) refers to the co-optation of feminists' goals with racism by a coalition of nationalists, neoliberals, and some feminists' organizations to stigmatise Muslim men. I will argue that the Conservatives utilized a narrative of Brown and Muslim women needing saving to promote their political interests and enforce a type of "patriotic neoliberal citizenship" (Abu-Laban 2018). This type of citizenship promotes Canadian values of militarism, having close ties with the British Crown, and economic independence over multiculturalism, among others (Abu-Laban 2018, 250).

Orientalist Tropes in Post 9/11 Canada and the West

This section provides background to the global context of the pervasiveness of Muslim stereotypes across Western states post 9/11. The "war on terror" discourse influenced Western perceptions, including Canadian perceptions, of Muslim populations post 9/11. Similar to other Western states, Canadian human rights superiority is juxtaposed with the backwards Orient to create a narrative of a clash of civilizations, which purports uncivilized Eastern values to be incompatible with civilized Western values (Mason 2015, 111). These Orientalist tropes portray those perceived to belong from the East as "pernicious and inherently uncivilized" (Gill and Brah 2014, 75 – 76). These fears resulted in Islamophobia being prevalent in Canada. Yasmin Jiwani (2014, 145 – 146), citing Jasmine Zine, states Islamophobia means perceiving Muslim populations as "anti-liberal, anti-democratic, and unamenable to the requirements of modernity." Jiwani notes this perception constructs Muslims to be unfit to join Western 'civilized' states. These narratives of 'Us' versus 'Them'

resulted in the construction of those from Eastern societies as the 'Other.' Although being from the East does not necessarily make individuals identify as Brown nor Muslim, this stereotype resulted in many racialized groups from North Africa, the Middle East, West Asia, and South Asia being racially profiled through the homogenous identity of Brown and Muslim in Canada (Stonebanks 2019, 310).

The Canadian media does not necessarily differentiate between these four regions' cultural differences when they report on these communities. Instead, these communities are portrayed homogeneously through the Orientalist tropes of the "Other" (Stonebanks 2019, 310-311). As my paper aims to analyze the Conservatives' invoking of racist and sexist narratives to elevate the supremacy of Canadian values, I will be using the term Brown and Muslim to describe the community they target in their discourses. By using this term, it will emphasize how Orientalist tropes do not distinguish between countries it assigns to be backwards or uncivilized. It applies to everyone perceived to belong to the East.

Regarding gender relations, the "war on terror" discourse revitalized the problematic narrative of Muslim women needing saving from oppressive Muslim men and their misogynistic cultures across Western societies (Montoya and Agustin 2013, 534). Lila Abu-Lughod (2013a) unpacks the problematic narrative of Muslim women needing to be saved in her analysis of Western intervention in Afghanistan in the 21st century. Muslim women's emancipation from their misogynistic culture became one of the primary reasons for the Western intervention in Afghanistan. The image of a "woman from Afghanistan whose nose had been cut off" on the cover of Times magazine and the speeches of feminists

in Western media about Muslim women's oppression reified this narrative (Abu-Lughod 2013a). This portrayal renders Muslim women helpless and lacking the agency to defend themselves. Meanwhile, Western states portray themselves as saviours. The West constructs itself to protect Muslim women through military intervention and liberate Muslim women through the teachings of liberal feminism from their misogynistic cultures.

The narrative of Muslim women needing saving from oppressive Muslim men animates in Canada during the Harper years through discourses of protecting women from barbaric cultural practices. Conservatives' discourses mention barbaric cultural practices as culturally driven violence against women and girls, based on backwards notions of honour and gender inequality (Olwan 2013, 535). These honour crimes can be broadly defined as "a vast array of violent and abusive acts perpetrated (primarily) against women in the name of protecting family, conjugal and/or community 'honour.'" (Walker 2020, 2) Despite using the neutral language of honour and refraining from blaming specific cultures, Conservatives characterize barbaric cultural practices as forced marriages, female genital mutilation, and honour killings (Government of Canada 2014). Many of the publicized occurrences of these barbaric practices in Canadian media occur in racialized (Brown) communities. Not only does sensationalizing honour crimes reify the stereotypes produced by the "war on terror" discourses and Islamophobia, but it also employs the racially charged term barbaric which



has links to old Orientalist stereotypes of Muslim men as barbaric (Jiwani 2014, 137). The average Canadian citizen then inscribes these crimes and the term barbaric with racial meanings, tying both to Brown and Muslim communities (Jiwani 2014, 125).

Immigration Practices and Discourses during the Harper Years

Magdalena Firtová (2019) argues the Conservatives utilized a nationalistic frame, which calls for preserving national borders and culture, in promoting their immigration policies. She notes this strategy deviates from the norm of promoting openness and multiculturalism in Canadian immigration discourse. The Conservatives' nationalist discourse focused on identity, creating a line between those who can be considered members of the in-group and the out-group. This Conservative identity reflects a "patriotic neoliberal citizenship" (Abu-Laban 2018, 250). This type of citizenship promotes Canadian values as militarism, close ties with the British Crown, and economic independence over multiculturalism, among others. This identity extended in the Conservatives' strategy of selecting immigrants. Alexandra Dobrowolsky notes this strategy resulted in selective immigrant policies biased based on race, ethnicity, gender, and class (2017, 197). The Conservatives justified their selective immigration policies as an attempt to securitize the immigration process. This securitization would vet threats to Canadian values by restricting their access to Canadian immigration (Amery 2013).

Paul Bramadat (2014) notes the term securitization has been politicized post 9/11. Securitization broadly means the primacy of national security in policymaking, such as increased border patrol. In Canada, policymakers create an "illusion of neutrality" regarding the term and refer to securitization to mean protecting core values and public spaces' safety (Stonebanks 2019, 304). However, the "war on terror" discourses and the perception of Brown and Muslim people as threats resulted in creating immigration policies that target ethnic and religious groups under the guise of national security. Dobrowolsky then coins the term "Bad Canada" to characterize the conservatives' exclusionary approaches during the Harper years (2017, 198-201). She notes the racialized discourses surrounding immigration constructed notions of 'Us' versus 'Them,' wherein those who do not ascribe to Conservative notions of Canadian identity belong to the 'Other.'

Neoliberal economic interests also characterize the Conservatives' immigration practices. The Conservatives framed their immigration interests in the

language of establishing a "procedural/ managerial" immigration system that would allow "hard-working, law-abiding" migrants into the country while keeping out the threats to public safety (Firtova 2019). This strategy resulted in a contradictory immigration system that pursued neoliberal policies, like the expansion of Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) programs, and exclusionary policies, like the Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act that prevents those who practice polygamy and other barbaric practices from entering Canada (Dobrowolsky 2017). The Conservatives pursued these policies through a combination of "security and economic" frames. By doing so, they justified the securitization of the immigration system to protect Canadians from "criminals" and "bogus claimants" (Firtova 2019, 13).

Regarding women migrants, the Conservatives' nationalist and neoliberal immigration practices both "invisibilize and instrumentalize women im/migrants" (Dobrowolsky 2017, 198). The Conservatives utilized women as vehicles to advance their political interests when introducing the Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act (Bill S-7) in November 2014. Bill S-7 received Royal Assent on June 15, 2015. The Act aims to protect women and girls in Canada against early and forced marriage, polygamy, violence in the name of so-called "honour," and other barbaric cultural practices (Government of Canada 2014). Some protective strategies implemented by Bill S-7 includes criminalizing anyone involved in organizing a marriage for individuals under the age of 16 and provides Border officers discretionary powers to deny individuals who practice polygamy entry into Canada, as well as provides Border officers discretionary powers to expel anyone who practices polygamy within Canada (Government of Canada 2014). The discourses surrounding Bill S-7 emphasized the imperative to heighten Canada's immigration practice of vetting threats entering Canada. However, as I will argue in the following two sections, Bill S-7 functions to advance the Conservatives' political interests by constructing narratives that elevate Canada's responsibility to human rights.

Critical Examinations of Conservative Debates and Rhetoric

This section provides a critical discourse analysis of Parliamentary Hansards during the debates for Bill S-7, focusing on the speech notes of Former Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Chris Alexander, Former Minister of Status of Women Canada K. Kellie Leitch, and Former Minister of National Defence Jason Kenney from February 7, 2015, to June 6, 2016. There were three main themes found across their speeches:

Bill S-7 sends a strong message that Canada will not tolerate barbaric cultural practices; the Government has a responsibility to pursue a humanitarian immigration system; Bill S-7 would protect all women and girls from gendered-based violence that uses culture as an excuse.

The Conservatives' speeches utilized a nationalist frame, which "promotes the enhancement of [Canadian] national values (Firtova 2019, 6)." Their speeches emphasized the protection of "patriotic" Canadian values. These values were imagined through the narratives of the supremacy of Canadian human rights and Canada's supposedly humanitarian engagements in its immigration history. Alexander (2015a) noted that "we are morally bound to take a stand" after the testimony of Aruna Papp, who is a South Asian advocate against honour crimes, by reinforcing that "Canada was designated the best country to be a woman." Alexander's statement implies Brown and Muslim women rely on the Canadian state to protect them from their misogynistic cultures and, to an extreme, implies Canada is the only state where women can be free from violence. Additionally, Conservative Ministers argue that the term barbaric cultural practices needed to be included in Bill S-7 to demonstrate Canada's zero tolerance. By supposedly calling these practices as it is, Canada signals it will not tolerate forms of violence against women and girls that use culture as an excuse (Alexander 2015b, Leitch 2015a, and Kenney 2015). Alexander (2015a) notes the term barbaric does not target any specific group. Instead, any acts of violence against women can be considered a barbaric practice. However, Alexander contradicts himself by expressing that the purpose of Bill S-7 is to prevent individuals who commit these barbaric practices from entering and remove those who commit them from Canada. This contradiction constructs a narrative of gender-based violence as foreign and imported into Canada. If this is the case, immigrant communities are the only group this term applies to because they can be denied entry and be expelled from Canada.

Kenney also made an explicit relationship between the term barbaric cultural practices and immigrant communities. Kenney stated he initially hesitated to use the term barbaric. However, after talking to "new Canadians who asked [him] why we tolerate these things in Canada, which they fled such countries to escape," Kenney realized the significance of naming these practices as barbaric (Kenney 2015). Despite his claim of hesitating, Kenney previously used the term barbaric cultural practices. The term was included in the 2009 Discover Canada citizenship guide, created under Ken-

ney's ministerial leadership (Firtova 2019, 19). Kenney's statement implies that ethnic communities themselves asked the Government to use the term to indicate Canada's commitment against gender-based violence. However, comments from the South Asian Legal Office of Ontario (2014) and the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (Mastracci 2015) denounced the term to be racist and discriminatory against Muslims and South Asian and Arab communities. Kenney's statement then does not represent the perspectives of the communities these barbaric cultural practices supposedly happen.

Alexander's speech about the story of the Canadian origins of immigration reifies the Conservatives' patriotic and nationalistic rhetoric. According to Alexander, the Europeans' arrival to Canada was characterized by "values of responsible government, self-government, respect for human dignity, respect for the rule of law" (2015c). He also notes that this history compels the Conservative Government to pursue humanitarian immigration practices (Alexander 2015c). For Bill S-7, the argument for protecting women and girls centres this humanitarian cause (Government of Canada 2014). However, Indigenous narratives of settler-colonialism dispute the Conservatives' claim. European's arrival on Turtle Island, the Indigenous name for North America, was characterized by loss of land, loss of sovereignty, and violence against Indigenous Peoples (Green 2017, 179). Therefore, the Conservatives' narrative of humanitarian engagement obscures the violent realities experienced by Indigenous Peoples from that period onwards. This false claim undermines the Conservative Government's narrative of being responsible for emulating the past's humanitarian immigration system in 2015.

Lastly, Conservative Ministers argue that Bill S-7 would protect all women and girls from gendered-based violence that uses culture as an excuse. Alexander, Leitch, and Kenney all emphasized how Bill S-7 will prevent gender-based violence that uses culture as an excuse to occur in Canada and protect all women and girls from these barbaric practices, especially those in vulnerable immigrant communities (Alexander 2015a, Leitch 2015a, and Kenney 2015). Leitch mentions these practices need to be prevented because they are a "breach of basic human rights" (2015a). No one disputes that these crimes of gender-based violence are harmful to women and girls. The opposition parties did not criticize the contents of the bill during the debates. The oppositions target their critiques towards using the term barbaric cultural practices. Therefore, the aims of Bill S-7 seem genuine in theory. However, Leitch's statement about the Conservative legislation reasons

in introducing Bill S-7 does not reflect Conservatives' gender-based violence social policies (2015b):

“This bill reflects our government’s priority for supporting women and girls to live violence-free lives, because a building block for women and children in reaching their full potential is being able to live life free of violence and free of the threat of violence.”

Leitch’s statement obfuscates the gender-based violence that occurs in Canada. During this time, there has been an increase in domestic violence incidences in Canada. The Conservative government reduced the overall budget of the Status of Women Canada by \$5 million, resulting in reduced funding for services that serve victims of domestic violence (Strumm 2015, 107). Meanwhile, the Conservatives prioritized funding for organizations that either raise awareness or serve communities where these so-called barbaric practices occur (Olwan 2013, 549). This reality contradicts Leitch’s statement. The Conservatives’ arguments for women’s rights are undermined by their social policies that disadvantage women. This limitation exposes how the Conservatives’ self-righteous attempt to advocate for Brown and Muslim women through securitizing immigration systems advances the Conservatives’ interests.

The Political Work of Conservative Rhetoric

The Conservatives’ mobilization of the term barbaric cultural practices in the context of Bill S-7’s aim to protect Brown and Muslim women advances the Conservatives’ nationalist and neoliberal interests; its goal is not necessarily about securing women’s safety. Instead, these narratives are mobilized to obfuscate the harms caused by Canada’s settler-colonial institutions against Indigenous Peoples and to fulfill the Conservatives’ neoliberal demands by refraining from stigmatizing Brown women, who often fill the role of caretakers in the Canadian economy, from participating in Canadian society.

To defend my argument, I will utilize Sara Farris’ femonationalism framework. Farris examined how



right-wing nationalists, neoliberals, and some feminists' organizations co-opted feminism with xenophobia and Islamophobia in Europe (2017a, 3-4). She argues this paradoxical intersection extends beyond populism, where the discourse of "Us" versus "Them" mobilizes a group of people against the "Other" (2017a, 7-8). She notes femonationalist narratives operate differently than populism because women's rights, particularly of Brown and Muslim women, are invoked to stigmatise Muslim men. In Europe, this phenomenon animates through xenophobic and Islamophobic discourses of Muslims' inability to integrate into Western society successfully (Farris 2017b, 73-74). Brown and Muslim women can potentially be integrated when saved from their culture, whereas Muslim men cannot. Farris argues that refraining from stigmatising Brown and Muslim women serves a political-economic dimension that advances Western neoliberal interests (2017a, 5).

Megan Gaucher argues that the state's primary motivation for Bill S-7 is not necessarily to avoid harm. Instead, the "state is enforcing a particular type of citizenship reliant on sexist and racist undertones" in her analysis of Bill S-7's regulation of polygamy (2016, 520). I argue that the Conservatives' narratives around barbaric cultural practices preserve their imagined patriotic neoliberal type of citizenship. This preservation operates in multiple narratives.

First, Conservative Ministers' nationalist frames in their Parliamentary speeches examined in the previous section preserve patriotic citizenship by linking Canada's contemporary immigration to Europeans' arrival to Turtle Island (Alexander 2015c). This narrative links Canada's immigration history to the British. Therefore, the Conservatives construct a historical memory devoid of the violence of settler-colonialism by framing their contemporary immigration system to one of humanitarian engagement. They valorize a history characterized by violence, dispossession, and genocide.

Second, the Conservatives' patriotic type of citizenship is enforced through the "political work of honour crimes," meaning honour crimes reinforce the fantasy that associates modernity solely with the West (Abu-Lughod 2013b, 120-121). This political work provides opportunities for Western states to revitalize the Orientalist trope of protecting Muslim women from becoming victims of gendered violence in their misogynous cultures (Abu-Lughod 2013a, 32). This fantasy animates in the Conservative narratives of being "morally bound" to prevent barbaric practices from harming women and girls. They portray Brown and Muslim women as helpless against these crimes unless

the Canadian state creates laws to regulate them. It empowers Western states to embark on a "self-righteous attempt" to change those backward cultures (Abu-Lughod 2013b, 127). Bill S-7 promotes this philosophy through its racist undertones of implying violence can be prevented from being imported to Canada. It implies women will be safe when the state gets involved to prevent gender-based violence. By doing so, the Canadian state elevates itself regarding human rights and obfuscates its legacy of colonial gendered-based violence.

The Canadian state's downplaying of the gender-based violence within its borders, especially towards Indigenous women, further enforces patriotic citizenship. Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Conservatives downplayed the violence against Indigenous women and girls and defunded organizations researching the case of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) (Strumm 2015, 107). The construction of this narrative obscures the legacy of patriarchal violence caused by settler-colonialism against Indigenous women and girls. Dana Olwan states the Conservatives employ this logic because "while the dead Muslim women's body can help write a story of national innocence, the missing or murdered Indigenous women's body cannot" (2014, 232). A tension exists between these two bodies: the body of an Indigenous woman would expose the state's structural forces of racism and settler colonialism. In contrast, a Muslim woman's body elevates the state's status as a protector of human rights. The combination of emphasizing links with British immigration systems, the fantasy of saving Brown and Muslim women, and the downplaying of the MMIWG cases all factor into the enforcement of the Conservatives' patriotic type of citizenship.

Meanwhile, the Conservatives' neoliberal interests and neoliberal type of citizenship are preserved by refraining to stigmatise Brown and Muslim women. Farris (2017c, 147-148) argues women are spared from stigma because western states rely on women migrants, especially racialized women, for the state's social reproduction. This political-economic dimension makes racialized women essential in preserving the state's economic interests. Farris (2017c, 149) describes this dimension as the "sexualization of racism." Since Brown and Muslim women can be redeemed from their backwards culture, they would take up work and integrate into society in designated spaces. Farris (2017c, 157) states these spaces are often jobs, like caregiving, that feminists would not do. Racialized women from the Global South primarily perform caregiving work to provide childcare and eldercare support in Canada

(Dobrowolsky 2017). When the image of Brown women elicits fear in Canadian imaginaries, the demand for caregivers from the Global South will decline. This apprehension would disrupt Canada's workforce by creating a gap in those who perform care work.

Additionally, it does not help that many in the Canadian public are concerned about their Muslim neighbours (Gaucher 2020, 87). To temper this fear, the Conservatives frame some migrants to be more undesirable than others (Gaucher 2020, 83). Brown and Muslim men are constructed to be less desirable than Brown and Muslim women. Men cannot be redeemed from their misogynistic cultures, whereas women's victim status makes them redeemable. However, "citizenship is consistently precarious." Since Canada frames immigration as an "act of benevolence," immigrants become "eternally grateful" to the state (Gaucher 2020, 84). The experiences of Brown and Muslim women heighten this belief. Their lives within Canada are intertwined with the narrative that their safety relies on the state's responsibility to protect them against gender-based violence. This reliance on the state then inhibits them from making claims against the state for better job opportunities. In this way, the state's social reproduction needs get fulfilled without worries of disruptions.

Lastly, the security narrative of Bill S-7 is then a dog whistle for enforcing the Conservatives' patriotic neoliberal citizenship accomplished through multiple narratives constructed to advance nationalist and neoliberal interests. These narratives do not act independently. Instead, they interact with each other, where each narrative advances the Conservatives' political interests by rendering Brown and Muslim women victims of their misogynistic culture needing saving.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Conservatives utilize Brown and Muslim women as drivers of their immigration policies, especially S-7 The Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act, to enforce a type of patriotic neoliberal citizenship. This enforcement was done through the construction of narratives portraying Brown and Muslim women as victims needing saving. By doing so, the Conservatives elevated Canada to a position of superior human rights against other backward and uncivilized cultures, specifically those belonging to Eastern societies. This strategy advances Conservative nationalist interests by valorizing the European arrival to Canada as the template for a humanitarian immigration system, and neoliberal interests by constructing Brown and Muslim women as redeemable from their

cultures. Thus, the supposed aim to protect women and girls through securitizing the immigration system was not necessarily the aim of Bill S-7.

In addition to advancing nationalist and neoliberal interests, these narratives also constructed a "discourse of distrust," where immigrants and refugees were constructed to be threats (Dobrowolsky 2017, 202). This divisive discourse extended beyond the Harper years, even continuing to exist under the current Liberal government. Under the leadership of Erin O'Toole, the Conservatives are caught between apologizing for the Conservatives' stoking racist and Islamophobic sentiments during the Harper years and pandering to their nationalist base in the Conservative party (Raza 2020). Nonetheless, O'Toole did not criticize Quebec's Bill-21 which forbids employees of certain public sector jobs from wearing religious symbols (Raj 2020). O'Toole's silence shows how the Conservatives are not abandoning their anti-Muslim beliefs, albeit they are less vocal about it. This strategy's continual effect stems from the Canadian political parties engaging in a permanent campaign, where they engage in divisive immigration discourse both during and between elections to foster support (Abu-Laban 2020, 374-375). In this case, narratives about Brown and Muslim communities will continue to be prevalent in Canada.

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