

The Dangers of Porous Borders: The “Trump Effect” in Canada

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ABSTRACT

Donald J. Trump’s journey to the White House signaled the resurgence of right-wing populism in the United States. His campaign and his surprising electoral victory rode a wave of anti-elitism and xenophobia. He masterfully exploited the economic and cultural anxieties of white working class and petite bourgeois Americans by deflecting blame for their woes onto the “usual suspects,” among them minorities, liberals, Muslims, professionals and immigrants. His rhetoric touched a chord, and in fact emboldened and energized white supremacist ideologies, identities, movements and practices in the United States and around the world. Indeed, the Trump Effect touched Canada as well. This paper explores how the American politics of hate unleashed by Trump’s right-wing populist posturing galvanized Canadian white supremacist ideologies, identities, movements and practices. Following Trump’s win, posters plastered on telephone poles in Canadian cities invited “white people” to visit alt-right websites. Neo-Nazis spray painted swastikas on a mosque, a synagogue and a church with a black pastor. Online, a reactionary white supremacist subculture violated hate speech laws with impunity while stereotyping and demonizing non-white people. Most strikingly, in January 2017, Canada witnessed its most deadly homegrown terrorist incident: Alexandre Bissonnete, a right-wing extremist and Trump supporter, murdered six men at the Islamic cultural centre of Quebec City. Our paper provides an overview of the manifestations of the Trump Effect in Canada. We also contextualize the antecedents of Trump’s resonance in Canada, highlighting the conditions for and currents and characteristics of right-wing extremism in Canada.

Keywords: White supremacy, Canada, hate politics, 2016 U.S. presidential election

INTRODUCTION

The outcome of the 2016 U.S. presidential election capped off a year in which the politics of hate went mainstream. Donald J. Trump, billionaire, former reality TV star and political neophyte, ran an explicitly racist, sexist and xenophobic campaign. Fashioning himself as a right-wing populist representing the interests of white male conservatives generally and white working class and petite bourgeois people in particular (Myerson, 2017; Rosenfeld, 2017; Shihpar, 2017; Taylor, 2017), Trump's campaign constructed minorities, liberals, Muslims, professionals and immigrants as un-American "others" and unfairly blamed "those people" for a number of social problems. His campaign message resonated with white supremacists across the U.S., who hoped that an election victory would "make America great again" by reinstalling white power.

The Trump Effect has been widely discussed by political commentators in the U.S. context (Giroux, 2016; Potok, 2017), but less attention has been paid to its consequences for Canada. This paper explores the Trump Effect in Canada and argues that Trump's right-wing populist and white nationalist political campaign galvanized Canadian-based white supremacist ideologies, identities, movements and practices. We argue that Trump's election victory has reenergized white identity politics as a mainstream form of political expression in Canada. In other words, the resurgence of right-wing extremism (RWE) in Canada that followed Trump's presidential victory was not caused by the shocking election or Canadian RWE alone, but rather, are symptomatic of the continuing legacy of white supremacy.

We examine the impact of the Trump Effect in Canada in four sections. The first section conceptualizes "Trumpism" as a form of right-wing populism convergent with an emboldened white supremacy. The second section gives evidential weight to the Trump Effect in Canada by documenting the recent uptick in Canadian RWE organizing, propagandizing and hate crimes, online and on-the-ground. To contextualize the antecedents of this Trump Effect, the third section highlights the historical and contemporary pre-conditions for the uptake of Trumpism in Canada. We conclude by noting that, at present, resistance to the Trump Effect in the U.S., Canada and worldwide is spreading.

TRUMPISM: RIGHT-WING POPULISM AND WHITE SUPREMACY

Trumpism is the most recent expression of right-wing populism that has enjoyed resurgence of late in many countries around the world. Political parties running on right-wing populist platforms have garnered increasing support and have successfully mobilized around politically divisive issues

such as immigration, free trade and social entitlements (Mudde, 2004). We conceptualize Trumpism as right-wing populism and illustrate how Trump employed populist communication strategies to win the consent of some people to his presidency.

Albertazzi and McDonnell (2008) define populism as an

Ideology which pits a virtuous and homogeneous people against a set of elites and dangerous 'others' who are together depicted as depriving (or attempting to deprive) the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity and voice. (p. 3)

Populism is most suitably conceptualized as a communication strategy used by a plurality of actors – from professional politicians to activists – to construct “the people” and articulate the people to a movement against a real or imagined elite. In a helpful survey of current research on populism, Engesser, Ernst, Esser and Buchel (2016) identify five key communication strategies that populist political actors employ in battles to win the consent of the people to their power, each of which provide a framework to understand Trumpism and the Trump Effect. Populists tend to: (1) emphasize the sovereignty of the people; (2) advocate for the people; (3) attack the elite on behalf of the people; (4) ostracize “bad others” juxtaposed against “good people”, especially along racial lines, and; (5) invoke the national community or heartland, typically as a vision under threat from “foreigners” or “outsiders.”

Firstly, right-wing populists emphasize the power of the people’s will and the sovereignty of the people. They frame their opponents as elites that have deprived “the people” of self-rule. This allows right-wing politicians to portray themselves as the only entities able to restore the sovereignty of the people by replacing the elite and all other representative and intermediary institutions (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Mudde, 2004; Shils, 1956).

Second, they construct and advocate for the people, depicting the “people” in often partial and selective ways, but always as a unified and inherently virtuous group of good, moral and innocent people afflicted in some way by “bad others” (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Jansen, 2011; Taggart, 2000). Populists also represent themselves as hailing from the people, closely related to the people or at least empathetic to the people’s real needs and wants (Taggart, 2000).

Third, right-wing populists construct a corrupt (i.e., abusive, guilty, unaccountable, arrogant) “elite” that rules or dominates society against the will or wishes of the “people”, and at the people’s moral and material expense (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Mudde, 2004; Rooduijn, 2014). In this right-wing populist narrative, elites are represented as an alliance of

educated, cosmopolitan and professionally-minded individuals: in many cases, people of color, non-Christians, feminists, liberals, and intellectuals. These “coastal” elites supposedly occupy positions of power within government institutions, the mainstream news media, and the education system.

Fourth, right-wing populists construct and ostracize “dangerous” and “threatening” others (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Rooduijn 2014). Like elites, these “others” are contrasted to the people and depicted as the enemy of the people. While the populist depicts the elite as internal threats to the interests of the mainstream society, these others are portrayed as external threats, or threats “from below” (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). They are framed as a group that is unfairly or unjustly favored by the elite, or even as the elite’s partner in a conspiracy against the people. The right-wing populist lumps various groups into this “other” category: immigrants, ethnic minorities, their political rivals or opponents, religious groups, criminals, and communists (Abts & Rummens, 2007; Betz & Johnson, 2004; Rooduijn, 2014). Finally, right-wing populists construct and invoke an ideal of the “national community” that plays upon nostalgia for a supposedly better time, promising to restore the nation to a time that is better than the present (Taggart, 2004).

Trump’s campaign, undeniably, channeled these populist themes. His political rhetoric whipped up the people’s angst and resentments at the Democratic Party and elite political structures, channeling white conservative anger toward racial, religious and cultural minorities. Incredibly, Trump’s campaign constructed Hillary Clinton as a symbol of a corrupt, liberal globalist power elite as part of his efforts to differentiate himself as a “person of the people.” Yet Trump, the inheritor of a family fortune, an Ivy League graduate, a billionaire real estate mogul, and a reality TV celebrity, is very much part of the U.S. economic and political elite, not the common folk. That Trump differentiated himself from this “elite” in the minds of millions of Americans reflects the efficacy of his populist communications campaign. The “people” addressed by and attracted to Trump’s populist campaign, however, brought together sections of the white working class and the white petite bourgeoisie, a voting bloc that was in the past, fascism’s demographic base (Myerson, 2017; Rosenfeld, 2017; Taylor, 2017). As Shihpar (2017) notes, “white people, of all ages, education statuses, and genders voted for Trump. While it is true that out-of-work coal miners from West Virginia cast ballots for Trump, so too did the affluent in cozy suburbs” (para. 3). Not all white people voted for Trump, but millions of white people—poor and rich, uneducated and educated, rural and suburban—did (Myerson, 2017; Rosenfeld, 2017; Shihpar, 2017; Taylor, 2017). It comes as no surprise, then, that Trump attracted an explicitly white supremacist subculture aimed at re-establishing a white nationalist State. In response to

increasing diversity, political gains made by communities of color, multicultural policies and practices, and increased immigration, white supremacist groups claimed that white American citizens were victims that had lost their place in society.

Early in the 2016 U.S. election campaign, some white men saw Trump as someone who would champion them and their “race.” Using the moniker of the “alt-right” to distinguish themselves from old-fashioned loathsome white supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and the American Nazi Party, as well as from mainstream Republicanism, these *rebranded* and digitally savvy white nationalists supported Trump’s race to the White House. Keep in mind, however, that the term “alt-right” has not only been embraced by those holding overtly racist or white nationalist beliefs. The “alt-right” is a heterogeneous group of disparate people who may also hold nativist and protectionist ideologies, believe in conspiracy theories, and advocate traditionally conservative values such as limited government, low taxes, patriarchal families, evangelical Christianity and strict crime control policies (Neiwert, 2017). While their messaging retains a distinct nationalist fervor, the variety of personalities and groups bundled together under the moniker of the alt-right seeks to couch their ideology in more sanitized terms. For example, despite their evident ties to white nationalist causes, these mostly young white men claimed that their support for Trump was based purely on his political platform and his promise to “make America great again.”

Among the myriad examples, immediately after Trump’s win, white power activists in the U.S. such as Andrew Anglin, Richard Spencer, and David Duke tweeted and shared exuberance at the prospects for their racist utopia. These and other white nationalists tend to retweet and promote Trump’s tweets when they align with their ideological agenda but ignore or criticize them when they don’t. It must be noted, however, that Trump’s presidential campaign and subsequent victory did not cause these RWEs to emerge. Rather, his right-wing populist campaign emboldened the haters to openly preach and practice racist hate. In the first few weeks following Trump’s election win, The Southern Poverty Law Centre (SPLC), for example, documented more than 800 reports of hate crimes: a swastika was spray-painted on a Mexican-American family home in Washington; a Georgia-based Muslim high school teacher’s students left her a note telling her to use her headscarf to “hang herself;” and “TRUMP NATION WHITES ONLY” was painted on the wall of an African American church in Maryland (Potok, 2017).

Trump’s right-wing populist campaign tethered a message of economic prosperity and political freedom to white nationalist fantasies of returning to a time where the complexion of American society was different

and where the supremacy of whites was unquestioned, reigniting white claims to power. To be sure, many issues gave rise to Donald Trump's appeal: socio-economic inequality, precarious and alienating employment, dissatisfaction with the political process, and anger at a rigged political system designed to work for elites rather than average citizens. Trump's right-wing populist campaign filtered these economic and political grievances through the prism of white victimhood and dreams of reclaiming white power and culture or, in simple terms, to make America great again by making America white again. A similar brand of sentiment made its way north of the U.S., crossing into Canada's border.

SIGNS OF TRUMPISM IN CANADA

In the weeks following Trump's stunning victory over Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, Canada saw evidence of increased RWE activity, wherein visible minority communities were targeted – both online and on the ground – at staggering rates. This was a stark reminder that Canadians are not immune to the “appeal” of racialized politics. We discuss this at length below.

A glimpse of Canada's daily media reports following the U.S. election revealed that many Canadians were also attracted to the hateful political rhetoric that had emerged south of its borders, a marquee that Trump's “successful” campaign was built on – Islamophobic, anti-immigration, and anti-LGBTQ sentiment, to name a few. To set the tempo of what was to come, disturbing graffiti was found in a Regina, Saskatchewan neighborhood the morning following the results of the U.S. presidential election: “niggers go to the U.S. and let Trump deal with you” (Sharpe, 2016). Similarly reported incidents and other forms of hatred emerged in Canada, immediately following the results of the U.S. election.

In Ottawa, Canada's capital city, visible minority communities were the targets of several hate-inspired incidents following Trump's victory, which began on November 13th and lasted until November 19th; two synagogues, a Jewish prayer house, a mosque, and a church with a Black minister were vandalized with spray-painted racial slurs, swastikas, and white supremacist symbols (Pfeffer, 2017). Other Canadian cities experienced a similar uptick in targeted hatred against visible minorities coinciding with the outcome of the U.S. election. On November 14th, for example, Toronto residents woke up to find racist posters scattered across city neighborhoods. The hateful propaganda, titled “Hey, white person,” encouraged readers to join the alt-right movement and subscribe to a list of “pro-European” websites (McGillivray, 2016). That same morning, residents in a predominantly Chinese community in Richmond, British Columbia, were shocked to find

racist pamphlets in their mailboxes. The flyers stated: “STEP ASIDE, WHITEY! THE CHINESE ARE TAKING OVER” (Chin, 2016). Sources also reported racist graffiti in a neighborhood in Regina, Saskatchewan, wherein alarming messages were scattered across an alleyway, a resident’s garage, and a local playground. Some of the messages included “KKK is great” and “fuck niggers” (Martin, 2016). In Toronto that same week, a passer-by stopped in his tracks when he discovered a swastika spray-painted on the windshield of a car in a parking lot (Pelley, 2016).

Within a single week of Trump’s election victory, Canadian supporters of the ideal of a liberal, pluralistic and equitable multicultural Canada were shocked by the sheer volume of racist, xenophobic, and homophobic sentiment inspired by Trump’s win. However, racist attacks were not limited to the weeks immediately following the American presidential election. In November and December, for example, similar white supremacist-generated propaganda flyers were found in a neighborhood in Hamilton, Ontario, and Edmonton, Alberta, as well as on university campuses in Ontario and Quebec. The flyers read: (1) “Tired of anti-white propaganda? You are not alone” and (2) “It’s only racist when white people do it.” Flyers also directed viewers to alt-right websites for more information on what they described as a White cultural “struggle” (Carter, 2016a; Clancy, 2016). Of particular interest were those posted on the McGill University campus in Montreal. What was unique about this campaign was their attempt to borrow from Trump’s “Make America Great Again” slogan, as the messages included: “Tired of anti-white propaganda? It’s time to MAKE CANADA GREAT AGAIN!” (Shingler, 2016). The time of “Canadian greatness”—the era in Canadian history which this derivative slogan points backward to—is never qualified or described by these hateful activists. Instead, they are creating a mythical golden age of “white” Anglo-Saxon and Francophone Christian dominance, a period when Canada had fewer non-white minorities and immigrants. They are perhaps harking back to a time when multiculturalism was not Canada’s official national culture.

Nonetheless, following Trump’s win, Canadians also saw, first hand, levels of hatred escalate from pamphleting and vandalism, to verbal altercations and violence, to first-degree murder. For example, on November 14th a verbal altercation ensued between two men on a Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) streetcar. Caught on camera was a White man throwing racist insults at another man who allegedly punched him, a claim that was not supported by witnesses. When a pedestrian tried to intervene in the attack, calling the offender a “fucking racist,” the man claimed that he was proud of it, and he simply said: “Go Trump” (Rieti, 2016).

White supremacist hate and violence escalated on November 26th, as a 15-year-old youth of Muslim faith was brutally attacked by two men with a

baseball bat as he was walking home from a friend's house in Hamilton, Ontario (Carter, 2016b), resulting in serious injuries, including a cracked skull and injuries to his brain, jaw, limbs and spine (CBC News, 2016). While the police found no evidence of hate, the victim's family feared that the incident was a hate crime (Carter, 2016b). The family also showed concern about racial tensions that they have felt in their community since Trump's election win (Carter, 2016b).

The most alarming act of racist violence in Canada following the Trump win occurred on the evening of January 29, 2017. A 27-year-old White male entered the Centre Culturel Islamique de Québec in Ste. Foy, Quebec with the intention of killing Muslims. Equipped with a long gun, the lone actor murdered six Muslim men and injured 19 others while they prayed in the Centre (Perreux & Freeze, 2017). The suspect was described by his friends as a moderate conservative who, over about a year's time, became an apparent xenophobe and racist, one who overtly supported Donald Trump and far-right French politician Marine Le Pen (Dougherty, 2017). In other circles, he was described as an extremist troll who frequently posted alt-right rhetoric on the Web (McKenna, 2017). While communities across Canada banded together to support the victims and communities of the tragedy, another campaign was underway: Montreal police received 29 reports of hate incidents, both on- and offline, just three days following the massacre, with Muslims as the target (Perreux & Freeze, 2017).

Months following Trump's victory, the intolerant sentiment on which he so boldly built his politics, had rippled across Canada, both in the real world and on the Web. Online, a *Facebook* group, Canadians for Donald Trump, was created in February of 2017 with the purpose of providing Canadian Trump supporters with a space in which they could have "positive" discussions about the effects that the U.S. president would have on Canada, all while demonizing Hillary Clinton and other Trump non-supporters (Krishnan, 2017). Across major Canadian cities, a far-right vigilante group, Soldiers of Odin (SOO), patrolled the streets to "protect" Canadian citizens from what they perceived as the threat: Islam (Makuch, 2017), seeking to silence and marginalize Muslims through intimidation and a show of force. Similarly, the Canadian Coalition for Concerned Citizens (CCCC) and the SOO rallied against a motion, M-103, which was intended to limit Islamophobia and track hate crimes. On March 4th, these groups protested M-103 in Toronto, making the public claim that "Islam is Evil" and clashing with anti-Islamophobic protesters (Khandaker & Krishnan, 2017).

In the virtual realm, a reactionary white supremacist subculture has also stereotyped and attacked non-white people, on platforms ranging from

discussion forums and blogs to social media sites (i.e., *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *YouTube*), to questionable alt-right media sources. Far-right Canadian media outlets, for instance, have bombarded its subscribers with all kinds of pro-Trump, racist and xenophobic dialogue, both before and after Trump's victory. Rebel Media, a popular far-right online media platform run by Ezra Levant, a controversial Canadian far-right political activist, writer and broadcaster, has been an outright supporter of Trump, publishing countless extreme-right leaning articles on why to support him. Canadian alt-right groups have also supported Trump, directly or indirectly, by promoting similar anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic discourse online. For example, the Council of European Canadians (CEC), a far-right group that is dedicated to promoting and defending the ethnic interests of European Canadians, made the news when they urged Canadians to consider a candidate of the Conservative Party who supported Trump, Kellie Leitch, and her call for the screening of all visitors, refugees, and immigrants (Browne, 2016).

TRUMPING MULTICULTURALISM: EXPLAINING THE TRUMP EFFECT IN CANADA

A number of political factors pre-existing Trump's presidential campaign and victory established the material and ideological ground for the Trump Effect in Canada. Consider Gramsci's (1971) assertion that the appeal of any political formation depends upon "previously germinated ideologies . . . [which] come into confrontation and conflict, until only one of them, or at least a single combination of them, tends to prevail" (pp. 181-182). Ideologies of any stripe cannot flourish in unprepared soil; rather, there must be some existing conditions, which let them bloom. And indeed, Trump's right-wing populist rhetoric found fertile ground in Canada. To understand the Trump Effect's hold in Canada, we must look outwards *and* inwards to explain the conditions conducive to the ready uptake of right-wing populism in Canada.

A global-level structural factor supporting the Trump Effect in Canada is the economic, geopolitical and technological integration of Canada and the U.S. The economies of Canada and the U.S. are tied together by free-trade agreements, cross-border business partnerships, and two-way trade flows: 85 percent of Canadian exports flow to the U.S. and Canada is the U.S.'s second largest trading partner. In addition, since 9/11 the Canadian security apparatus has aligned with the U.S.'s, and successive Canadian governments have supported the U.S.-led global war on terror (Klassen & Albo, 2012; McQuaig, 2007). The global war on terror and the rise of Islamophobia in the U.S. and Canada march in lockstep: right-wing politicians, think tanks and extremist groups beat the "war on Islam" drum

loudly, spew anti-Muslim rhetoric, engage in anti-Muslim practices, and satisfy anti-Muslim bigots (Kumar, 2012; Kundnani, 2015). Furthermore, the World Wide Web, the spread of smartphones, tablets and laptop computers, and the dominance of U.S.-based digital giants such as *Google*, *YouTube*, *Facebook* and *Twitter* in Canada (Alexa, 2017) enable cross-border virtual linkages to be formed between Trump and the Canadian public and RWE in both countries. As users of U.S.-owned social media platforms, Canadians are fed a steady diet of Trump's hyperbole. His Twitter feeds reach us; his sound bites have made front page news in the Canadian media; the alt-right social media ecology and forums are accessible – and emulated – here. In short, the economic, geopolitical and technological integration of Canada with the U.S. renders Canada's border porous and enables an uninterrupted flow of American right-wing populism and Trumpism across the border.

Beneath these global-level factors and at the domestic level of politics is the fact that long before Trump burst onto the scene, Canada had already experienced its share of right-wing organizing. Like the U.S., Canada harboured a viable KKK movement in the early part of the twentieth century, giving way to a brief flurry of Nazi activism between WWI and WWII (Barrett, 1987). And again, like the U.S., Canada saw an explosion of RWE activity in the 1970s and 1980s. The atrocities of the WWII and Hitler's anti-Semitism had begun to dim; major changes in Canada's immigration laws were introduced; and unemployment and inflation were rampant (Barrett, 1987). Together, these factors lit a powder keg of pent up frustration and anxiety. Influenced by Britain's far right-wing party the National Front and British white power rock and punk music (i.e., Skrewdriver), neo-Nazi skinheads began to appear in the U.S. and Canada in the late 1970s.

The far right continued to be active in Canada into the 1990s. During this time, the Heritage Front, led by ultra-violent Wolfgang Droege, continued to grow in power, making its mark in urban centres such as Toronto (Kinsella, 2001). In Montreal, various Hammerskin groups, including the Northern Hammerskins and the Vinland Hammerskins made their presence known, engaging in a series of assaults and weapons offenses. George Burdi's band RaHoWa formed in 1989, and the Canadian branch of the World Church of Creator was heavily involved in the RWE movement, pushing the white power music scene across the country (Kinsella, 2001). In 1993, Burdi, who still maintained a close bond with Wolfgang Droege, attempted to advance white power music by launching Resistance Records. He also organized Church of the Creator paramilitary training with a former member of the Canadian Forces Airborne Regiment (Michael, 2006). In Alberta, Terry Long, leader of the Aryan Nations in Canada, and Kelly Scott Lyle, founder of Calgary's Final Solution Skinheads, gained media

attention in a series of racist activities. Matt McKay, member of the Manitoba Klan and the Final Solution Skinheads in Winnipeg was involved in a murder and a number of assaults, and Carney Nerland of Saskatchewan's Aryan Nations led the group in a series of violent crimes (Anti-Racist Canada, 2014).

More recently, as demonstrated in the previous section, right-wing movements seem to be enjoying a renaissance, spurred in large part by the ascendancy of Trump and the self-proclaimed alt-right. However, a crucial backdrop to the uptake of Trumpism in Canada is provided by reactionary trends at federal, provincial and municipal levels of government. On each of these levels, we have seen both historical and contemporary vestiges of the sort of right-wing populism onto which Trumpism could be grafted. At the federal level, the ten-year reign of Stephen Harper's Conservative government (2006-2015) ushered in a turn to the right in Canada unlike any we have seen since at least the early 1900s. Harper emerged out of the Reform party, a formation akin to the Tea Party which harnessed Western Canadian dissatisfaction with the Federal status quo, bemoaned a central Canadian liberal elite, rejected Quebec's "distinct society" claims, rolled back the welfare state, and pushed for enhanced immigration controls – classic populist positions in Canada (Sayers & Denmark, 2014). While the Reform gained traction in the West, it was rejected elsewhere, and ultimately merged with the right-wing Alliance Party to become the 'new' Conservative Party of Canada.

During the "Harper years," the Federal government blended neo-liberalism with social neoconservatism, mixing a pro-business agenda pushing free markets and privatization of collective public goods with regressive public policies extolling in what Porter (2012) described as "strong support for traditional family structures, opposition to abortion and family planning, and getting tough on crime" (p. 19). These years were also marked by militarism, a retreat from human rights, the elimination of hate speech protections, fear mongering and hate, anti-immigrant rhetoric, and restrictions on immigrants and refugees to Canada. Especially pronounced was Harper's vilification of Muslims. After the "terrorist" attacks in Quebec and on Parliament Hill in 2014, Harper introduced Bill C-51 with the claim that "Violent jihadism is not just a danger somewhere else. It seeks to harm us here in Canada" (Campion-Smith, 2015, p. 1). During the 2015 election campaign, Harper ratcheted up his Islamophobia, depicting Muslim culture as contrary to Canadian values and pandering to a bigoted base. He called Islamic culture "anti-women," declared the wearing of the hijab "offensive" and said that "We do not allow people to cover their faces during citizenship ceremonies" (Chase, 2015, p. 2).

As Prime Minister of Canada, Harper pushed for a regressive social

policy regime applauded by the far-right (Mallea, 2001; McDonald, 2011). Some of Harper's policy initiatives included: (1) the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act (2015), to revoke Canadian citizenship for select Canadians for "national security" reasons; (2) Bill C51 (2015), which was a drastic expansion of police powers; (3) the Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act (2015), which tacitly targeted Muslims; (4) the Oath of Citizenship Act (2015), which intended to constrain religious observance; (5) refusal of international aid to organizations offering family-planning and birth control counseling; (6) a ban on federal scientists' public discussion of research contradicting party ideologies; and (7) elimination of the long-form census, long used in planning evidence-based public policy.

Cumulatively, the rhetoric, policy proposals and strategies unleashed by the Harper years predated and paralleled some of those mobilized by Trump and supported the growth of a right-wing populist movement in Canada (Chwalisz, 2015; Prince, 2015). However, the move to the right did not end with Harper's electoral defeat in 2015. Significantly, "Trump-lite" figures have emerged in the context of the subsequent 2016/2017 race for leadership of the Conservative party. A key contender, Kellie Leitch, spoke of creating a tip line for reporting "barbaric cultural practices" as well as a mechanism to screen potential immigrants and refugees for "anti-Canadian values" (Tunney, 2016). Channeling Trump's right-wing populism, Leitch tweeted that Trump's election win meant that "our American cousins threw out the elite" and that the win represented an "exciting message that needs to be delivered in Canada as well" (Stone, 2016, p. 2). Observing the groundswell of support for right-wing populism to the south, Kevin O'Leary, a second "Trump-lite" contender, joined the fray in January 2017. O'Leary shared much with Trump: bombast, egotism, and reality TV fame. Like Trump, he promised to "drain the swamp" but at least refrained from capitalizing on Trump's racism and xenophobia. While the Harper administration had the broadest and deepest effect on creating the conditions for a resurgence of the far-right in Canada (Perry & Scrivens, 2016), Trump's win encouraged the embrace of right-wing populism by conservative leadership contenders like Leitch and O'Leary.

At the provincial level of governance, additional signs of a pre-Trump right-wing populist politics in Canada abound: Alberta and Quebec are especially relevant cases in this regard. Alberta has long been an incubator of right-wing populism. It was home to the anti-cultural diversity "Ralph Klein Revolution," headquarters of the moral conservative and religious right-embracing Reform Party and the centre for Harper's political base (Lund, 2006). Alberta continues to be a bastion of right-wing populism (Rayside et al., 2012), with the Wildrose Party being a case in point. Part of the populist Wildrose-Alliance, Wildrose is a far-right party that panders to

the ideology of religious conservatives and moral absolutes (Rayside et al., 2012). For example, in the run-up to the 2012 election, Wildrose's Edmonton candidate, Allan Hunsperger, wrote in a now infamous blog that homosexuals would suffer for eternity in a "lake of fire." Just two days later, another candidate made these racist comments:

I think as a Caucasian I have an advantage [. . .] When different community leaders such as a Sikh leader or a Muslim leader speak, they really speak to their own people in many ways. As a Caucasian, I believe that I can speak to all the community (Graveland, 2012, p. 1).

Initially, the Wildrose Party faithful failed to challenge these divisive statements, lending credence to their characterization as a reactionary right-wing party. In spite of – or perhaps because of – the party's stance on social issues, they led the race right up to the election. While they did not win the election, they had remarkable success in southern and rural areas of the province, and became the official opposition. Clearly, the party touched a resonant chord with voters – a chord very much in tune with the Trumpism that would follow just a few years later.

Arguably, Quebec provides the richest illustration of the readiness of a province in Canada to take up the sort of right-wing populist rhetoric championed by Trump, particularly with respect to Islamophobia. Since the mid-1990s, Quebec has been the "epicentre" for institutional challenges to public expressions of Muslim identity. It is the province where Islamophobic politics is most pronounced and divisive. This is evidenced in multiple ways, from long standing attempts to bar Muslim women and girls from wearing hijabs to school, to 21st century polls expressing a growing public opinion in Quebec that immigration from Islamic countries should be reduced (Helly, 2004), to the creation of a Statement of Values in Herouxville in 2007 and in Gatineau in 2011 aimed at banning people from publicly wearing religious symbols and attire.

The Parti Québécois (PQ) and its previous Premier, Pauline Marois, were especially prone to this position. In 2012, the PQ proposed a Charter of Values to ban religious expression in the public sector (sans the Christian crucifix). While the Charter was "dressed in the guise of narratives of gender equality and secular values" (Ameli & Merali, 2014, p. 39), it actually targeted Muslims. Far from backing a ban on symbols of Christianity, Judaism or Hinduism, most PQ leaders and supporters focused on removing hijab from public spaces. PQ premier Marois declared the hijab to be an unequivocal symbol of women's oppression; PQ Minister for Democratic Institutions argued that the ban was a necessary defence against the "Islamization of Quebec"; a TV commentator said she wouldn't trust a nurse wearing a headscarf; and the former president of the Quebec

Women's Federation said she would change lines in order to avoid being served by a covered woman (Mathelet, 2015).

While Marois' electoral defeat in 2014 put the Charter to rest, the Islamophobic rhetoric did not disappear. The PQ's newest leader (Jean-François Lisée) pushed for a ban on burqas during his election campaign saying that women could hide an AK-47. Islamophobic rhetoric continues to be shored up by "Radio poubelle" (shock radio) and the conservative tabloid news, which also rants against immigrants, non-whites, Muslims, LGBTQ communities, social justice warriors and threatening "Others" in their midst. Most recently, Bill 62, which requires Quebeckers who receive or provide public services to remove their religious face coverings, was passed in Québec in 2017. This has sparked considerable public and political debate, and the 'religious neutrality law' has since been challenged by the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (NCCLA) in Quebec Superior Court on the basis of it targeting Muslim women (Leblanc, 2018).

Given the above, it is no coincidence that RWE groups are probably most visible in Quebec. The German-based Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West (PEGIDA), for example, has been a growing presence in Quebec as of 2015 (Toronto Star, 2015), and Quebec was where Alexandre Bissonette, a RWE terrorist and dutiful *Facebook* follower of Marine Le Pen and Donald Trump, shot and killed six Canadian Muslim men at prayer. A final level of analysis for explaining the pre-determinations of the Trump Effect in Canada is municipal. In Toronto, Canada's largest urban centre, then-mayor, Rob Ford, was a masterful populist. Ford shared many of Trump's traits: egotistical, overbearing, an outsider, and someone who would help the people take back the power from entitled elites. Kipfer and Saberi (2014) capture the essence of Ford's right-wing populist strategy, noting that:

Ford's belligerent interventions deepened existing social divides by pitting an imagined "Ford Nation"—car-driving, home-owning suburban family men, proper "taxpayers" like himself—against a range of enemy others: City workers, downtowners, cyclists, transit users, refugees, gays and lesbians, protestors, and "thugs" (gang members). Ford thus laced the anti-establishment mentality of small property and business owners with vengeful homophobic, racist, sexist, anti-labour, and anti-environmentalist elements (p. 134).

The irony was that Ford, like Trump, came from a well-heeled family business and was himself a member of the economic elite. And Ford, like Trump, seemed immune to the rules of politics or society as a whole; no "indiscretion" stuck to them; consequences for them were in short supply. Yet that did not stop either one of them from presenting themselves as

champions of the people against corrupt and smug liberal political insiders. Ford promised to “stop the gravy train,” just as Trump promised to “drain the swamp.” When caught in compromising and often illegal activities, Ford, like Trump, castigated the so-called “bias” of the news media and chastised his political opponents for conspiring against him (Kipfer & Saberi, 2014). The endless scandals and bombastic claims and deflection of criticisms that characterized Ford’s career as mayor of Toronto may be repeated by Donald Trump.

TRUMPING THE TRUMP EFFECT IN CANADA

While the Trump Effect is real in the U.S. and in Canada, its power to shape the hearts and minds of Americans and Canadians is being challenged. Trump is far from “hegemonic” in the U.S., and his presidency does not have the consent or the approval of the majority of American citizens. According to a 2016 Pew Research Centre poll, Trump took office as the most disliked U.S. president in modern history (Waldman, 2016). A year later, Pew found that a mere 16 percent of Americans “liked” how Trump conducts himself (Pew Research Center, 2017b). Moreover, Pew further noted that “Trump and many of his key policies are broadly unpopular around the globe, and ratings for the U.S. have declined steeply in many nations” (Pew Research Center, 2017a, p. 1). In Canada the dislike of Trump is widespread. A Forum Research poll, for example, highlights how Canada’s approval of Trump is very low, with 72 percent of Canadians saying they disapprove of Trump’s conduct (Forum Research, 2017).

Significantly, Canada represents some countervailing factors that may circumvent the Trump Effect and slow the worldwide spread of right-wing populism. After a decade in power, Canada’s then-Prime Minister Stephan Harper was defeated in 2016 by the Liberal Party leader, Justin Trudeau, who at the time promoted Canadian multiculturalism and promised a more inclusive approach to negotiating identities and cultural differences. An additional blow to right-wing populism is reflected in the unpopularity of Kellie Leitch, as well as the defeat of both the Parti Quebecois in Quebec and the Wildrose Party in Alberta. On the whole, the Canadian public is averse to the kind of cultural chauvinism and xenophobia expressed by Trump and the alt-right (Ambrose & Mudde, 2015).

Despite the deep integration of Canada and the U.S., the countries still diverge in important ways. Numerous Environics polls, for example, highlight broad Canadian support for values very distinct from those conveyed by Trump: equality and equity; inclusivity; gender and sexual diversity; women’s rights; immigration; and significantly, the role of the Canadian state in safeguarding these through the use of public funds (Adams, 2013).

Canada and the U.S. are still different countries. Although neo-fascists have gained some ideological ground in Canada, Canada's multicultural society and mainstream public opinion is not aligned with the extremist ideology of white nationalism that is capitalizing on and Canadianizing the Trump Effect. Some Canadian politicians, citizens, and social movements have been working to counter ideologies of hate in Parliament, on *Facebook* pages, in the streets – anywhere they can. Moreover, Canada's federal and provincial governments are actively promoting anti-hate initiatives and policies. At the federal level, Member of Parliament (MP) Iqra Khalid introduced M-103 calling for the government to “recognize the need to quell the increasing public climate of hate and fear” and “condemn Islamophobia and all forms of systemic racism and religious discrimination.” (Levitz, 2017, para. 4). At the provincial level, governments are also condemning acts of hate. Ontario recently passed a motion that condemns “all forms of hatred, hostility, prejudice, racism and intolerance,” rebukes “the growing tide of anti-Muslim rhetoric and sentiments,” “denounce[s] hate-attacks, threats of violence and hate crimes against people of the Muslim faith,” and “condemn[s] all forms of Islamophobia” (CBC News, 2017, para. 1). That province has also recently enacted its three-year Anti-Racism Strategic Plan, intended to counter systemic racism across the province. Importantly, there is a resurgence of “bottom up” grassroots campaigns to counter the Trump Effect in Canada. Canadians representing diverse social movements drawing from communities of faith, peace and anti-war networks and democratic socialist groups have countered (and outnumbered) every public rally organized by the Trump-loving CCCC (described above) in Canada's major cities. Anti-racist (and anti-fascist) organizing and activism is growing across Canada, and this is a direct expression of organizing “from below.” Without such organizing by a plurality of local activist groups - one of the most significant being the Coalition Against White Supremacy and Islamophobia (CAWSI), with over six thousand members—these anti-racist demonstrations would not exist.

At this juncture, there is a need for a progressive Left populist vision for the U.S. and Canada that attempts to ameliorate the real material conditions that give rise to right-wing populists like Trump. In both countries, the richest 1 percent have increased their share of total national income while the poorest and middle-income groups have fallen behind. The typical American CEO pockets about 340 times more than the average worker's wage; Canada's top CEOs take in 193 times the average worker's wage (Conference Board of Canada, 2017; Jackson, 2015; Paddon, 2016; Yalnizvan, 2010). These dire economic conditions and the dispossession and grievances they entail are capitalized on by right-wing populists like Trump and by racist movements more broadly.

Trump and his supporters in the alt-right movement craftily channeled real economic grievances into attacks on racialized and demonized others, not toward “class struggles” aimed at the heavy concentration of wealth and power noted above. Of course, economic conditions do not singularly cause racism, but deteriorating economic conditions have historically shaped receptivity to racist white supremacist ideology, as promulgated by right-wing politicians. Consider the rise of fascism in Germany, or the ascendancy of Thatcher in the U.K. and Reagan in the U.S., which were also tied to the demonization of immigrants and moral panics around racialized urban crime. In periods of capitalist downturns and rising inequality (such as the period we have been living through since the collapse of the world economy in 2008), large numbers of people are drawn to right-wing populists and thus also drawn to taking up “race war” ideology, instead of fighting for social justice, fairer redistribution of wealth and a more equal society. As Taylor (2017) reminds us,

Trump and the Republican Party explain the inequality experienced by workers — white workers in particular — as the fault of Mexican immigrants who steal jobs; or the fault of black criminals who make us unsafe; or the fault of Muslim terrorists who make us spend billions on defense. And meanwhile, they pursue policies intended to destroy the living standards of those same workers. (para. 41)

To trump the Trump Effect in the U.S. and in Canada, we must challenge right-wing extremism with a multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional response (Scrivens & Perry, 2017). We must also challenge the racist ideology that divides working people and the material conditions that foster the rise of right-wing demagogues. To this end, we conclude with a call for a two-pronged “progressive” strategy: (1) an anti-racist left internationalist populist alternative to the white nationalist populist right; and, (2) participation in and support for the progressive social movements currently struggling at global, national, provincial and local levels and pushing for the development of public policies that aim to take society beyond the material conditions that have historically enabled marginal fascists to go mainstream.

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