

THE ENTANGLEMENTS OF CANADA'S NATIONAL IDENTITY BUILDING AND
VIETNAMESE CANADIAN COMMUNITY CONFLICTS:
RACIAL CAPITALIST DEMOCRACY AND THE COLD WAR NEOLIBERAL
MULTICULTURAL SUBJECT

ANH PHUNG NGO

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Abstract

This study weaves Cold War Epistemology, critical multiculturalism, racial capitalism, and critical refugee studies to theorize how the Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity is related to Canada's national identity formation. Adopting a critical ethnography methodology and discourse analysis, this study asks: What are the conditions of community conflicts within the Vietnamese community and how are those conflicts related to the processes of Canadian national identity formation? The production and contestation of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity in the making of Canadian national identity is traced through three major sites of analysis. This first site is the debate on the *Memorial to Victims of Communism* as captured in the media. The second site is the parliamentary and community commemoration of the "Fall of Saigon" on April 30th, 1975 which includes debates on the *Journey to Freedom Day Act* and local community events. The final site is a Toronto community agency conflict of identity. This study reveals the logic of racial capitalist democracy underlying Canadian national identity as free, humanitarian, democratic, and peace-making. This is constructed through the production of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity as a particular model minority and model refugee framed within Cold War neoliberal and multicultural discourse with significant consequences to the wellbeing of the community.

Dedication

To my parents, Đào Thị Tứ and Ngô Sách Vinh.

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I have drafted this piece in my mind hundreds of times over the years of completing this dissertation, waiting for the long-anticipated moment I would be able to write it post-defense. But now I find I am at a loss for words.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

April 30, 2015

On Thursday April 30th I went to Ottawa to mark the 40th anniversary of the Fall of Saigon as a participant to observe the Vietnamese Canadian's commemoration as part of my dissertation study. It was a beautiful sunny day and Vietnamese Canadians came out in droves on Parliament Hill for the celebration of the first Journey to Freedom Day which is a national commemoration of the April 30th anniversary of the end of the war in Vietnam. I estimated about 600-1000 people were there and heard that 6 full buses were from Toronto alone.

I remember a scene on the greens in front of the Parliament building that made my heart well with emotion and tears come to my eyes. I stood next to this elderly woman at the front of the crowd near the stage. She was petite, about 5-foot-tall and no more than 120 pounds. She held a large, heavy South Vietnamese flag which attached to a solid wooden 2x2 post that was taller than she. This woman stood in this uncomfortable position for over 2 hours without setting the flag down, without leaning on others or asking another to hold the flag. Her face showed none of the tiredness and weariness I myself felt for having stood in one spot in the sun for over two hours. Instead, her face beamed a large, bright smile. A smile of pride, of relief, and of joy. Her pride, relief, and joy can only be explained by her being at this event, this celebration of Vietnamese Canadians who had received official national state recognition for their suffering. April 30th, 1975 was the date the war in Vietnam ended by the withdrawal of American forces and the subsequent surrender of the South Vietnamese regime to the North Vietnamese. Forty years later, April 30th, 2015, was the first celebration of the National Journey to Freedom Day in Canada. This day signified and encompassed all the hardship, loss, terror, literal and

metaphoric death of lives and dreams, but also of new beginnings and new lives, and new identities. This day has not been recognized before for this woman. She did not get this recognition from her former home state of Vietnam. She waited decades for this official recognition. My heart was bursting with conflicting emotions. I felt her joy, her relief, and her pride. Relief for having her sacrifices of leaving home, fleeing by sea, leaving countless family members and graves behind.

I felt belonging at this event where I was a Vietnamese among other Vietnamese. I heard the language of my childhood and my home. I was accepted, praised as a younger adult who is taking on the cause of the older dying generation. I was a Canadian-educated Vietnamese youth who “kept my roots” and can speak the Vietnamese language, something that many of the children of these people cannot do. An elderly couple offered me a Vietnamese bánh mì (sandwich), from Nhu Lan bakery, located at the intersection of Jane and Finch, Toronto, where they purchased it very early in the morning and carried it on the 5-hour trip to Ottawa. Jane and Finch is where many of them continue to live on limited means. But I also felt conspicuous, like I did not belong. Because I did not belong. I was not there to celebrate an identity that, in my view, only serves to divide a group of people. This identity, these celebrations scare me. My parents taught me to avoid “anti-communist” events and protests. The veteran men in their preserved military uniform make me nervous, they remind me of my mother’s fragmented stories of oppressive military personnel who terrorized her rural home in South Vietnam. I was there as a prying scholar, to observe, to listen in, to try to make meaning of people’s lives.

Then on top of it all, this crowd of happy smiling, proud people who finally got some recognition and had their terrors and pains validated, was told to sing happy birthday to then Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper. Which they did. I was enraged. My mind was

screaming. My heart was pounding, and my face became flush. I was so angry tears came into my eyes; that this group of refugees, who endured and continue to endure all manner of systemic challenges and barriers, was now singing happy birthday to the leader of Canada. To the man who, to me, represents the local and global oppression structuring our society in Canada and abroad. These people, finally receiving official recognition, who must do so in a flat singular identity, sang so happily. I saw the provoking of sentiment of the leaders of this group, the organized Vietnamese community, amongst its members. The leaders pointed to the lowered flag at the top of the Parliament building, a flag flying at half-mast. The leader at the microphone said, “look, look at that, the government of Canada is mourning the loss of our country with us. That is why they are flying the flag at half-mast”. In reality, what had happened is that the Speaker of the Senate, Pierre Claude Nolin, had passed away earlier that week¹.

Introduction

My study theorizes how the Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity is related to Canada’s national identity formation. This study reveals the logic of racial capitalist democracy underlying Canadian national identity as free, humanitarian, democratic, and peace-making as constructed through the production of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity as a Cold War neoliberal multicultural subject. Adopting a critical ethnography methodology, this study traces the production and contestation of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity in the making of Canadian national identity through two major national debates and community conflicts. First, I examine the debate on the National Memorial to Victims of Communism captured in the media which

¹ See: Parliament of Canada, “The honourable Pierre Claude Nolin.” Retrieved from <https://sencanada.ca/en/speakers/pierreclaudenolin/home>; “National flag of Canada half-masting notices”, Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/half-masting-notices.html>

illustrates the imaginations around the Canadian national identity. Second, I trace the discourses on Canadian national identity and Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity in parliamentary and community debates focused on the commemoration of the “Fall of Saigon” on April 30th, 1975. Third, I examine the negotiations of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity within a Toronto community agency as a conflict of identity which threatened the wellbeing of the agency and its members. A concurrent timeline of the events occurring in the sites of study are located in Appendix C. I use discourse analysis to trace the subject formation of Vietnamese Canadians concurrently with Canada’s national identity building by weaving the analysis of local sites of identity production with the national and community sites of identity building projects. Throughout this study, Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity is key to illuminating the process of Canadian national identity building.

The vignette I start with at the beginning of this chapter is a poignant example of the conflicting and complex productions of identity reproduced by Vietnamese Canadians within the limitations of social political conditions of knowing. Vietnamese Canadians are living the aftermath of the war in Vietnam, a war that is situated within the larger international context of the Cold War.

The Cold War was an ideological war between Western democratic nations led by the United States and the communist/socialist bloc dominated by the Soviet Union and its allies. The Cold War started in 1946 when the Americans formalized a policy of containment of the Soviet Union and ended in 1991 with the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) (Lau, 2012). Ideologically, the Cold War was positioned as the struggle between democracy and communism and was presented as such, but its underlying binary is in fact capitalism versus communism. These superpowers sought control over newly independent former colonies and

fought proxy wars in the regional conflicts of these nations. In the name of containment of communism, American forces intervened in the civil struggle in Vietnam, now commonly referred to as the Vietnam War. The outcome of this war is the so-called “Fall of Saigon” in 1975 when American forces formally withdrew from Vietnam and the political and military forces from North Vietnam took over the South. The end of the war in Vietnam resulted in mass international migration of the Vietnamese people; 130, 254 Vietnamese arrived in Canada during the refugee receiving period between 1975-1990 alone (Employment and Immigration Canada, n.d.; Statistics Canada, 2016).

The Vietnamese Canadians now in Canada, and depicted in my opening vignette, include those who have directly fought in the war in Vietnam, have experienced the violence of colonization, de-colonization, and civil war on their own bodies, and have witnessed the destruction and violence on their homes, communities, and country. These are the same people who survived the refugee flight from Vietnam on the makeshift fishing boats, languished in substandard refugee camps, and experienced the painful re-settlement in a foreign and not always welcoming country. This is one key element of the Vietnamese Canadians’ subjectivity as survivors of the civil war and political exiles of socialist Vietnam. These people mourn the loss of their South Vietnam, thus were enlivened when they thought the Canadian flag flying at the Peace Tower on Parliament was lowered at half-mast, sympathetic to their annual commemoration of loss on April 30th. But this simple action points to the exploitation of their sentiments, as the Vietnamese Canadian’s mourning of their country on April 30th has been re-written as a celebration of them finding refuge. This is another key element of their subjectivity: the mourning of the loss of their country has been re-cast as a celebration of refuge.

Vietnamese Canadians possess conditional belonging into multicultural Canada. This multicultural Canada enables the celebration of a political, “Fall of Saigon” day as a National day of heritage re-written as the “Journey to Freedom”. In order to be celebrated in Canada, these Vietnamese Canadians must subscribe to the “Fall of Saigon”, an Americanized rewriting of the civil war in Vietnam with heavy international intervention and now a “Journey to Freedom”, a Canadianized rewriting of the refugee passage as a story of the “Indochinese” victims and Canadian national refugee haven. Finally, regarding the Vietnamese Canadians, this vignette points to the significance of gender for the Vietnamese diaspora in their entanglement with political-cultural Vietnam. This mutually sustaining relationship is framed by the Cold War epistemology, as gender is taken as the signifier of a particular version of heritage and tradition that the Vietnamese Canadians defend in their identity negotiation. This opening vignette not only describes Vietnamese Canadians, it also describes Canada.

This vignette highlights the national (and international) identity formation of Canada as a peaceful and safe haven for refugees which undergirds and overshadows Canada’s history of settler colonial violence to Indigenous peoples and the ongoing oppression of and discrimination against racialized communities. In this identity building project, the Vietnamese “refugee” subjectivity is significant as it illuminates the processes of Canadian nation-building. Canadian national identity building projects, such as the Memorial to Victims of Communism (2008-ongoing) and the Journey to Freedom Day Act (2015) allow Canada to narrate itself as a benevolent place of freedom, democracy, and human rights. Canada offers these naturalized “gifts” to lesser Others such as the Vietnamese “Indochinese” by means of giving refuge, and in return, Vietnamese Canadians prove themselves worthy of this giving by being grateful refugees, such as by singing happy birthday to the leader of Canada (Nguyễn, 2012). This opening vignette

then, calls for a critique about the popular discourse and the theoretical literature, particularly social work informed literature, about the Vietnamese community as a particular ideal refugee subject and its co-constitution with Canada.

In this chapter, I will review the context of this study which will include my personal entry into the topic of study and a brief review of the literature on Vietnamese Canadians to highlight the gaps in knowledge. I will address these gaps with a review of my research questions and central arguments. I argue the significance of this study as both of practice in working towards the wellbeing of the Vietnamese Canadian community and as a critical and theoretical point on Canada's investment in the sustained production of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity for its own identity building, which has significant negative consequences on the wellbeing of the community. Finally, I end this chapter with a roadmap to organize the remainder of my thesis.

Background: "Problems" in Vietnamese community

This study is borne out of my 10 plus years of working as a social worker with the Vietnamese population in Toronto. I first worked with them in the area of mental health, both in the community and in acute settings, then as a leader of a Vietnamese settlement agency. I saw firsthand the challenges this population faced: low incomes, precarious working situations, generational and cultural gaps, limited English proficiency, racism, and unresolved hurt and trauma from the war and refugee experience which exacerbate - and are exacerbated by - the structural and systemic challenges of living in a neoliberal, racially hierarchical society. I also witnessed opportunities for community development and mobilization, and community success. I saw firsthand the energy of tireless volunteers from both senior and youth generations. I saw this

community mobilize to fundraise for victims of natural disasters and petition for the Canadian government to accept the remaining Vietnamese refugees stranded and left stateless in Thailand for over 18 years. I saw warm, caring community gatherings where individuals shared stories, recipes, and tips on wellbeing and health.

On the other hand, in my role as a community worker towards community mobilization and change, I saw the intense conflicts and negotiations around identity – around which political flag should be hung in the Vietnamese non-profit organizations, and which flags to salute at the community celebrations. Of course, for this Vietnamese Canadian diaspora, in the public space of community, there has always been only one acceptable flag: the flag of the Republic of South Vietnam. The conflict has not been about which flag to hang, but rather whether to hang the flag at all. This pressure to reproduce the dominant identity that embraces the Republic of South Vietnam flag perches on the periphery of the above community development and mobilization activities as a constant and looming threat to community wellbeing. Complicating this observation is the role of Canadian officials who take an active part in supporting the Vietnamese Canadian identity that perpetuates Cold War politics. This dominant identity as Cold War anti-communists is not solely confined and reproduced within the Vietnamese community, but rather influenced and sustained by larger projects of knowledge production. While from a place of benevolent helping, one source of knowledge production is the academic literature informing social work, which contributes to and sustains a flattened Vietnamese Canadian identity.

As I trace in chapter 4 on the context of Canada and the Cold War, Canada has a very different relationship with Vietnam and with Vietnamese-Canadians, yet our literature does not reflect this. The effect of this on our understanding of and our relation to the Vietnamese in

Canada is that our knowing of them is through the homogenizing Orientalist gaze (see Said, 1979) which folds the Vietnamese as a distinctive group into the broad-based category of Pan-Asian. The academic literature on the Vietnamese in Canada makes invisible this subject as one distinct group apart from other Asian subjects within of the pan-Asian category. This means that our knowledge of the Vietnamese is through the lens used to view an umbrella group of Asians in Canada. I draw upon academic texts that social work practice and research relies heavily upon to understand how the Vietnamese are constructed. This body of literature is significant because of its transmutability. In other words, the knowledge that is produced and circulated about persons and groups have an impact on the material services and resources allotted to them through the practice of social work. I follow the tradition of critical scholars who have unraveled the colonial, racial, gendered, and ableist subtexts within the social work informed literature specifically on the topic of working with immigrants and refugees (Park, 2006; Sakamoto, 2003; Tsang, 2001). I trace this literature as profoundly neoliberal, multicultural and invested in the racial capitalist nation-building project to the extent that it loses sight of the complexities of the Vietnamese Canadian community that I am outlining in this work. The academic works include the disciplines of education, health, migration studies, and refugee studies. The databases chosen for critical review are Social Services Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, PsychINFO, and Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts. An examination of keywords related to Vietnamese immigrants and/or refugees to Canada in these four databases was conducted on articles published from 1970 to 2015. This search yielded a total of 85 articles.

A critical reading of the literature reveals the dominant construction of the Vietnamese's exceptionalism as legitimate and productive refugees several decades after the end of the Vietnam War. This construction, when set in the context of 'bogus' refugees or refugee

smugglers, contributes to the discourse of Vietnamese exceptionalism. This legitimacy is narrated in their rightful flight and adequate suffering in their countries of origin (Chan & Indra, 1987; Phan, Rivera & Roberts-Wilbur, 2005). In describing the Vietnamese refugees' departure from their country of origin, the theme of a rightful flight, which constitutes legitimate "refugeeness", was used repeatedly. Beiser (1999), a respected expert on Vietnamese-Canadians, contributes to this conversation in his work to draw attention to and support for the refugees. He states, the Vietnamese "refugees are survivors of oppression, plunged into poverty, purified by their sufferings, and boundlessly grateful for safe haven" (p.170). The discussion of legitimate refugees contrasts with and sets them apart from other arrivals in the official context of 'bogus' refugees, smugglers, and 'economic' migrants (Bradimore & Bauder, 2011; Mountz, 2004).

Few critical works contest the Vietnamese's legitimacy, such as Allen and Hiller who, in 1985, provided an early critique of the legitimate refugee discourse of the Vietnamese by tracing the individuals' process of becoming a refugee as active agents rather than hapless victims on a "spontaneous flight". The researchers describe the refugees' strategic organization, such as the grouping of family and friends into escape ventures, solicitation of means of transport, and the payment and bribing of various officials. These activities have since been cited as evidence of refugee smuggling operations in the 1999 case of Fujian Chinese refugees and the 2009 case of the Tamil refugees, yet Vietnamese refugees are rarely, if ever, remembered as such (see: Ashutosh & Mountz, 2012; Bradimore & Bauder, 2011; Krishnamurti, 2013). The discourse of the Vietnamese as exceptional constructs upholds them as legitimate refugees to be positioned innately against other racialized groups who are constructed as 'bogus' refugees.

Not only are Vietnamese Canadians portrayed as legitimate refugees, but they are also viewed as productive. Here the Vietnamese are described as a model minority in education,

refugee adaptation, and participation in capitalism, such as attainment of credit cards as a measure of progress (Dorais, 1991; Johnson, 2007; Phan, 2003). Productive refugees are those who are able to overcome their traumas and hardship to gain financial independence after a period of resettlement and are no longer a burden on the state for charity. The frequent description of the refugees' dire situations under communism compared to their successes in capitalist Canada implies movement, positive difference, and progress.

Vietnamese refugees are described as "pathetic wretches struggling to escape from a nation which sought to enslave its own population" where the evil is communism that created the conditions forcing the flight of the nation's people (Montgomery, 1991, p. 89). Beiser, Johnson, and Turner (1993) describe the Vietnamese refugees as "survivors of terror, upheaval, and forced incarceration" (p.731). In infantilizing the refugees, Montgomery (1991) compares theories of education as important to economic adaptation using the data collected on refugees to that of previous studies on youth. This evokes images of the Vietnamese refugees as underdeveloped, uneducated, and in similar stages of education and career readiness as the youth of Canada. Thirty years post-Vietnam War, Beiser (2004) recounts the model refugees' transition into model immigrants: "Within ten years, employment rates for the former Southeast Asian refugees were higher than the Canadian average, and there was no apparent difference in the rate of Southeast Asians versus native-born Canadian use of public services" (p.55). This celebration of "progress" from communism to capitalism will be further illustrated in chapter 6, when I analyze the discursive construction of the Vietnamese via the debates around the April 30th, "Fall of Saigon" event. For now, as traced in the literature reviewed, by appealing to the public on the successes of refugee rescue and resettlement, these scholars contribute to the discussion of this

particular group as ‘exceptional’ thus overshadowing the struggles many of them may continue to experience.

The construction of the Vietnamese as desirable in both their legitimacy as refugees and productivity not only disciplines other lesser desired refugees and racialized subjects, but also serves to uphold Canada’s innocence and superiority as a refugee haven. This move veils Canada’s own oppression and violence at home against the Indigenous peoples and racialized subjects and abroad in its participation and complicity in international conflicts. The Vietnamese’ legitimacy was constructed in the 1980s to serve Canada’s nation-building project on the international stage as a leader in humanitarian rescue and refuge (Nguyễn, 2013). As I will review in chapter 4, during the time of destructive American action against another sovereign nation, Canada’s role as its ally and chief arms supplier in the Vietnam War was quietly ignored as the focus was kept on the humanitarian rescue and resettlement of war-created refugees. Additionally, critical theorists demonstrate how the construction of Asian Canadians as the desirable immigrant subject serve to dismiss and delegitimize the political claims of Indigenous peoples and nonconforming racialized others. Commonly referred to as the model minority discourse, Asian Canadians’ successes are linked to ‘cultural’ factors, thus leaving implicit the understanding that other groups’ problems are also linked to cultural factors rather than ongoing colonialism intersecting with structural racism, sexism, homophobia, and classism (Pon, 2000).

I trace this literature to highlight the challenge we have in social work as a profession that is invested in community health and well-being. In examining the mutually sustaining relationship of Canada to Vietnamese Canadians based on what is captured in the literature, the discourse of multiculturalism continues to assign a flat subjecthood on this community in relation to Canada. Yet it does not account for the nuanced complexity of what is being seen on

the ground in terms of the subject formation of Vietnamese-Canadians in co-constituting Canada's national identity building. Here Vietnamese Canadians are only known as refugees to a peaceful haven, such as Canada. The socio-historical and political contexts of their precondition of being in Canada and the diaspora's very formation rooted in histories of violent displacements are left out, as well as their continued interaction with and constitution of the Canadian national identity, now over 40 years after the conflicts that prompted their arrival to Canada. Finally, what is known of Vietnamese Canadians renders invisible the work of the Canadian state in producing and sustaining Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity and community conflicts. Based on my observations of identity negotiation in the community and informed by the gaps in the literature, I began to interrogate Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity formation as co-constituting Canadian national identity building.

Research Problem: Flattened Vietnamese subjecthood and Canadian nation-building

To return to my opening vignette during the celebration of the Journey to Freedom Day, a national day of heritage to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the "Fall of Saigon", what alarmed me in that moment was the official misrecognition of Vietnamese Canadians by the government of Canada. Vietnamese Canadians are not a homogenous group. They continue to experience the lingering hurts of a "civil war" – one that was produced and sustained by external powers including the United States and the Soviet Union as part of the international Cold War struggle - within their generation: personal and collective loss, community distrust and fragmentation from unaccounted and unaccountable past transgressions and crimes during the war. Canada is now home to Vietnamese from both sides of the civil war in Vietnam. An official act of recognition to this group, while it may be a long-awaited validation for many, as in the

case of the woman in my vignette, also silences the experiences and perspectives of others who are now excluded from the identity of Vietnamese Canadians. Given the significance of this political move, I wondered, what is the investment of Canada in Vietnamese Canadians' identity?

I wanted to theorize and account for the socio-political and historical context that frames Vietnamese Canadians within Canada, and connect this to current national identity building projects, while keeping the focus on the local community's wellbeing. Thus, my final research question is "What are the conditions of community conflicts within the Vietnamese community and how are those conflicts related to the processes of Canadian national identity formation?" Within this I explore the following sub questions:

1. How are Vietnamese Canadians invested in Canadian identity?
2. How does Canada constitute Vietnamese subjectivity?
3. What is Canada's stake in Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity?

In order to address these questions, I searched for theories that inform me of the lingering effects of the Cold War, Canada's current national identity set within the historical context of a white settler colonial society, and the Vietnamese as a critical refugee subject. These theories support my central argument that Canadian national identity is embedded in a racial capitalist democracy logic which is constructed through the production of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity as a Cold War neoliberal multicultural subject, by elaborating and nuancing the elements of both identity and subjectivity for Canada and the Vietnamese Canadian. I also theorize how the two emerge from and sustain one another. Below, I will expand on these theories and their reinforcement of one another in pursuit of my research study.

Theoretical lens

The theoretical lens that informs this study includes: critical multiculturalism, racial capitalism, and Cold War epistemology. In addition, I rely on critical refugee studies literature with a focus on the Vietnamese diasporic community to contextualize my study of Vietnamese Canadians against an international Vietnamese diaspora.

I take critical multiculturalism as my starting point as it allows the tracing of Canada's national identity projects in today's context to Canada's history as a colonial continuity. Heron (2007) terms colonial continuities as a set of "deeply racialized, interrelated constructs of thought...circulated from the era of empire" (p.6) which continues to be instructive in the discursive production of identity. Canada's national identity building has always been and continues to be insistent on hiding its violence and genocide of the Indigenous peoples on this territory. The national identity building projects I study in this thesis can be seen as a continuation of this by upholding Canada's moral superiority as a global leader in refugee protection despite the real historical and current acts of racial violence against the Indigenous and racialized peoples in Canada. The celebration of heritage and diversity mask deeply troubling acts of Canadian complicity in global warfare, as shown in chapter 5 as Canada narrates the "Fall of Saigon" as a "Journey to Freedom". This act discursively erases the war in Vietnam and with it, Canada's complicity in the war by celebrating Canada's rescue of anti-communist Vietnamese as legitimate refugees in order to support Canada's identity of international neutrality and refugee haven.

Additionally, in chapter 6, critical multiculturalism is used to understand the critical conflict of a Vietnamese Canadian Toronto agency as the two parties struggle with their negotiation of their conflicting identities and seek discursive belonging to Canada. Adopting this

lens, I theorize the production of Vietnamese Canadians as multicultural subjects, but this is only part of the picture and explains only one part of the phenomenon seen on the ground. Vietnamese Canadians are not simply multicultural subjects, as the expression of their identity has a particular productiveness about it, one that contributes to the capitalist machinery of Canada.

Racial capitalism extends critical multiculturalism in situating capitalism as a significant rationale for Canada's settler colonialism project. If capitalism is central to Canada's settler colonialism, how does capitalism drive -and is driven by- Canada's multiculturalism? I nuance this concept in understanding Canada's constructed national identity when I study the Memorial to Victims of Communism debates in chapter 4 and I also show how racial capitalism appears in Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity studied in chapter 5 through the idea of the neoliberal multicultural subject. The neoliberal multicultural subject is one that enables the harnessing of capitalist aims and outcomes through the selling and marketing of diversity. Canada's neoliberal multicultural subject furthers Canada's capitalist attainments by supporting Canada's trade initiatives – by attesting to Canada's racial tolerance, its progressiveness, and its high value of diversity. Here, diversity of people, heritage, and culture are marketed for diversity of trades, economies, and partnerships.

I use racial capitalism to theorize Canada's stake in Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity. I test it and expand on it to show the racialization of Vietnamese Canadians as a particular alien Other situated in relation to current day Vietnam as the deliverer of Western democracy and liberty. I require this lens to understand Vietnamese Canadians' long promoted "Dream" of bringing democracy to Vietnam, regularly touted in the community's annual commemorations of the April 30th anniversary of the end of the war in Vietnam, as written of in chapter 5. This "Dream" of democracy to Vietnam can be realized through expanded "diversity" of trades and

“opening” of Vietnamese markets to Canada. But how do Vietnamese Canadians envision their role as the bringers of democracy to Vietnam, and how does democracy become conflated with capitalistic ventures? A significant gap is missing here, and Cold War epistemology is a critical theoretical intervention which bridges critical multiculturalism and racial capitalism. It structures the dance of subjectivity construction and identity production between Vietnamese Canadians and Canada.

Cold War epistemology asks how it is that states and subjects continue to construct themselves through the images, identities, and discourses developed during the Cold War era. The Cold War’s legacy is theorized as a lingering knowledge production that continues to operate as a key condition to identity construction and subjectivity formation. In my study, it shows up in all the sites of study discussed in chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Cold War epistemology expands on the previous theories to explain how the debate on a national monument titled “Memorial to Victims of Communism” studied in chapter 4 is centered on the Canadian national identity as a refuge, a beacon of hope, a place of freedom and democracy, while at the same time silently and hegemonically conflates capitalism to these aspirational ideals. In chapter 5, on the April 30th “Fall of Saigon” commemorations, Cold War epistemology offers an understanding of how Vietnamese Canadians are racialized in such a way that enables the conflation of liberal values of freedom, democracy, and human rights to capitalism.

In chapter 6, I use Cold War epistemology to read the discursive negotiations of the local site of an agency conflict in Toronto through structures of sentiment in which two generations of Vietnamese Canadians work to align themselves with the different faces of Canadian multiculturalism in attempts to secure belonging to the nation. The older generation who profess

their identity linked with the pre-1975 “Fall of Saigon” South Vietnam seeks belonging to Canada via their legitimated identity as anti-communism freedom-seeking refugees. The younger generation seeks belonging through the smoothing and flattening of what they view as the older generation’s politicized identity in order for them to achieve “mainstream” race neutral inclusion. The implication of this frustrated negotiation which mobilizes the circulated discourses, produced at the national and community sites by the Memorial to Victims of Communism and the Journey to Freedom Day debates, is the threatened wellbeing of the Vietnamese Canadian community. I expand on critical multiculturalism and racial capitalism to more fully account for the observations in the various sites of the Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity as entangled with the Canadian national identity building through the lens of Cold War epistemology.

I unpack the complex entanglements of state and subject making specific to Vietnamese Canadians and Canada through the triangulated use of three theoretical bodies. By doing so, not only do I show the complex processes of subject-making within a group, but I also show the state contributions to shaping intragroup relations and shift the analytic lens to Canada’s entanglement with the Vietnamese community rather than limiting my gaze at the Vietnamese Canadian’s responses to Canada. And in doing so, I point to Canada’s complicity in maintaining Cold War epistemology with implications on its own identity that is embedded within a logic of racial capitalist democracy.

Significance: Unpacking our positioning to one another

The significance of this study is twofold, theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study advances Cold War epistemology as I integrate this concept that is new to the literature in

Canada, with critical multiculturalism and racial capitalism. The Vietnamese have a complex subjectivity. Both nationally and internationally, the lingering legacies of the Cold War continue to condition Vietnamese' subjectivity. Cold War epistemology expands on the understanding of this group's distinctive subjectivity as mutually sustaining Canadian national identity. When integrated with critical multiculturalism, I theorize Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity as distinct from the studies that have emerged from the American sites of study in critical refugee studies. I mobilize racial capitalism to expand on the critical understanding of Canada's national identity project as promoting Canada's global economic aims while centering the Vietnamese Canadian subject as the neoliberal multicultural vehicle to deliver these aims.

At the practice level, Vietnamese Canadians continue to be known through their "refugeeness" and Canada's national identity building project is active in sustaining this flattened subjectivity. For Canada to be a refugee haven, there must be authentic refugees to rescue and shelter. The term "Vietnamese boat people" is still in circulation for the Canadian national and international identity, as this subject is mobilized to conceal Canada's historical and current aggressions. The concept was recently evoked and reiterated to bolster Canada's national and international identity as a safe and peaceful haven for refugees in the Syrian refugee crisis.

Currently, Canada is internationally praised for its role in leading the humanitarian response in the Syrian refugee crisis with little attention paid to its military involvement. Gaining this new 'knowledge' about how Canada is invested in Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity is directly related to improving the condition of the Vietnamese diasporic community in Canada. This new understanding and knowledge then will make visible Canada's ongoing violence against Indigenous peoples and racialized persons through its colonial continuities which now fold Vietnamese Canadians into its projects of racial capitalism. When conditions for conflict in

the community are made visible, when the hegemonic processes that veil our understanding of ourselves in entanglement with Canada and with one another are interrogated, there may be space made for mutual understanding, empathy, and ultimately mobilization for change. Finally, I will end this introduction with a roadmap of the remainder of the dissertation.

Organization of Chapters

I will expand on my integration of the theoretical bodies that frame this study in chapter 2 followed by an outline of my use of critical ethnography and discourse analysis as methodology in chapter 3. I then move into the study's content, which journeys from the general to the particular through a historical tracing of the Vietnamese Canadian to Canada at the national site of study, to the Vietnamese community site at large, and finally, to the local site in Toronto. I do this deliberately to foreground the contextual conditions of national identity building on the local site of Vietnamese Canadian community conflicts. Much of the literature on Vietnamese start and stop with the "problems" within individuals and communities as seen in the brief literature review above. By starting with the larger historical and national forces, I want the reader to see the broader frame of reference within which to understand the explosive conflict of the Vietnamese Canadian community that I am about to depict. Writing about the conflict of the Vietnamese Canadian community, I am risking revealing to readers a rare glimpse inside my community out of context. It is thus important that I provide readers with first a critical interrogation of Canada's national identity building.

In chapter 4, I start the historical tracing from the Cold War period and move to the "Indochinese Refugee Crisis" to present day. This historical tracing provides the background context for the study and I situate this historical context with the current day Memorial to

Victims of Communism debates to show the construction of the Canadian national identity as a racial capitalist democracy. In chapter 5, I analyze the making of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity as the Cold War neoliberal multicultural subject through the community sites of commemoration of the “Fall of Saigon”, both in parliamentary debates and Vietnamese Canadian community events. Finally, I unpack the circulated discourses of Canadian national identity and Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity at national and community sites, as both inform and are informed by a local conflict between two generations of Vietnamese Canadians in Toronto. The final chapter then summarizes my study and considers the impact of these discursive constructions and productions of identity and subjectivity on the wellbeing of the subjects centered in Canadian national identity building: the Vietnamese Canadians.

Chapter 2: Weaving a Conceptual Framework

I situate my study of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity in relation to Canadian national identity formation within four significant and integrated theoretical lenses. These integrated theoretical frameworks provide the basis for the analysis of this study's three data sites from which I will frame the Vietnamese Canadian as a Cold War neoliberal multicultural subject, and trace Canada's continued colonial white settler project steeped in racial capitalism and informed by the knowledge production of the Cold War. These lenses move from the general to the particular, providing the theoretical context for my analysis which trace continuities from Canada's colonizing project, to the Cold War, to present day diaspora struggles. A study of an ethnocultural group in a mutually sustaining relationship to Canada's national identity cannot be undertaken without the lens of critical multiculturalism which theorizes how Canada's nation-building relies on its carefully managed relations with multiple racialized and ethnicized communities. To augment my theorization of the relationship between Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity and Canada's identity formation, racial capitalism provides linkages and leads to understanding how Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity productively relates and contributes to the Canadian national identity formation in this current sociopolitical context within global neoliberalism. Global neoliberalism gained prominence during the Cold War when this ideological war promoted the superiority of capitalism over communism to the benefit of Western liberal nations including Canada. Additionally, Canada utilized this historical time period to further secure its own national identity. Cold War epistemology theorizes this state making process as Canada continues to reproduce the Cold War logics in constructing its

national identity. These lenses also support the understanding of the Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity.

Vietnamese refugees are the most recognized Indochinese refugees following the ideological Cold War, specifically the conflicts in Southeast Asia, and today this refugee cohort in Canada actively works to reproduce their own identity. Thus, I require a lens that theorizes how this historical event has become a knowledge producing agent that continues to inform how the actors of the Cold War – at times occupying the role of aggressors, victims, and saviours – know themselves and one another. Here, Cold War epistemology provides this opening. Finally, to attend to the nuances of the Vietnamese Canadian diaspora and explore this group's relations intra-community, I look to the critical refugee studies literature as it informs me of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity in relation to Canada as inseparable from their identity internationally and transnationally as refugees of the Cold War. Next, I will outline my integration of these four theoretical lenses starting with critical multiculturalism.

Critical Multiculturalism

Critical multiculturalism reveals how the enacted policy of Canadian multiculturalism works to further the white colonial settler project while productively incorporating racialized subjects within the national state project. Multiculturalism became an official policy in Canada in 1971 under the government led by Pierre Trudeau. It is an official policy and a national discourse. As an official policy, multiculturalism distinguishes the official cultural identities of Canada as being French and English, with Indigenous nations as part of the remaining ethnicized groups. The policy states that all Canadians are afforded rights under this Act to celebrate their ethnic heritage, values, and beliefs in order to contribute to the diversity of Canada, so long as

they abide under the laws and constitutions of Canada. Critical scholars have long argued that multiculturalism was key to Canada's nation-building as a white settler colonial society (see: Bannerji, 2000; Day, 1998; Povinelli, 2002; Thobani, 2007). Multiculturalism continues this colonial project by producing and governing difference within racialized others, including the construction and maintenance of the 'desirable' versus the 'undesirable' Other to the nation, in order to further the colonial project within white settler society. In addition, multiculturalism furthers the colonial project as a capitalist one by veiling an oppressive capitalist project in the guise of cultural celebration and inclusion.

Critical theorists vigorously interrogate the technologies of Canada's nation-building in upholding the myth of Canada as a peaceful, inclusive settler society on empty land. This myth is perpetuated by celebratory discourses of culture and heritage and works to consistently deny the continued oppressive colonialization of the Indigenous peoples in the land Canada occupies (Chazan, Helps, Stanley, & Thakkar, 2011). Critical scholars have pointed out that the 1971 Multiculturalism Act was quite productive for Canada in rewriting Canadian history as one based on French and British founding fathers which temporarily appeased French Quebec's calls for independence, while erasing the Indigenous peoples' political and territorial claims to Canada by allotting them as one of many ethnic groups under this new official policy (Kamboureli, 1998). Thobani (2007) triangulates the discursive constructions of Canada as a nation, and the use of racialized migrants to discipline the Indigenous peoples of Canada in a reimagining of the nation as one of white settler colonials. This triangulation effectively works to disenfranchise both the Indigenous and the immigrant peoples leaving white settler colonials and their descendants as the legitimate occupants and heirs to Canada. Indigenous claims to sovereignty and the land are erased. Also erased by the celebrations of culture and heritage are the histories of violence and

racism towards racialized indentured persons, migrant labourers, and settlers who were part of the early colonization of the land.

Haque's (2012) examination of government materials produced during the 1970s Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism reveals the deployment of this language policy to reinforce and, in effect, legislate the myth of two founding fathers under official bilingualism with the rest of the nation as 'multicultural Others'. She explores the use of language and culture to maintain hegemonic racial ordering while disavowing racial and ethnic exclusions within nation-building. Haque argues the discourse of language and culture replaced that of race and ethnicity to continue to exclude Others in the formulation of a national narrative and true belonging to the nation: "The shift from overt racial distinctions between founding and other ethnic groups onto the terrain of language and culture meant that racial exclusions could be disavowed even as they were smuggled back in through the contradictory operation of language and culture" (2012, p. 6). The construction of desirables and undesirables is clear in the language of multiculturalism. French and English became the founding legitimate races which *unite* the nation, Indigenous and ethnic groups are then positioned as against the *unity* of Canada due to their division and opposition to the founding languages and races. This construction of excludable subjects, the basis of Canada's nation-building as written in the policy of multiculturalism, continues in present day as Canada increases its population with immigration. In addition to processes of exclusion, multiculturalism works to govern constructed difference.

Kernerman (2005) theorizes multiculturalism as a governing technology of the state to manage and regulate the interactions and relationships of 'ethno-cultural' groups amongst themselves, between groups, and with the state. Multiculturalism provides a grid and structure for the inclusion and regulation of difference from racialized groups and in doing so as an

official discourse, delegitimizes values and practices outside of dominant norms as group culture or special interest groups. Many scholars (see: Bannerji, 2000; Day, 1998; Ng, 1996; Povinelli, 2002; Thobani, 2007) critique multiculturalism as a framework within liberal discourse. It is a framework which tolerates certain forms and degrees of acceptable difference from the racialized groups within a nation as individual cultures while upholding the dominant values as normative to the nation. Bannerji (1993) argues that via multiculturalism, differences are situated and constructed within boundaries of state power. She argues Canada's liberal nationalism is a facade of equality with culture used to explain difference and inequality. Brah (1996) argues, in discussing how differently racialized groups are positioned vis-a-vis one another, that difference is constructed as central to discourses of the nation, nationalism, racism and ethnicity. Mackey (2002) argues multiculturalism has a role in the making of a national crisis of identity to be resolved by the state. It is a constructed matter of national concern as "contrary to the common sense that circulates about national identity and cultural pluralism in Canada, national identity is not so much in a constant state of crisis, but that the reproduction of 'crisis' allows the nation to be a site of a constantly regulated politics of identity" (Mackey, 2002, p.13). These critiques of multiculturalism deconstructed its operation as one that conceals structures of racism while upholding white supremacy within the colonial project. Multiculturalism is the governing tool in which those outside of the nation are managed in various ways to serve the nation but, paradoxically, to never fully achieve belonging within it. As shown below, recent scholarship now turns to another function of multiculturalism – the sustaining of inequitable relations of capitalism premised on racial difference in furthering the nation-building.

Scholars focus on the operation of multiculturalism as a key driver in the unrelenting project of capitalism in Canada's white settler colonialism. They start with the premise that the

colonial project is as much a capitalist one as it is a racist and argue the discourse of multiculturalism simultaneously enfolds racialized subjects into this ongoing project of colonialization of the land and Indigenous peoples while maintaining the exclusion of these racialized subjects. Multiculturalism was created within neoliberal economic structures and continues to be instrumental in the global economic initiatives of Canada. Racialized persons, immigrants, and newcomers have variously been constructed as outside of the nation, yet their labouring bodies are required for the nation (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002; Chatterjee, 2015; Ku, Bhuyan, Sakamoto, Jeyapal, & Fang, 2018). Abu-Laban and Gabriel (2002) conceptualized “productive diversity” in tracing the ways in which the discourse of diversity is harnessed for economic goals by reviewing the twinning of economic and cultural projects in Canada. These discourses of cultural diversity are essential to fostering linkages between trade, business, and multiculturalism with international partners. Chatterjee analyzes the use of “Canadian experience” as an ideology in “mobilizing exclusionary discourses (including that of skills and standards) that position immigrant professionals as outside of the national space” (2015, p.558). She traces the mobilization of multicultural discourses within contemporary economic policies designed to provide a “conditional welcome” to international students and skilled migrants.

Interrogating Canada’s harnessing of the discourse of multiculturalism to attain capitalist gains within the international economy is very significant; it draws attention to Canada’s colonial project as a capitalist one just as much as it is a racial one, while at the same time tracing the simultaneous logics of inclusion/exclusion within current day policies and practices. For the purposes of my study on how Canadian national identity is very much sustained by the Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity, a firm grounding on critical multiculturalism situates the Vietnamese Canadians within the white colonial project. This Vietnamese Canadian subject is

conditionally included in disciplining even less desirable Others – “bogus” refugees, nonperforming Indigenous and racialized groups. For the Vietnamese Canadians, this inclusion, the “conditional welcome” to recall Chatterjee (2015), must consistently be re-earned through the performance of a subjectivity that serves the national identity. To continue the critical multiculturalists’ interrogation of capital in the Canadian national building project, I turn now to the robust scholarship that highlights the inescapable twinning of racism and capitalism as the basis of and requirement for the continuation of white settler nations.

Racial Capitalism and Neoliberalism

Racism and capitalism are intertwining forces that reinforce the structures of dominance and hegemony embedded within one another. This intertwining of race and capital was the basis for the settler colonialism of Canada and continues to operate in contemporary practices and policies. White dominance continues in the global context yet race itself is disavowed as racial dominance and hegemony is veiled behind discourses of liberalism. Canada is a white settler colonial project based on the premises of capital accumulation. It continues to reinforce the mutually dependent structures of inequity derived from racism and capitalism while at the same time utilizing discourses of liberalism to disavow the inequity and oppression required for capital accumulation. Below, I trace racial capitalism across geographical and historical timelines. I move from the Canadian context to the global context of the Cold War, and from the early colonial period to the present.

The key works I use draw from Cedric Robinson’s early theorization of “racial capitalism” in *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (1983). I use the work of Iyko Day (2016) who grounds capitalism as the primary project of Canadian settler

colonialism and traces linkages between settler colonialism and racism as a project of capitalism with a particular emphasis on Asian bodies as one of the triangulated subjects. I am influenced by Jodi Melamed (2006, 2015) who situates neoliberalism and multiculturalism within the global context to consider the victory of neoliberal capitalism as the normative economic system after the events of the Cold War. This review of racial capitalism supports my theorizing of the productivity behind the relationship between the Canadian national identity- free, humanitarian, democratic, and peace-making and the Vietnamese Canadians as victims of war and freedom fighters.

Race as an organizing structure of capitalism has been largely invisibilized. Melamed highlights Robinson's (1983) challenge of the "developmentalism and racism" of Karl Marx and reiterates Robinson's critique that race, and capital cannot be understood exclusive of one another, as capital accumulation depends on the excluding process of race, and concurrently, racial exclusion results from capitalist processes of structured inequity. The inequity of one simultaneously fuels, drives, and results from, the inequity of the other: "Capital can only be capital when it is accumulating, and it can only accumulate by producing and moving through relations of severe inequality among human groups – capitalists with the means of production/workers without the means of subsistence, creditors/debtors, conquerors of land made property/the dispossessed and removed." (Melamed, 2015, p.77). This accumulation occurs through the "hyper-extraction of surplus value from racialized bodies and naturalizing a system of capital accumulation that grossly favours the global North over the global South" by social and economic systems of inequity organized through logics of racism and capitalism (Melamed, 2006, p.1).

Melamed continues that capital accumulation requires systems of inequity, and racism is key in naturalizing inequity, or “processes of differentiation and dominant comparative logics” which creates “ ‘certainties’ of discreteness, distinctness, and discontinuity – of discrete identities, distinct territorialisation and sovereignties, and discontinuities between the political and the economic, the internal and the external, and the valued and the devalued” (Melamed, 2015, p.78). Therefore, “racism enshrines the inequalities that capitalism requires...by displacing the uneven life changes that are inescapably part of capitalist social relations onto fictions of differing human capacities, historically race.” (Melamed, 2015, p.77). This fused intertwining of the two processes of inequity that both fuels and results from one another is what Melamed calls “racial capitalism”, a system that requires “the production of social separateness – the disjoining or deactivating of relations between human beings (and humans and nature) – needed for capitalist expropriation to work” (Melamed, 2015, p.78). It is resistant to challenge as it works to “impose a forgetting of interconnections, of viable relations, and of performances of collectivity that might nurture greater social wholeness but are deactivated for capital accumulation and state management.” (Melamed, 2015, p.79). Day (2016) expands on the theory of racial capitalism to consider the North American context and the nuanced ways, particularly with immigration, in which racial difference is managed productively to drive capitalism, sustain, and to veil it as a force of social organization.

Iyko Day (2016) firmly centers capitalism as the primary project of Canadian white settler colonialism with race acting as a function of capital accumulation. She utilizes Cedric Robinson’s (1983) work to locate the violent expression of capitalism that creates differential value out of highly differentiated gendered and racialized labour for the purposes of capital accumulation on the triangulation of Indigenous peoples, colonizers, and Asian settlers (Day,

2016, p.9). Her work is significant to this study as it firmly positions Asian bodies as productive to the colonial founding of Canada from the very start. Asian bodies have always been “conditionally welcomed” (Chatterjee, 2015) on the premise of their productivity, and this conditional welcome based on their racialized labour has formulated the nuanced racialization and subsequent value of these Asian bodies. The productivity and value of Asian bodies continues to have lingering legacies to the current study on the construction of Canadian national identity through the production of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity.

Day argues the process of racialization of non-white bodies depended on these bodies’ relationships with the coveted land (the colonial basis for capitalism) and informs their relationship with the land, with Canada, and with one another. The degree to which bodies are racialized functions as a tool of settler colonial capital – “alien” Others are racialized by European colonials via the logics of whiteness. Day utilizes the concept “logics of whiteness” which is the seemingly disparate and different moves to either *exclude* or to *eliminate* the Other but which are in fact two sides of the same coin. First, Indigenous peoples were racialized as an alien race, but one that is internal to the colonial territory of Canada. This non-white alien body’s simple existence and claims to the land threatened capital accumulation for the white settlers and reduced the settlers’ ability for capital accumulation. Thus, Indigenous persons as a group had to be reduced in number. Policies and practices based on the “the *logic of elimination* is driven to eradicate an Indigenous population rather than controlling it through various exclusionary measures” (Day, 2016, p.25). The practice of barring Indigenous women who marry a non-Indigenous person from accessing conferred Native status and treaty rights exemplifies this practice of erasure (Mawani, 2009).

The second group of alien bodies required to fuel colonial capitalism was that of Black slaves as labouring bodies. During the colonial period, their numbers had to be increased and the example given was the “one-drop blood” rule in which any distant African heritage rendered a body Black and thus enslave-able and bondable. But as slaves were brought into the territory pre-Confederation, Black races could not be excluded in the modern state based on simple measures of immigration policy (their labouring bodies were needed, but they could not be “returned”) thus their racialization had to be upheld as a matter of social control of a population inside the colony. These alien bodies had to be removed by forces of both social exclusion and if required, elimination by means of state violence, incarceration, and death. Day argues “exclusion and elimination are not discrete logics but operated on a moving spectrum of biopolitical violence” (Day, 2016, p. 25).

Finally, colonial Canada also required Asian alien bodies as labouring bodies on colonial land. However, unlike the Indigenous whose traditional ties to the land had to be erased, and Black bodies who were present on the land pre-confederation and could not be physically removed from the land, Asian bodies were brought in as migrant outsiders to the territory. They could easily be rid of and “returned” based on migration policies. Thus, for Asian labouring bodies, “A logic of exclusion is the *prerequisite* for the recruitment of alien labor, functioning either to reproduce an exclusive labor force in the case of African slaves or to render an Asian labor presence highly conditional to the demands of capital” (Day, 2016, p.34). Their racialization, while still prominent, did not have to be vigorously upheld and reconstructed during colonization because it was less of a matter of social control – they could easily be barred entry or deported.

Conceptualized as “settler colonial triangulation” Day traced the relationship of alien Others to Canada, the land, and to one another based on the logics of whiteness. Day shows the differing functions of race to serve the capitalist project of Canada: “While a logic of elimination functions to increase white property through the decimation of Indigenous populations who stand in the way of territorial expansion, a logic of exclusion serves industrial capitalism by furnishing a vulnerable labor force whose existence could be managed at the border.” (Day, 2016, p.33). This early context of the function of race in creating difference to serve capitalist Canada provides the backdrop for contemporary discourses on multiculturalism within the market-based ethos of neoliberalism.

Race-based policies and practices serve the colonial capitalist project in which land was the basis for capital accumulation. Day argues these logics persist in today’s racialization of Asian bodies as the colonial capitalist project persists in its modern presentation. Her work centers capital as the primary project of Canadian white settler colonialism which contributes to critical multiculturalism’s interrogation of the function of race in service of present global trade initiatives of Canada. As in the case of Vietnamese Canadians, their bodies are “conditionally welcomed” and productive to the Canadian national identity formation during the increasing drive for trade with Southeast Asia. Rather than as labouring bodies on the Canadian Transnational Railway as Chinese bodies were for colonial Canada, Vietnamese bodies are made to labour in the discursive construction of the Canadian national identity. This will be shown further in chapter 5 on the making of the Vietnamese Canadian as the Cold War neoliberal multicultural subject traced in the events commemorating the April 30th Fall of Saigon.

Multiculturalism is the tool of Western Liberal states to manage, impose, and sustain difference while at the same time to disavow racial exclusion: “Race continues to fuse

technologies of racial domination with liberal freedoms to represent people who are exploited for or cut off from capitalist wealth as outsiders to liberal subjectivity for whom life can be disallowed to the point of death.” (Melamed, 2006, p.2). Yet racism and capitalism are contrary to the contemporary aspirational ideals of liberalism, thus the institutionalization of neoliberal multiculturalism, which simultaneously hides the operations of racism and capitalism, is required. Neoliberalism upholds the logics of whiteness and racial exclusion based on the premise of privatized preferences, freedom of choice, and democracy of the majority (Goldberg, 2005).

Neoliberalism is the capital market-based ideology that operates in all parts of social and cultural relations and is characterized by the belief that free economic growth is the means to progress. To maintain this structure while still claiming liberal modernity, the privatizing of preferences along market economy logics sustains historical exclusion based on racial systems: “Liberalism plays a foundational part in this process of normalizing and naturalizing racial dynamics and racist exclusions... liberalism serves to legitimate ideologically and to rationalize politico-economically prevailing sets of racialized conditions and racist exclusions.” (Goldberg, 1993, p.1). Privatization based on preferences then skew structures, systems, and services towards those benefiting white ethnics as principles of freedom, now freedom of choice in the capital marketplace, makes it commonsense that there would be more services for the “majority” while racialized communities continue to belong to “special interest groups” for which public monies would not benefit as they are not the demographic majority. Goldberg continues, “At the center of neoliberal commitment is the principle that people should be free to express and exercise their preferences as they see fit. Given that preference expression throughout modernity

was to greater or lesser degree fashioned and formulated in racial terms, preference expression and its products continue to carry racial weight.” (2009, p.341).

As I show in chapter 4 on the public debates around the Memorial to Victims of Communism, the discourse of multiculturalism within neoliberalism – liberty, freedom and progress – hides the capitalist logic behind Canada’s national identity. The Memorial is externalized in these debates as being of a “special interest group” rather than being “Canadian” thus the proponents had to intensify their arguments on Canadian national identity as being anti-communist. Private market interest and presumed homogeneity of the demographic majority allows for racial exclusions to occur in socially funded institutions, yet it is argued that rather than racism which is segregating these cases, it is the private preferences of individuals that lead to these outcomes. Neoliberalism valorizes private preferences and freedom of choice under capitalist economic structures while suturing racial inequities from capitalist operations. This move firmly re-articulated and established capitalism as the global economic system during a historical period of time when capitalism was threatened by a strong contender, communism, during the Cold War.

While neoliberal multiculturalism is very much a product of settler colonialism, its global hegemony came about during a very specific geopolitical and historical time period of the Cold War where ideologically, global powers presented themselves as opposing poles in competition for global political and economic power over newly independent nations. Neoliberal multiculturalism achieved dominance during the 1950s period of the Cold War. The Cold War period was a pivotal time for American hegemony and Western hegemony. During this period Western liberal states were forced to remake themselves and their racial identities. As this period saw the decolonization of racialized countries, the overthrowing and disavowing of biological

racism and European supremacy, America had to develop a process in which inequality can still be tenable while it remakes itself into an antiracist set apart from the European colonizers. By doing so, it was able to present itself to decolonized nations as the better option against the other major non-colonial socio-economic model and power: communism. The lens, filter, and subject positions developed during the Cold War was that of the neoliberal multicultural subject. For example, as traced in chapter 4, during the war in Vietnam, American proponents of the war discursively constructed the Vietnamese as freedom seekers trying to escape the tyranny of communism, not much unlike their own early founders as freedom seekers escaping British rule.

White supremacy required new creative means in which to organize and hegemonize racial exclusion while at the same time disavowing it. It required a “new racism”, one that “deploys economic, ideological, cultural, and religious distinctions to produce lesser personhoods, laying these new categories of privilege and stigma across conventional racial categories, fracturing them into different status groups.” (Melamed, 2006, p.14). The post-Cold War period required that “contemporary racial capitalism deploys liberal and multicultural terms of inclusions to value and devalue forms of humanity differentially to fit the needs of reigning state-capital orders” (Melamed, 2015, p.77). The era of decolonization called upon “ideologies of democracy, nationalism, and multiculturalism” as the “key to racial capitalist processes of spatial and social differentiation that truncate relationality for capital accumulation.” (Melamed, 2015, p.79). Melamed contends that neoliberal multiculturalism “is a central ideology and mode of social organization that seeks to manage racial contradictions on a national and international scale for U.S.-led neoliberalism. It does this through a form of official antiracism, now often reduced to a nonracism, which hinders thinking about or acting against the biopolitics of global capitalism.” (Melamed, 2006, p.3).

Neoliberal multiculturalism's power is in its abilities to "suture[s] official anti-racisms to state policy in a manner that hinders the calling into question of global capitalism" (Melamed, 2006, p.14). It provides the means for the global spreading of capitalism and the persistent driving of market trade on uneven terms. It is a process that makes natural the "'opening' markets" as an imperative, that "opening societies to diversity of the world (meaning its investment capital and products) fulfills the spirit of multicultural inclusiveness" (Melamed, 2006, p.16). In sustained inequitable market relations between the global markets, capitalism "relies specifically on a neoliberal multicultural discourse of 'economic rights' that incorporates the rhetoric of civil rights to portray 'economic rights' as the most fundamental civil right and to advocate in an absolutist manner for deregulation, privatization, regulated 'free markets,' and other neoliberal measures as the only way to guarantee economic rights." (Melamed, 2006, p.17). As such, regional and global trade agreements can be broadcasted as "opportunities" for growth and development to benefit developing countries or emerging markets while at the same time veiling or making invisible the outright degradation of the human and environmental systems of these developing markets at the benefit of global capital consumption.

Premised on ideas of liberty, democracy, and freedom, neoliberal multiculturalism makes it a moral imperative and a social justice that we as global north capitalists offer opportunities for the global south to enter the global capital market as the only means for which to grow and develop their economies. It is the current extension of the developing imperative, the white man's burden of the colonial project. This neoliberal multicultural "logic of inclusion", the value, the ethic, rather, the responsibility of the global north to "include" lesser societies into the global capitalist regime, is rather an extension of the colonial project of bringing civilization to the Other. The responsibility of the global north is to bring liberal values of human rights,

democracy, and freedom to the global south by way of trade missions. By “opening” up the global south to trade partnerships, we can influence these societies to “be better”.

Multiculturalism’s value of inclusion here is at work and the “logic of inclusion” becomes a tool of white supremacy as “how” societies are included, keeps the hierarchal order of subjugated racial Others as plodder for capitalist consumption and accumulation. I show this in the subjectivity of the Vietnamese Canadian in chapter 5 by tracing the discourses on the diaspora’s “Dream” of bringing freedom and democracy to Socialist Vietnam. Through the analyzed speeches and text, I trace how freedom, democracy, and human rights are used in describing trade relations and development imperatives. Still in chapter 5, the neoliberal multicultural subjectivity of the Vietnamese Canadian is uniquely tied to the lingering sentiments of the Cold War as an epistemology.

The ideological project of the Cold War was buttressed by the intertwining logics of race and capitalism. Neoliberalism supported the preservation and increase of North American hegemony based on industrial capitalist might with the liberal values of freedom, liberty, and human rights, while at the same time preserving white racial superiority. During the period of the Cold War, neoliberalism which rests on the intertwining logics of white racial superiority and capitalism sets up North American strength as superior to the European biological racism of colonialism and Eastern European/Asian communism. It makes sense then, to consider the knowledge producing effect of the Cold War on racial capitalism in Canada. In the next section, I will review the Cold War Epistemology and consider its contribution to the nuanced understanding of both the theory of racial capitalism and situate it among the theoretical lens which informs this present study.

Cold War Epistemology

Cold War epistemology theorizes the lingering effects of the Cold War and centers this international historical event in the analysis of the entanglements between former colonizers and colonized. It is key to my study and provides conceptual tools to interrogate the productivity of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity in constructing Canadian national identity. I trace the operation of Cold War epistemology in chapter 4 as Canada continues to build its national identity on the particular versions of freedom and democracy conflated with capitalism in rhetorical debates in the making of the Memorial to Victims of Communism. I also show the Cold War as a structure of sentiment in chapter 5 on the making of the Vietnamese Canadian subject and chapter 6 on the wellbeing of the Vietnamese Canadian community, as the legacies of the Cold War continue to drive the Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity in their mutually sustaining relationship with one another and with the Canadian national identity.

Kuan-Hsing Chen theorizes the hegemonic relationship between former colonizers and colonized in the ideological divide leading up to, and following, the Cold War. Chen draws on critical race and postcolonial scholarship that takes up knowledge production as a project for decolonization. Renowned scholar Walter D. Mignolo calls for the colonial Others, “*anthropos*” to epistemologically decolonize, or to practice “epistemic disobedience” from knowledge that was built on Western philosophy created in and for Europe and the West. He urges awareness that “there is a territorial and imperial epistemology that invented and established...categories and rankings” of epistemes and paradigms (Mignolo, 2011, p.276). Rather, we are to look to our own local histories, our local geographies, in essence our material bodies for ways of knowing that provide alternative paradigms to the colonial universalism that inevitably marks the colonial Other as inferior. Chakrabarty takes this up in his work, *Provincializing Europe*, to interrogate

how European ideas were constructed as universal despite them being “drawn from very particular intellectual and historical traditions that could not claim any universal validity” (2000, p.xiii). Informed by and contributing to these pivotal scholarships, Chen focuses on Asia in his calls for a regionalization or provincialization of knowledge with the political aim of decolonization and deimperialization of scholarship (Chen, 1996).

In his 2010 work *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization*, Chen theorizes the ongoing impact of colonialism, imperialism and the Cold War on the psyches and subject formation of Asians globally in his conceptualization of “structures of sentiment”. He argues that former colonizers and colonized are still bound together by their objects of identification – what is idealized by the former colonized is the colonizer and the colonizer too can only see or hear the colonized within frames of reference and legitimated knowledge derived from colonialism. He states that regionally and globally, former colonizers and colonized are still operating within the limits of colonialism even when we attempt to deconstruct it. Chen (2010) terms these colonial limits “structures of sentiment” which continue to emphasize hierarchical differences based on socially constructed race, unresolved historical faults, and projection of desires towards the West; “If modern colonialism has been initiated and shaped by the West, then the postcolonial enterprise is still operating within the limits of colonial history and has not yet gone beyond a parasitic form of critique” (p.2). As such, our critiques of colonialism are still operating within its set boundaries, thus we need to be cognizant of this and theorize new ways of deconstructing colonialism from outside of it. One major structure that is left unchallenged, due to our structures of sentiment, is that of neoliberal capitalism.

Chen takes up the oppressive, neoliberal, capitalist relations we currently see in globalization by stating that in order to counter this we must first decolonize our sentiments and

desires which tie us to our objects of identification as former colonizers and former colonized. Chen addresses the hegemony of neoliberalism in his observation of the challenge in finding spaces of critique outside of the relations between colonizer and colonized. He asks, “Has the struggle to oppose the colonizer reproduced the frame and limits defined by the enemy, and therefore allowed the imperialist cultural imaginary to persist uninterrupted?” (Chen, 2010, p. 66). This is based on his analysis of critical works by former colonized literary scholars that does not escape the object relations of colonized and colonizer while additionally strengthening the oppressive neoliberal capitalist global regime: “Capitalist liberal democracy (as a set of normative discourses) has been adopted to criticize the undemocratic practices in the former socialist regimes” (Chen, 2010, p.71). By posing this question, he suggests that the knowledge project of colonization, domination and ‘natural’ advancement of territory and power has been perpetuated, unchallenged, so that decolonization continues to be played out within the same structures set out by the colonizers. Decolonization can only progress when we recognize that “neo-colonialism, neoimperialism, and globalization are structural continuations and extensions of colonialism; and that colonialism is not yet a legacy but is still active in geocolonial sites on the levels of identification and cultural imaginary” (Chen, 2010, p.112). The global West has become the “Other” to Asia, but not as the degraded, foreign, dangerous Other as theorized by Said (1979), but the referent, and superior Other. Chen (2010) argues the driving sentiment among leaders in Asia continues to be the desire to replace the colonizer; “Politicians, intellectuals, and business people have always identified themselves with advanced, first-world countries and felt it shameful to be put into the category of the third world” (p.20).

Operating as the desired Other, “[t]his imaginary West has performed different functions in nationalist discourse. It has been an opposing entity, a system of reference, an object from

which to learn, a point of measurement, a goal to catch up with, an intimate enemy, and sometimes an alibi for serious discussion and action” (Chen, 2010, p.216). Chen calls for an alternative way to look at the West, as one of many influences, perhaps one of the largest influences, but not the only one: “Rather than being constantly anxious about the question of the West, we can actively acknowledge it as a part of the formation of our subjectivity. In the form of fragmented pieces, the West has entered our history and become part of it, but not in a totalizing manner” (2010, p.223). Chen calls for a different form of knowledge production that embraces regional studies and “self-understanding in relation to neighbouring spaces as well as the region as a whole, while at the same time removing the imperative to understand ourselves through the imperialist [western] eye” (2010, p.3). He states now is the time to simultaneously deimperialize, decolonize, and de-cold war. To deimperialize is to start with the reframing of our epistemology: if we in Asia do Asian studies, then those in Europe do European studies and not universalist studies, while to de-cold war is to center the effects of the Cold War as a lingering producer of knowledge.

Both Chen and Jodi Kim (2010) argue that the effect of the Cold War has had such a significant impact on the ways we know ourselves and one another as to refer to it as a knowledge producer. In describing the lingering impacts of Asian subjectivity, Chen reiterates that “the effects of the cold war have become embedded in local history, and simply pronouncing the war to be over will not cause them to dissolve. The complex effects of the war, mediated through our bodies, have been inscribed into our national, family, and personal histories. In short, the cold war is still alive within us” (2010, p.118). He argues “the subjectivities formed during the cold war remain within us. Our worldview, political and institutional forms, and

systems of popular knowledge have been deeply shaped by the Cold War structure” (Chen, 2010, p.119).

Similarly, Kim, in her 2010 book, *Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War*, interrogates the effects of the Cold War on the knowledge production of Asians and Americans. Kim (2010) argues the actions and consequences of the Cold War continue to linger and have very real material effects on the lives of Asian Americans as they internalize Cold War racism and imperialist inscriptions of their bodies. While the Cold War official timeline of events has ended, it is a knowledge producing agent as a lingering “structure of feeling, a knowledge project, and hermeneutics for interpreting” events in the post-Cold War (2010, p.3). Kim’s work emphasizes not just the impact of the colonial period and Cold War on former colonized subjects but also on former colonizers and imperialists in their relationship with their former subjects and builds on Kang’s use of “compositional subjects” (Kang, 2002, p.2). Compositional subjects are those who are intelligible and legible to dominant powers in that their presentations and utterances align with pre-structured frames of reference for the dominant players. Kang explores Asian/American women as compositional subjects which “might tell a tale about the peculiar protocols of inclusion and representation” in a given instances; compositional subjects spotlight “how it is possible to say *some* thing about *any* body under certain settled procedures of recognition” (2002, p.3). By knowing Asian Others through preconceived notions of race and gender, colonial and imperial powers continue to know themselves through the structures of the colonial and Cold War ideologies. I use the concept compositional subjects in my analysis of the Vietnamese Canadian Cold War neoliberal multicultural subject in chapter 5 when I read the constructed discourses of this community along pre-conditioned ways of knowing. My work

tests Cold War epistemology in the Canadian context as this theory was largely conceptualized within Asia American relations.

Within Cold War histories, America continues to be a central figure, thus to de-cold war is also to “to de-Americanize”, and “to examine the consequences of the United States’ role as a central component in the formation of East Asian subjectivity.” (Kim, 2010, p.120). Kim’s main focus has been on the knowledge producing effects of the Cold War localized on Americans and Asian Americans in their entanglements with one another. Through analysis of cultural productions of Asian American works and the analysis of Cold War military and political documents *as cultural works*, Kim demonstrates how American Cold War actors had Orientalized their enemies as gendered and racialized subjects and how this Orientalism of Asia during the Cold War continue to shape America’s entanglements with its Others and most importantly for my purposes, it continues to shape Asian American subjectivity.

She takes this Orientalization of the Other back to the analysis of the American Self and argues its logics in the making of the Other “construct a narrative of a masculine, Anglo-Saxon, and capitalist America that is to serve as a model and source of guidance for the other nations of the world” (Kim, 2010, p.45). Her reading on the Cold War frames it as “a significant project of American empire and gendered racial formation in Asia, the Cold War at once consolidated, destabilized, and reconstituted America’s self-identity and identification.” (Kim, 2010, p.10). This legacy of the Cold War as “an entrenched production of knowledge has shaped how Americans narrate this history of military intervention and how Korean and Asian Americans have come to know their very selves” has consequences for not only America but its Other (Kim, 2010, p.3). Kim states, the Cold War as a complex problem of knowledge: “This problem of knowledge saturates not only American nationalist Korean War history and broader Cold War

history, but Korean American subjectivity and the very conditions of possibility for the post-World War II formation of Korean America in the first place.” (2010, p.38). Breaking out of this structure of subjectivity and identity means to make visible its conditions.

To return to Chen’s challenge, breaking out of the structures of sentiment and interrogating the lingering knowledge from the Cold War, means looking to specific local sites of identity reproduction to highlight the hegemonic relationships but also to look for inconsistencies, what Chen calls “de-cold war”. To de-cold war is to interrogate the history of conflicts and to supersede the structure that conditions the minds of those living within the Cold War regimes, to “mark out a space in which unspoken stories and histories may be told, and to recognize and map the historically constituted cultural and political effects of the cold war.” (Chen, 2010, p.120). This brings us back to our specific local site of study in this thesis: the Vietnamese-Canadian community in Toronto. By tracing their Cold War neoliberal multicultural subject formation, we can shed light onto the construction of Canadian national identity.

Finally, one last body of literature that has had a significant impact on the analysis of this study is Critical Refugee Studies which highlights the specification of the Vietnamese-Canadian by theorizing refugee community, which will be particularly pertinent in chapter 6 on community belonging. I use critical refugee studies to problematize the notion of “refugee” or “refugee community” as homogeneously victims of hegemonic forces of the state, capitalism and imperialism.

Critical Refugee Studies

Critical refugee studies takes up the “refugee” as an analytic and asks what conditions of knowing are made possible when we treat the refugee as an ideological construct in producing

meaning when used (Espiritu, 2014). I read critical refugee scholars who focus on the Vietnamese diaspora to explore “refugee community” as a “problematic” or analytic with a focus on refugee victimhood and refugee nationalism. While the scholarships on critical multiculturalism and racial capitalism robustly critique the hegemonic work of the state, they leave gaps in knowledge of the concept of the “refugee”. I draw on works that challenge the notion of refugee and its assumed identity as more than simple victimhood – it is also a means for dominant members within a refugee community to enact power within their internal social hierarchies. Critical refugee studies unsettles the image of refugee as only victims. It shows how refugee community is a force that influences its members’ meaning-making and subject formation, as conditioned by the historical socio-political events which spurs the need to seek asylum, the current contingencies of belonging to the host country, and the direct personal experiences of the refugee passage. I trace the problematic of the refugee and refugee community in the intracommunity conflict within the Vietnamese refugee community in chapter 6 in order to interrogate the multiplicities of power at play within the community.

The concept of refugee community is not a homogenous given. It is not entirely enacted upon by hegemonic American neoliberal discourses in the American context, or Canadian liberal capital multiculturalism in this study’s context, nor is it an independently informed grassroots movement. Refugee community has its complexities and contradictions that have not been widely recognized and credited. It is a space of both inclusion and exclusion as pointed out by Duong and Pelaud (2012) in their work with the arts-based Vietnamese diaspora in California: “Scholars also need to be critical of the Vietnamese diasporic community’s efforts to construct a monolithic discourse about citizenship and cultural membership, one that complies with the disciplinary logic of being “with” or “against” one’s community” (p. 251). I rely on the works of

critical refugee scholars who detail the dynamics of Vietnamese refugee groups in North America together to show the heterogeneity, conflicts, and power negotiations that condition the subjectivities of members within a refugee community. The following conditions of knowing structure the sentiments and subjectivities of those within the Vietnamese refugee community: refugee victimhood in its historical entanglements with imperial America and refugee nationalism.

First, Vietnamese refugees as a conceptual figure is rarely allowed to exist outside of its history of the war in Vietnam. In the context of the war, Vietnamese refugee victimhood is required. It is required by imperial America in its war-making machinery and it is also required by the Vietnamese refugees themselves in seeking a place of belonging in the West. I suspect to some extent this victimhood is required by all actors of the war in order for them to make meaning of and exist with their past participation in atrocities of war. Yến Lê Espiritu (2006) challenges us to take the figure of the refugee as an ideological concept, in that she asks how the use of the Cold War, and specifically the war in Vietnam, can be a meaning-making tool for the United States, in her work on the American ‘we-win-even-when-we-lose’ syndrome. She examines how as American military intervention was justified in the war in Vietnam for the liberation of weaker Others; in presenting itself as a refugee haven rather than an international aggressor, the same justification continues to be used in recent conflicts such as the war in Iraq. She states, “[c]ritical refugee study scholarship conceptualizes the “refugee” as a critical idea but also as a social actor whose life, when traced, illuminates the interconnections of colonization, war, and global social change” (Espiritu, 2014, p.11). As an emerging solution in the continuity of colonialism to modern day imperialism, “[r]efugeeness became a moral-

political tactic,” demarcating the difference between the supposed uncivilized East and the civilized West and fostering “cohesion of the Western Alliance nations” (Espiritu, 2014, p.8).

Similarly, Mimi T. Nguyễn (2012) interrogates Vietnamese refugee integration into the United States as a grateful refugee, arguing that the actively performed role of the grateful refugee serves as proof of the moral righteousness of American war-making which is now rebranded as liberal gift giving. These imperial histories and mutually sustaining relations of power and the conditional welcome faced by Vietnamese refugees in North America complicate belonging. Viet Thanh Nguyễn draws our attention to the work of refugee stories that trouble and affirm regimes of power to remind us that Vietnamese refugee stories themselves work to narrate a particular victimhood that draws the spotlight away from the complicities of the Vietnamese during the regional conflicts of the Cold War and continues in the identity negotiations within the diaspora. He states,

In its own corner of the world, Viet Nam is a minor imperial power, both before and during Communism, exerting power and influence over its neighbors. Consequently, in the West, the Vietnamese overshadow other Southeast Asian refugees. So, in considering Vietnamese refugee memory and the way it serves the interests of the Vietnamese Diaspora, we should be skeptical of how the so-called “Vietnam War” is retold as a story in which the Vietnamese are the victims but not the victimizers. (Nguyễn, 2006, p.33)

Here Nguyễn alludes that refugee victimhood can become just as much a “political tactic” for the refugees as it is for imperial America. Vietnam and the Vietnamese as a dominant force has been overshadowed by the Vietnamese refugee victimhood narrative of a lost nation. I show this in chapter 6 on the community conflict as some dominant members of the Vietnamese refugee

community enact their power over the internal “Other”– such as the patriarchal power over women, or the exclusion of Northern Vietnamese as “true Vietnamese” – in their assertion of refugee nationalism (to restore the lost Southern Vietnamese ‘nation’). This idealization of the lost nation and dream to restore it figures significantly in the composition of Vietnamese refugee community and can be seen in Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity.

Second, critical refugee studies offers analysis of the hegemonic work of refugee nationalism enacted in the Vietnamese diaspora. Like refugee victimhood, refugee nationalism is traced as both a means for surviving within a hostile social political climate and also a means for the refugee community to reproduce and sustain internal power hierarchies. Unlike the literature on multiculturalism that assumes migrants arrive baggage free, Vietnamese refugees, in addition to being victims of war and violent displacement, occupy gendered and classed hierarchies within their social political networks. Phuong Nguyễn (2009) theorizes refugee nationalism in examining the community political conflicts in Little Saigon, Orange County. He explores how the Vietnamese American’s political conflicts around demonstrations of anti-communism are in fact complex responses to the homogenizing American narrative of the war in Vietnam, mediated political belonging, and masculine military nationalism. Refugee nationalism is, “[a]n imagined community rooted in the collective memory of exile from Vietnam, implying a righteous migration and a future return to reclaim their lost nation” (Nguyễn 2009, p.39). Similarly, Espiritu observes that the Vietnamese American’s reproduction of itself as political exiles is a means to become legible and intelligible to the American dominant narrative, “[w]e need to recognize that this ‘anticommunist’ stance is also a narrative, adopted in part because it is the primary political language with which Vietnamese refugees, as objects of U.S. rescue fantasies,

could tell their history and be understood from within the U.S. social and political landscape.” (2014, p.96).

Nguyễn (2009) highlights the productivity and role this production of refugee nationalism plays in the survival of this group: “The cultural broker defense and the anti-communist component of their refugee nationalism, ridiculed in later years as a vestige of the past, actually helped them navigate a society sometimes incapable or unwilling to distinguish Vietnamese refugees from America’s former enemy the Viet-Cong.” (p.173). Yet, refugee nationalism, while argued as a protective response in the resettlement of refugees within a nation that too easily and readily resorts to xenophobia and racism, has its price on the wellbeing of a community through its reproduction of social hierarchies. The Vietnamese refugees’ display of refugee nationalism in the form of anti-communist protests are all too often within ceremonies that honour fallen soldiers: fathers and sons of the lost Republic of Vietnam (RVN). This refugee nationalism inevitably reproduces the gendered and classed structure of the imagined nation. As I show in chapter 5, any April 30th commemoration of the “Fall of Saigon” ceremony outside of Vietnam will feature a salute of the RVN flag and national anthem, and a moment of silence for the deceased. These events, whether in Canada or the United States, are orchestrated by RVN soldiers in their military regalia in rank and file. Reflecting on these commemorations and the reproduced hierarchies and relations of military regimes, Espiritu writes, “[r]efugee remembrance, however critical, becomes problematic when it elicits a nationalism that replicates patriarchal control as a means to buttress lost status and identities in the postwar diaspora” (2014, p.137). As refugee nationalism inevitably supports gendered relations of power, it disciplines refugee community formation into a gendered hierarchy. This dynamic and gendered power will be analyzed further in chapter 6 on community belonging.

Critical refugee studies centered on the Vietnamese diaspora unpacks the ideological work that the concept of the Vietnamese “refugee” continues to provide in the bolstering of North American interests. When Vietnamese refugees are flattened as victims of an ideological war within the context of the Cold War, saving them provides both the excuse for war and the reaffirmation of a North American racial and gendered superiority. And yet as the Vietnamese refugee struggles against this dominant discourse, they further strengthen the structures of patriarchy and racism when they evoke a South Vietnamese nationalism in their remembrances and commemorations. I use this theoretical body to understand the Vietnamese Canadians’ negotiations of subjectivity intra-community as conditioned by the social and political structures of refugee rescue and belonging.

Summary

In order to attend to the complexities and contradictions in the production of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity which reinforces the construction of Canadian national identity, I draw from multiple bodies of literature – critical multiculturalism, racial capitalism, Cold War epistemology and critical refugee studies – to unpack the processes of state and subject making. I rely on critical refugee studies focusing on the Vietnamese Canadian as a central subject from which I can theorize the national identity building processes of Canada. By focusing on Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity, I show how Canadian nation-building is complicit in sustaining the Cold War logics as a continuation of its white settler colonial project. By tracing the mutually sustaining relationship between Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity and Canadian national identity, I show the operations of racial capitalism in Canada’s use of multiculturalism to further its capitalist gains. At the same time, the enactment of celebratory multiculturalism and

the Cold War fosters national identities of refugee saviours and peacekeepers, hides Canada's capital driven oppression and exploitation at home and abroad – from Canada's ongoing violence against the Indigenous peoples to its complicit participation in international warfare. These different theoretical bodies overlap in time and geography, but when integrated into a cohesive study, they provide the vital lens from which to understand the phenomenon at various sites: from the national Memorial to Victims of Communism debates, the differing sites of April 30th "Fall of Saigon" commemorations, to the local Toronto agency conflict that threatens the wellbeing of the Vietnamese community.

Chapter 3: Method, Design, and Data

I started this project wanting to know more about how Vietnamese Canadians formulate ideas of themselves and their identities. I wanted to know what conditions of knowing shaped the Vietnamese Canadians' reproduction of their identities. Just as importantly, I wanted to know what Canada's investments are in this community's reproduction of a particular identity, the anti-communist identity, that is firmly rooted in the historical events of the war in Vietnam, which by now, is over 40 years past. Simply put, how does Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity relate to Canada's national identity?

I first started from the ground. Due to my background as a social worker, I was very much focused on the community site of the Vietnamese Canadians' wellbeing. I wanted to interview Vietnamese Canadians to understand how they understood themselves in relation to Canada, and to explore how Canada might be invested in this community. During this period of data collection, two major developments occurred that pushed my focus to the national site of Canada's identity building: the first was the passage of the Journey to Freedom Day Bill timed to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the "Fall of Saigon", and the second was the National Memorial to Victims of Communism. I sought to work these two newly emerging events into my dissertation without losing sight of this study's core focus, the wellbeing of the Vietnamese Canadian community in Toronto.

In this chapter, I will outline my study grounded within the Foucauldian framework of power, discourse, and subjectivity. I use the method of critical ethnography that allows the reflexivity from the local sites of community conflict and wellbeing, to the national sites of national identity building while implicating the researcher as a participant in the study. My data

is drawn from a variety of sources to theorize the conditions of knowing which shape Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity and Canadian national identity formation: from media debates, parliamentary texts, community representations, and locally produced talk and text in Toronto. The data is analyzed using discourse analysis that attends to processes of hegemony, (il)legibility, and subject-making. Finally, I consider issues of researcher positionality and non-equivalency in the act of translation as I collect and analyze data which spans different temporal periods and cultural and linguistic origins.

Foucauldian Power, Discourse, and Subject

The operations of power are circulatory and emerge as discourses that shape and constitute subject formation. My key focus is on subject formation attending to the simultaneous production of and resistance to power. The term discourse used within this discussion is drawn from Foucault's articulation of it as the ways in which subjects and objects can be spoken of, how they are spoken of, rituals around the speech acts, the enabling of what can be said and imagined, the privileging of speech acts, and the means which influence speech acts (Foucault, 1982, 1984). I rely on the Foucauldian concept of discourse as my methodological framework.

Firmly rooted in the analytic lens of circulation of capillary power, discourses contained within speech acts themselves are acts or "instruments" of power within assumption that "texts have social, political, cognitive, moral and material consequences and effects, and that it is vital to understand these consequences and effects if we are to raise moral and political questions about contemporary societies" (Fairclough, 2003, p.14). The analyst must engage with discourse as an event, at the material level, in addition to the textual level. This assumes that rather than a truth, what can be said, uttered, even knowable – and conversely what cannot be said and is

unknowable, in itself is a manifestation of power: “The methodological injunction here is to replace these ‘true’ explanations with some other form of answer that is more conditional, that can demonstrate that what counts as ‘the truth’ is a product of discourse and power: a displacement of the will to truth by the will to power.” (Hook, 2001, p.525). These are “conditions of possibilities” that enables the occurrences of discourse “stretching across the material, institutional and historical circumstances that make certain acts, statements and subjects possible at certain specific locations” (Hook, 2001, p.540). Due to the specific sites of discursive formations, “The analyst of discourse, then, is predominantly concerned with exploiting the gaps or shortcomings of a given discourse, with systematically demonstrating its contradictions and discontinuities; there are the seams to be pulled, the joints and weaknesses to be relentlessly stressed” (Hook, 2001, p.536).

Hook (2001) reminds the analyst of the critical political project of discourse analysis in disrupting productions of material power held within competing discourses: “There are institutions, social structures and practices that limit and constrict the free flow of discourse, that both reinforce and renew it, and as such they need to take [sic] their rightful places within a thorough analysis of the power of discursive practices” (p.524). These dominant ways of constituting knowledge which conditions social practices and informs subjectivity and power relations are discursive practices, which are productive: “They produce the specific semantics of the words in use, and they relate words to objects and to strategies of acting towards and thinking about things, persons etc.” (Diaz-Bone, Bührmann, Rodríguez, Schneider, Kendall, & Tirado, 2008, p.12). Discourse manifests in the form of material power which conditions what can be said and known of a group of people which then shapes their social reality and influences their subject formation. Next, I explore the function of discourses in subject formation as it pertains to

my study on the conditions which constrain and enable individuals' and communities' negotiations of their identities as entangled with one another and with Canada.

The complexities of subject formation are conditioned by and produced through discourse. In her foundational text on the production of Third World women as the Other, Mohanty (1991) showed how the subject identities of feminist women scholars are affected by relations of power when produced as the Other in relation to men, but they themselves also formed these mutually sustaining relations of power, "Women are *produced through these very relations* as well as being implicated in forming these relations" (p. 340, original source formatting). Hook's urges the critical analyst to study discourse as a task to disrupt material power, by understanding the multiplicity of discourses that reaffirm dominant discourses but also resists them, and it is in this process of negotiation of competing discourses that provides the opening: "Foucault suggests we ask instead about *what subject-positions are made possible within such texts*" (Hook, 2001, p.527, original source formatting). A study of subjectivity then allows for a space of resistance: "Discourses which constitute the subject are at the same time the condition of possibility of its empowerment" (Yeğenoğlu,1998, p.21).

Macías clearly articulates the direct impact of the discursive condition on the material and social experiences of individuals subjected to the available discourses in her study that traces how

[H]uman rights discourses produced specific images of victims of human rights violations – images that were discursively shaped in ways that determined the kinds of experiences of victimization that became publicly acknowledged and the notions of justice and retribution that became possible within the constraints of post-authoritarian politics. (Macías, 2015, p.236)

Rather than enacted upon, Macías points to the investments made by individuals moving through, against, and alongside discourses: “To understand the full reach of power, we need to pay attention to how discourse constitutes subjects, regulates their desires, and implicitly and explicitly calculates their relationships with other subjects and with society” (Macías, 2015, p. 231). She highlights the use of discourse analysis in the Foucauldian tradition for spaces of disruption by tracing the “power struggles” within the text of competing and alternative discourses and this is the potential for disruption and change:

FDA [Foucauldian Discourse Analysis] made it possible, then, to explore the biopolitical effects of discourse at two levels: the effect of discourse on the regulation of subjects whose lives become captured in discourse, and the subject-making practices that subjects enact through the use of discourse. (Macías, 2015, p.232)

In my study of the conditions of conflict within the Vietnamese community, as multiple individuals and groups negotiate their stance in relation to one another and to Canada, against a background of dominant versions of history of international conflicts and state-making, “FDA allows us to explore how power-knowledge regimes work to produce human subjects who are captured in discourse or use discourse to ascertain or claim subjectivity and a place in social power relations.” (Macías, 2015, p.227). Using the Foucauldian conceptualizations of power, discourse, and subject as the core theoretical framework in my methodology, I now move to the practical methods employed in the next sections which discusses study design and data analysis.

Critical Ethnography

I utilize the method of critical ethnography, which is often termed the “doing of critical theory” (Madison, 2012). It is concerned with theorizing social relations where “various sites of cultural contestation and everyday practice were interrogated to better understand societal forces of power, dominance, and change” and embrace the multiple (Foley, 2002, p. 471). There is an inherent reflexivity within critical ethnography that directs the researcher to simultaneously attend to structures of power while firmly grounded in the everyday practices of the participants to understand the converse impacts of one as it informs the other as it “aims to link social phenomena to wider sociohistorical events to expose prevailing systems of domination, hidden assumptions, ideologies, and discourses” (Hardcastle, Usher, & Holmes, 2006, p.151). Critical ethnography interrogates everyday experiences as sites of power struggle, which “takes us beneath surface appearances, disrupts the *status quo*, and unsettles both neutrality and obscure operations of power and control” (Madison, 2012, p.5). In a related way, this method allows us to go beyond what Maiter and Joseph call “face-value analyses”. This means to further probe possibilities of meaning-making that connects what is seen and heard in research to the hegemonic social and political processes that governs us so that “we are less likely to have analyses that take representation of voice at face value or representation that elude an analysis of ableism, mentalism, heteronormativity, racism or sexism (Maiter & Joseph, 2016, p. 767). I use critical ethnography in my study of the complex negotiations of subjectivity among individuals within communities and among communities within a nation, to focus my analytic lens on the operation of diffuse and relational power. In doing so I am prompted to “probe other possibilities that will challenge institutions, regimes of knowledge, and social practices that limit choices, constrain meaning, and denigrate identities and communities” (Madison, 2012, p.6). The

observation and analysis of everyday practices then supports the interrogative lens towards power relations between players, state and groups, as well as researcher and participants.

Researchers using critical ethnography focused on the examination of power relations seen in everyday interactions. Porter (2002) observed the power negotiations of professionals within a health care setting as conditioned within larger societal structures of race and professional role hierarchies. The researcher argued for the use of this method with a “utilization of close observational techniques” of patterns of interactions in order to reveal “a clear picture of the interactions of individuals, both at the level of action and of motivation” within multilayered social situations (Porter, 2002, p. 70). Similarly, Wilton and DeVerteuil (2006)’s study of alcohol recovery and treatment showed that while these community programs are understood as spaces of sobriety and rehabilitation, they also serve as spaces for the regulation of health-related behaviours according to socially structured discourses. The researchers showed that “the relations that exist among individuals within the organization – as specific micro-scale technologies – are incorporated into, and come to reflect, the broader rationality of the political domain” (Wilton & DeVerteuil, 2006, p. 660). Recently, a special issue of *Ethnography* centered the method of critical ethnography focused on studies on the “lived spaces of neoliberalism” to conceptualize the impact of neoliberal transformations on human subjectivity and the state in a project to “forge ethnographic conceptual linkages between site-specific phenomena and the structural forces that explain their existence and survival” (Fairbanks & Lloyd, 2011, p.7). These studies demonstrate the potential for rich analysis and theorizing on power structures grounded in the everyday interactions and negotiations within a specific group through the immersion of the researcher as a participant in the study.

Critical ethnography also demands researcher reflexivity on their own positionality in relation to the participants studied to the extent that the researcher is inseparable from the field. It actively engages in the interrogation of the researcher's power as an insider/outsider in relation to members of the group of study (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003). Critical ethnography requires the researcher to locate them self within the field of study and to utilize their own subject position in the collection and analysis of data (Madison, 2012). My subjectivity is a former refugee, a "boat person", from South Vietnam. My family's escape from Vietnam was an opportunistic one, as my family had no allegiances to either side of the war but saw the chance to flee the current violent, impoverished, and oppressed climate of post-colonial and post-war Vietnam. Prior to practicing as a social worker in Toronto, I had very little interaction with the Vietnamese diaspora, and therefore very little knowledge of the political tensions of this group. I quickly observed the intra-community differences in the types of people to access specific services, centers and events. As a former executive director of the Vietnamese Women's Association of Toronto (VWAT) Family Services, I am well known in the community. My power to the field is in my Canadian education and in previous encounters with the Vietnamese community as a social worker and again as the organizational head of a Vietnamese agency. I struggle to write myself into this study, preferring instead the safe objective gaze of the researcher. It is my privilege of higher education to access this hiding spot. The histories I write about and the community I write about are also partially mine. As well the discourses that I critique, interrogate, and analyze condition my own subjectivity as I also work to influence it in my own negotiations of identity within my community. In the next section, I will discuss the main sites of data collection and participants active in these sites.

Data Collection and “Subjects”

It is within the Vietnamese Canadian community that I developed my keen interest in the dynamics of community and its conflicts, and it is also where I ground my critical ethnography within this local site of subject formation while attending to the concurrent national projects of nation-building. The Vietnamese Canadians in Toronto is very significant to the larger Vietnamese community in Canada. As one of the early concentrations of Vietnamese following the refugee movement from Southeast Asia to Canada, Toronto is home to a sizeable South Vietnamese community very active in remembering and reproducing identities of South Vietnam during the Cold War. As a major city center, Toronto and its surrounding neighbourhoods especially Mississauga, North York, Scarborough, and Vaughan (collectively called the Greater Toronto Area) are home to the largest concentration of Vietnamese Canadians at an estimated 70,725 at the 2011 Census, followed by concentrations in Ottawa, Calgary, and Vancouver (Statistics Canada, 2011). The most recent published estimate of Vietnamese Canadians in Canada is 220,000 and the City of Toronto alone accounts for counts 45,270 persons of Vietnamese ethnic origin, with 23,575 reporting Vietnamese as a mother tongue (City of Toronto, 2012). Vietnamese ranked fifteenth in languages at home in Toronto. Across Canada, Vietnamese ranked in the top 12 most languages spoken at home in five of the six largest census metropolitan areas of Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, and Ottawa-Gatineau, and in the top 25 languages spoken at home nationally in 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Besides the large number of Vietnamese Canadians in the GTA, the community's significance is owing to the relatively large number of Vietnamese associations, and owned businesses, most importantly, the media. Many of these organizations were founded by and continue to be governed by former South Vietnamese refugees. As will be highlighted in

chapters 5 on the Vietnamese as the Cold War neoliberal multicultural subject and 6 on the community conflict and wellbeing, the Vietnamese associations work very closely with its ethnic media in producing and broadcasting negotiations of identity. Given its significance, the ethnography is grounded in this local community.

The ethnography consists of: analysis of the media debates of the National Memorial to Victims of Communism published from 2008 to 2017 in Canadian English language media, analysis of parliamentary debates on the passing of the Journey to Freedom Day Bill from 2014 to 2015, participant observations in Toronto and Ottawa in 2015 of community commemorations of the anniversary of April 30th, 1975 (known in North America as the “Fall of Saigon”), and analysis of recorded commemorations publicly available on YouTube of this date by the Vietnamese in Toronto from the years 2008 to 2015. Finally, I conducted 16 in-depth interviews of Vietnamese Canadians in Toronto from 2014 to 2015. Appendix C outlines these events along one central timeline.

These separate but related activities of data collection allowed me to attend to the minute specifics of what is happening on the ground in the Vietnamese community in the construction and maintenance of their subjectivity, while at the same time studying how these local negotiations have mobilized and challenged the community and national discourses of identity. In his study on immigration discourse, Li points out that “participants in the discourse include politicians, government officials, academics, community groups, and individual citizens, and their views are often articulated in public opinions, discussions, debates, prevailing viewpoints, academic writings, and media reports about issues of immigration” (2001, p.81). As such, my research design captures layered, deepened, and pluralized understanding necessary in analyzing the complex entanglement between the Vietnamese subjectivity and the Canadian national

identity. Next, I will detail each research activity and how each provides an additional layer of analysis to this project of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity in co-constituting national identity building.

I trace the racial capitalist democracy logic behind Canadian national identity formation in the media debates on the National Memorial to Victims of Communism in chapter 4. I again use media analysis in chapter 5 to interrogate the Vietnamese Canadians' ethnic media's coverage of the April 30th commemoration. I follow the strong scholarship of critical studies which analyzes media debates as discourse to unpack mutually sustaining relations and operations of power. By using media analysis to trace a tangible example of the abstract making of national identity, I am able to set this discursive process alongside the concurrent study of the Vietnamese Canadian subject formation as captured in community negotiations. Media analysis as a method was also feasible within the scope of my dissertation that encompasses the transverse national to local sites of study.

The media as a form of elite talk and text, controlled by government, economic, and cultural elites, influence public discourse affecting material social conditions by reproducing elite values and interests as normative (van Dijk, 1991, Bauder, 2008). As a form of elite text, "The media are powerful institutions that harbor the capacity to shape public discourse" (Bauder, 2008, p.290). Bauder focused his critique of the *2002 Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act* within media debates to show that the idea of danger was the most frequent and consistent theme associated with immigration. He argues that media discourse is part of the discursive practices that become materiality, in that "media representations affect attitudes towards migrants, create anxieties and fears, rally support for and against immigration, and legitimate immigration policies and law" (Bauder, 2008, p. 290). Similarly, Mahtani and Mountz in their 2002 study on

media coverage of immigration in British Columbia showed the media produced five specific themes in constituting immigration and then would depict immigration either positively or negatively within these themes. The appearance of a spontaneous debate on immigration veiled the preconditioned limits of the debate within the pre-existing themes. Another form of elite text is parliamentary debates and is similar to media discourse in the enactment of power by elites.

I study parliamentary debates, the passing of the Journey to Freedom Day Act, in chapter 5 which I connected with community commemorations of April 30th as I traced the making of the Vietnamese subject. Parliamentary debates have also been treated as a unique context of talk and text for discourse analysis, as it is not simply the “discursive structure of such debates that uniquely characterizes them, but rather also the structures of their context, such as its setting, its participants (and their different roles), and the ongoing (political) action” (van Dijk, 2003, p. 94). This elite discourse has material effect: “Parliamentary debates shape the discursive framework in which such policy is established. Parliamentary debates constitute a site where a certain kind of discursive practice is put together. They actively reshape, recreate and redefine social reality” (Sharma, 2001, p.421). Sharma (2001) analyzed parliamentary debates on the issue of temporary migrant workers to trace the discursive practice of bordering in the making and securing of “nation-ness” amidst the background of globalization. She argues the discursive separation and distinction between self and other then creates difference “where difference does not mean diversity but inequality” (Sharma, 2001, p.418). Recently, Kronick and Rousseau (2015) analyzed the political debates on the detention of asylum-seeking children, to understand how parliamentarians negotiated and legitimized either the mandatory detention of persons under the age of 16 or the mandatory separation of these young persons from their detained guardians. They highlighted the significance of these debates as an object of study in their power to impact

social and material conditions, “Parliamentary conversations which, as speech acts, produce and justify certain social practices [sic], in this case, the mandatory detention of some children.”

(Kronick & Rousseau, 2015, p. 549).

While a discourse analysis of elite talk and text implies an operation of power from top down may seem to be contrary to Foucauldian notions of capillary power, my use of discourse analysis in the above two specific sites of discursive construction (media and parliamentary debates) is at the level of method. I see the Foucauldian concept of discourse as operating at the level of the methodological framework. As a method, I see critical discourse analysis (CDA) as providing a guide to my analysis of these unique operations of talk and text. Fairclough (2003) highlights the traditional separation of different versions of discourse analysis which he distinguishes between those that are “textually oriented discourse analysis” which includes detailed analysis of texts including that of sociolinguistics, and those which follow the Foucauldian tradition which “pay little close attention to the linguistic features of texts” in an either/or fashion (Fairclough, 2003 p.3). He states this is not a necessary separation as for any social research project to be politically significant, textual analysis should be located within a framework attuned to operations of power and at the same time, “No real understanding of the social effects of discourse is possible” without a study of talk and text (Fairclough, 2003, p.3). Discourse analysis then moves from the “social structuring” of language as one element of social practices:

I see discourse analysis as ‘oscillating’ between a focus on specific texts and a focus on what I call the ‘order of discourse’...Critical discourse analysis is concerned with continuity and change at this more abstract, more structural, level, as well as with what happens in particular texts. (Fairclough, 2003, p.3)

Here I use the more prescribed method of critical discourse analysis, as per van Dijk (1991, 2003) to show what is happening in the particular parliamentary text while attending to the structural ordering of the discourse as per Foucauldian power.

Diaz-Bone, Bührmann, Rodríguez, Schneider, Kendall, & Tirado (2008) provide a straightforward assessment of Foucauldian discourse in elucidating the multiple variegations of discourse analysis. They first outline Foucault's loose process of discourse analysis: "He [Foucault] first asks which object or area of knowledge is discursively produced; second, he asks according to what logic the terminology is constructed; third, he asks who authorized it; and finally, he asks which strategic goals are being pursued in the discourse" (Diaz-Bone et al, 2008, p.11). To reconcile Foucauldian discourse with critical discourse analysis, Diaz-Bone and colleagues suggests that CDA is subsumed under Foucauldian discourse as a framework: "CDA was initiated to work out theoretical and methodological first principles of a critical perspective in empirical discourse analysis which extended Foucauldian notions of discourse, power and society" (Diaz-Bone, et al., 2008, p.22). As my overall study incorporates multiple data sites and types of talk and text, I am driven to bring in different methods of data collection within my study of local sites of identity and subject negotiations entangled with national identity building. Next, I will turn to the additional methods of data collection, participant observation and in-depth interviews.

In order to stay close to the empirical ground and attend to minute details of subjectivity production within the ethnography, I conducted participant observations of the April 30th commemoration in chapter 5. I attended the event in Ottawa and then Toronto in 2015. Within a cultural group, participant observation is "establishing a place in some natural setting on a relatively long-term basis in order to investigate, experience and represent the social life and

social processes that occur in that setting” (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011, p.352). Observations were made of the attendees at the events: for example, the participating booths; the staging of the venue – who is located next to whom, distances from the center stage; the visual displays – banners, posters, flags, and the scheduling of the program. Written community and media coverage of the events were analyzed for images, representations, themes, and narratives of Vietnamese subjectivity. Recorded speeches made publicly available on shared internet sites, from the ethnic media and also from individual users, of the event from 2007 onwards will be subject to discourse analysis.

My use of historical data such as the recorded community commemorations of April 30th, 1975 provides a background context in order to identify patterns and theorize the larger political landscape structuring the event. The bracketing of my scope from 2007 to 2015 is deliberate, as this appears to be the beginning of the Conservative government’s aggressive courting of the ethnic vote including the Vietnamese. It is apparent in the rankings of the politicians in attendance of commemoration, which have risen since 2007 from municipal leaders until 2015, with Federal Cabinet Minister Jason Kenney. Speeches in the opening ceremonies by the event organizers, sponsors, and invited politicians will be analyzed for discursive themes of power, mutually sustaining relations of ruling, hierarchies of difference, images, and productions. Finally, my last method of data collection is in-depth semi-structured interviews.

I interviewed 16 individuals from September 18, 2014 to October 14, 2015. These interviews include various members of the Vietnamese community: agency and event volunteers, agency staff, and event attendees. These semi-structured interviews are understood as constructive enterprises with the interviewer and interviewee as participants in the creation of knowledge within the interview space (Kvale, 1996). The interview guide is attached in the

appendix. Sampling of interviewees were purposeful to achieve diversity, as this was a theoretical sampling where “the researcher samples events, time periods, or people for their potential to exhibit the concept or theory” (Morris, 2006, p. 93). In this case, I looked for participants who can shed light on my question of how Vietnamese subjectivity is reproduced but also how Vietnamese subjectivity is contested.

I sampled diverse groups such as those of allegiance to North and South Vietnam; Vietnamese who came as refugees and the 1.5/2nd generation Vietnamese born in Canada; Vietnamese who migrated during the 1980s and Vietnamese who migrated later post 1990s; gender; from diverse classes (profession and education) in Vietnam; and with diverse involvement in community affairs². By increasing the range of diversity in my interviewees, I compiled a heterogeneous sample “to confirm or disconfirm the conditions, both contextual and intervening, under which the model holds.” (Creswell, 1998, p.119). My participants were predominantly from South Vietnam (12 identified from South, 1 from Central, and 3 from North Vietnam); 10 arrived in Canada through the post war refugee period in Vietnam and 6 came after the 1990s through economic migration; 9 identified as women and 7 identified as men; and 9 identified as the younger generation under the age of 50 while 7 identified as the older generation. The predominance of South Vietnamese participants in my study resulted from my sampling of those involved in organized Vietnamese activities in Toronto which are hosted by organizations founded by the South Vietnamese refugee cohort of the 1980s.

My goal for a diverse sample of participants was to seek ruptures, inconsistencies, points of departure and unevenness to challenge the homogenous Vietnamese subjectivity that is

² 1.5 generation is usually used in reference to individuals who arrived to Canada at a young age.

required to constitute Canadian national identity. A monetary incentive of \$20 was provided to interviewees for their time. An honorarium is necessary in this community to acknowledge the value of the participant's contributions and to demonstrate the commitment of the researcher to the sensitive issues studied. Interviews were 1.5 to 2 hours in length. Participant data is anonymous, and names are omitted including those quoted from ethnography events and public written materials. Overall, my data includes parliamentary debates, Canadian and Vietnamese media coverage, openly circulated letters, agency newsletters, publicly shared recordings of community and agency open meetings, publicly shared recordings of community events which includes speeches made, and participant interviews.

Processes of Analysis

Here I will detail the steps to my data analysis, which includes discourse analysis, transcription and translation. Discourse analysis attends to the structure, construction, and motivations of the talk and text. I read the data for resistances, imaginations, domination, silences, constructions, omissions, and allusions, connecting what is said to dominant structures of power and historical events and remembrances. I was particularly interested in how some knowledge became legitimized while others were illegible, as “ongoing statements have to respect the set of rules which is inherent in this context of preceding statements. If they fail to do this, they will not have an impact; they will not be accepted or even recognized in the social area or social field as ‘serious speech acts’” (Diaz-Bone, et. al., 2008, p.11). Attention was paid to points of inconsistencies, discontinuities, inclusions, exclusions, and conflicts in the presentation of Vietnamese subjectivity at the study sites to highlight the power dynamics behind the production and negotiation of subjectivity.

Alvesson and Karreman (2000) discuss the bridging of empirically grounded material to overarching discourses of social representation. They argue the need for empirical talk and text to ground and root discourses of the social as structured by power and knowledge; an act which they call “to move up on ‘a discursive ladder’” of discourses which are a way of talking and writing about an issue that frame how people understand and act within that issue (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000, p.1146). Speeches from both previous years and the current observed year were analyzed to note any differences in the language used, the narratives told, the analogies, to give context and show changes over time. I looked for any shifts in the boundary of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity and Canadian national identity, as discourse analysis of political talk and text requires a close textual reading to detect the language and social practices producing ideology (Marston, 2004). Interview data was treated as discourse with analysis looking for interviewees’ points of view, how they make meaning, and how they construct their responses. Additionally, I looked for indicators, such as “common-sense” references to explore what produces these points of views, meaning-making, and experiences of the respondents. The analysis was completed with the understanding that what people say is an expression of the discourse through these subjects, or what Maiter and Joseph call “representation as a production in progress”, so that I am able to go beyond the “face-value” of what participants say but rather treat statements as positionings with a historical, social, and political context (2016, p.767). Speeches were analyzed for what people are saying and what are the linkages, images, analogies they are making. Once the data was collected, I translated and transcribed the data simultaneously and treated these steps as part of the process of data analysis.

Translation is a key element of this study as I work between Vietnamese and English. I discuss it at length here because it is not a well discussed step in social research despite the

enormity of its role in data analysis. Like transcription, translation is a construction process that is also fraught with considerations of power impacting its validity and reliability “a transcript is a transgression, a transformation of one narrative mode – oral discourse – into another narrative mode – written discourse.” (Kvale, 1996, p.166). The act of translating language text is not a straightforward mechanical process and is fraught with power in the act of negotiating meaning from one language to the other (Baker, 2011; Squires, 2009; Wong & Poon, 2010). Additional data provided by researcher recollection and journal notes of the interview and initial responses were used to ensure the transcribed written data does not become decontextualized from the interview conversation (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 2011). With the understanding of translation as an exercise of power, Wong & Poon argue “the outcomes of translation are influenced significantly by the social positions of the researchers, the translators, and the participants, that is, the extent in which one group assumes absolute authority of knowing over another” (2010, p. 153). Similarly, Sutrisno, Nguyễn, & Tangen imagines “translation as a dialogue between the original texts in the source language and the translation in the target language, mediated by the translator, which results in a co-dependence between the two texts” (2014, p.1340). As the mediator of the two languages, I struggled with my role as translator to convey meaning of the participant to the reader.

The recorded speeches, publicly available recordings from the public events, and the audio recordings of interviews were in both the Vietnamese and English languages. I first transcribed the audiotapes in the language presented and analyzed the data in said language in order to capture the structure, syntax and semantics of the language. During the analysis, I kept both language versions of the transcriptions side by side in order to ensure the meaning-making

process was as reflective of the original language as possible. At the same time, I follow Farquhar and Fitzsimons' urging that we suspend the positivistic demand for a pure translation:

We must forgo the possibility of total translation. Notwithstanding the mourning for a perfect translation, we can best aim for a good translation.

Translation, as an encounter to be embraced, is not, then, a quest for perfect meaning. There is a tension between, on the one hand, staying true to the author; and on the other hand, communicating effectively with the reader.

(2010, p. 659)

This meticulous analysis of the original language is necessary to capture the structure, syntax and semantics of the language. Hsiung and Wong demonstrated in their study of Chinese women activists the vast gap in meaning of used terms when translated from Chinese to English, as the words' "implied cultural, political, and/or historical meanings are often lost in translation." (1998, p.474). They argue it is these linguistic operatives that structure and shape our worldviews, and our meaning-making of our experiences (Hsiung & Wong, 1998).

In the discussion of the data chapters (4, 5, and 6), participant responses are presented in English with key phrases left in Vietnamese and italicized. This asks the reader to take on the viewpoint of the speaker, the Vietnamese speaker. In doing so, the reader must consciously attempt to see the world through the participants' eyes and to resist their own viewpoints and analytic lens in reading and understanding the speaker. It reminds the reader of the different worldview Vietnamese people may have in as a minute attempt to counter the dominance of the English language in knowledge production. As a last note on translation and transcription, I will reflect on my own worldview as a "heritage" speaker of a language learned outside of the

country from which the language originated. This social location presented considerable challenges in my transcription and translation process.

Language itself is a living body of history and this one is marked with the wounds of colonization and war. Language is a signifier class, of regional origin, and very significantly for the Vietnamese Canadian community, language is a signifier of war allegiances and changes to language marks major points in Vietnam's and Vietnamese' history. As a "heritage speaker", a Vietnamese who learned the language outside of the country, my vocabulary and accompanying cultural understanding is of Vietnam pre-Fall of Saigon. My family originated from South Vietnam as part of the farming class. The vocabulary I am accustomed to hearing at home is South Vietnamese, pre-1975, and is different from the intellectual or economically affluent classes of urban Saigon. Certain Vietnamese terms as words and phrases were both created and ceased at major points in Vietnamese history. For example, popular translation software such as Google translate err towards the current Vietnam's Vietnamese which often do not entirely suit my participants' use of Vietnamese. Regional influences of neighbouring Cambodia is apparent in my form of Vietnamese, as there are terms which I have later been told have Khmer influences which colleagues raised in urban Saigon are not familiar with. Dictation software did not work for me in neither English nor Vietnamese owing to my accented English AND Vietnamese (a common Vietnamese description for my generation, both affectionate and disparaging is that we are "*nửa nạc, nửa mỡ*" [half lean, half fat] meat). I also had to locate a reliable keyboard software that enabled me to type out Vietnamese diacritics to mixed satisfaction. The difference between my pronunciation of Vietnamese and those of Central and North Vietnam from urban centers of Huế, Hai Phong, and Hanoi are even more apparent given

the context of a differential colonization of the different regions of Vietnam and a prolonged civil war as I will review in chapter 4.

When analyzing the in-depth interviews, I was able to access a community member who left Vietnam after adult education having taught English in Vietnam, thus this person has a strong grasp of the Vietnamese language and culture and also was able to provide insights to the nearest equivalent English translation. This process is to support my own second language abilities in Vietnamese but also to allow me to reconsider my worldviews, meaning-making, biases, and assumptions in the research process. Unfortunately, I was unable to request this community member's continued support for the remainder of the study due to the community conflict which I analyze in chapter 6 on community wellbeing.

My detailed review of these steps to translation and transcription highlights the challenges and complexity of research in a language that is not English. It also highlights the role of language in researcher participant relations, and the subjectivity forming influence language has as both my participant/subject and I move between the two languages in our interviews, speeches, and written documents. While I attempt to capture this in the data write-up by stating the language that the text was originally presented in, and by keeping the significant terms in Vietnamese when presented as such, a deeper analysis of this subjectivity forming influence of language is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Summary

Critical ethnography allows reflexivity in responding to emerging data, as I shift back and forth from being informed by my chosen theoretical lens to understanding the phenomenon on the ground to using the data seen on the ground to expand and build upon the theoretical lens.

My study is grounded in and relies on the Foucauldian use of power and discourse as the framework from which I approach my study. Within this overarching framework, I use specific methods of critical discourse analysis that allow me to carefully trace elite discourse in national parliamentary debates to the discursive constructions of subjectivity in the community and at local sites. I have incorporated a wide range of multiple types of data into this study including media debates, parliamentary debates, video recorded community events, participant observation, and in-depth interviews. Finally, I detailed the trials and challenges of transcribing and translation data presented in a language outside of English and present this process as a revealing exercise of power of researcher and community.

Chapter 4: Cold War, Vietnamese Refugees, and Canada as a Racial Capitalist Democracy

In this chapter, I provide a historical and political context to this study by tracing the development of Canadian national identity formation *vis-à-vis* Vietnamese Canadians from the Cold War period to the present. I map how Vietnamese refugees and Canada become *knowable* to themselves and to one another, and how Canada continues to construct its national identity through the production of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity. Canada's *knowability* of itself as deconstructed in the debates of the national *Memorial to Victims of Communism* elucidates the operation of Cold War epistemology in which Canada narrates its democracy and liberalism through discourses of anti-communism. And yet, overshadowed by Canada's boisterous self-proclamations of democracy is the strong conflation of this identity to capitalism. This is a lingering legacy of the Cold War – the only way towards progress is through democracy, which I will show is silently conflated with capitalism.

I arrive at this analysis by first tracing Canada's self-narrative as a politically neutral, peacekeeping nation developed during the Cold War period, and in particular, constituted by the war in Vietnam. I examine how Canada constructed itself as a humanitarian nation by admitting Indochinese refugees at the end of the war in Vietnam with a focus on the major policies and initiatives that shaped this construction. Finally, I analyze Canada's national identity in the debates around the proposed national monument titled the *Memorial to Victims of Communism: Canada, A Land of Refuge*. This historical tracing of Canadian identity formed during the Cold War period is necessary as it informs how the Canadian national identity -- free, humanitarian, democratic, and peace-making -- is embedded in a racial capitalist democracy logic. Canada continues to narrate this national identity while concealing the underlying logic of racial

capitalist democracy through the conflation of racial capitalism with democracy and multiculturalism.

Cold and Hot Wars

The Cold War is commonly understood as an ideological war between Western democratic nations, led by the United States, and the communist/socialist bloc dominated by the former Soviet Union and China. These super nations sought political and economic control over newly independent Southeast Asian nations that were former colonies of the colonial era. John Price articulates the role of ideology in the complex global transition of historical colonial dominance to the emerging period of rule within globalization:

Anti-communism can be best understood...as a means to completely reframe a situation so that what had been an important and legitimate regional anti-colonial movement was now part of a universalized communist conspiracy, thereby providing a rationale for continued imperial intervention in the postwar era. (2011, p. 283).

Price utilizes a critical historical analysis to nuance the complex role that Canada played in historical events tracing the embeddedness of Canada's foreign policy and racism. This reveal, among many acts of power dominance, the global rhetoric of anti-communism as it was often used as a target to overshadow and to sanction capitalism within imperial intervention in the period of economic globalization.

The threat of a nuclear devastation kept the war "cold" between Western and Eastern blocs of power. Yet, the reality of the former colonies that these superpowers fought over was such that military interventions on the ground were very much "hot" and very much devastating

(Miller & Vu, 2009). The Cold War period saw military conflicts waged in almost all of Southeast Asia from the early 1940s to as late as the 1970s (Lau, 2012). Former colonies such as Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam found themselves “aided” by these super-nations in their struggle for colonial independence and self-determination. Infrastructure such as governance, economic, political and social systems had to be re-negotiated and re-established. More importantly, the global economic framework required international trading partners. In these areas, the Western and Eastern power blocs were eager to assist as they saw these new nations as emerging markets in the new era of economic and political globalization.

Vietnam as one, united nation is a relatively recent historical phenomenon. Vietnam’s ancient history is a series of struggles for territorial control by different regional powers. China was a dominant power in the region and had exerted the most power and influence. For an extended period of time, China had annexed the territory that would later become Vietnam in modern history in a feudal tributary structure that started with a territorial expansion in neighbouring North Vietnam and progressed southwards³. In 1887 Imperial France colonized the region naming it “Indochine” or “Indochina” followed by American imperialism during the Cold War from 1954 onwards (Le, 2011). Vietnam was arguably still under American neo-colonialism during the age of modern globalization following its “*Đổi Mới*” (change and renewal) economic open-door policy in the mid 1980s and the lifted trade embargo with the United States in 1994. Since 1995, trade between the U.S. and Vietnam has grown from \$451 million to nearly \$52 billion in 2016, with the United States being Vietnam’s largest export market.⁴

³ The early history of Vietnam and China dates back to the time Before Christ and itself is a complex literature, see Le, L. S. (2011). " Colonial" and" postcolonial" views of Vietnam's pre-history. *SOJOURN: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, 26(1), 128-148 for an entry into this debate

⁴ Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, September 13, 2017, from <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/4130.htm>

During the height of the global de-colonialization period, Vietnam was newly independent from France's Southeast Asian colonial territories called "Indochina". After the first Indochina war, which ended in 1954 with the defeat of France by the Vietnamese nationalists under Hồ Chí Minh, an international agreement, the Geneva Accord, formalized a ceasefire for France to withdraw its military troops. International attempts to delay the expansion of Hồ Chí Minh further into South Vietnam prompted the Accord which divided the territory of Vietnam along the 17th parallel with the promise of a national election to reunite the country in 1956. The northern half of Vietnam under Hồ Chí Minh's government, formally called the "Democratic Republic of Vietnam" was recognized by China and the former Soviet Union, while the United States, Great Britain, Canada, and France recognized the southern half of Vietnam, formally called the "State of Vietnam" under Emperor Bảo Đại's government. To be clear, during this time period, Hồ Chí Minh's nationalist government was widely seen as a successful decolonial force against French colonizers. Noted anticolonial scholar Frantz Fanon cites Hồ Chí Minh's victory at Điện Biên Phủ, a battle which forced the negotiated removal of French colonial control from Vietnam, as an example of a successful decolonial act in his analysis of his own country's struggle against French colonial rule (Fanon, 1963, p.70). Under Emperor Bảo Đại, South Vietnam was regarded as a neo-colonial puppet state of France (Price, 2011). Canada's siding with imperial France and Great Britain in denouncing Hồ Chí Minh's decolonial movement and recognizing Emperor Bảo Đại's neocolonial South Vietnam preserves the international imbalance of power held by Western European and North American nations. As per the Geneva Accord, the unification of Vietnam was to occur in 1956, but international interventions which leveraged internal conflicts in Vietnam, derailed these plans and an election did not occur. By 1963, upwards of 16,000 American troops were officially operating military campaigns on the

ground in South Vietnam (Price, 2011). International intervention in the division and planned unification of Vietnam occurred within the larger framework of the Cold War as similarly structured conflicts were waged in neighbouring countries, including Korea.

Land played a prominent role in the prize that was Vietnam. Vietnam's geography made it an asset in both the colonial and now globalized eras. Its long shores along the South China Sea meant it was accessible for shipping trade and industry. Its land-locked neighbours Laos and Cambodia, which had little to no shores, provided Vietnam with trading leverage and dominance over these nations (Woods, 2013). Vietnam's shared borders with Laos and Cambodia were in constant guard and flux as these territories sought increased regional power and control. Within the context of the Cold War, the United States then saw Vietnam's geography as a critical location for its control of nearby communist countries, China and the former Soviet Union, and used the term "domino effect" to describe Vietnam's significance in geography (Preston, 2003). If a Southeast Asian nation was allowed to "fall" to communism, then the entire region would follow. Extensive critical historical research which deconstructed memos circulated in the Canadian government during the 1950s revealed that Canada, too, saw the territory of Indochina as "one of the most critical soft spots in Asia which the Communists are probing" (Price, 2011, p. 281). In the name of containing communism, the United States, supported by its Western allies including Canada, intervened in this civil struggle and waged war in Vietnam.

To highlight the significance of international influence during the war and in popular memory, this civil war in Vietnam is also colloquially called *Đánh Giặc Mỹ* (the war with America) among the Vietnamese diaspora and others still in Vietnam. This contrasts the dominant North American narrative that the Vietnam War was a "fight for freedom" within the Cold War binary of democracy "resisting" communism. In the context of the Cold War

Manicheanism, the imperial nations that intervened in Vietnam could not accept nor support a Vietnamese movement with no adherence to an ideology of communism or democracy (Topmiller, 2002). The North American discourse of the Cold War was “good” fighting “evil” and presented the conflict in Vietnam as a simple binary – democracy versus communism. Yet, this was not the case in Vietnam. The simple division of the country into North and South by international powers through the Geneva Accord is superficial as “Millions of Vietnamese were involved directly or indirectly in the war, and their loyalties and alignments were not always congruent to the rivalry between North and South Vietnam, or to the Cold War struggle pitting the United States against the Communist Bloc” (Miller & Vu, 2009, p.7). During the period of the Accord “...the Vietnamese War era was not only a time of military conflict but also a period of myriad social struggles that touched practically every individual Vietnamese” with little room for simple divisions of loyalty and commitment (Miller & Vu, 2009, p.8). This binary of communism versus democracy does not capture what was happening on the ground among the Vietnamese people. The division of Vietnam into North and South is an ideologically driven phenomenon, as the border was drawn and redrawn by foreign colonial powers with the latest iteration along the 17th parallel. A significant division still persists among Vietnamese Canadians as a lingering impact of the war in Vietnam. As I will argue further in chapter 6, given the complex struggles in Vietnam during the war, a simple division of communist versus anti-communist does not capture the sentiments of the Vietnamese Canadian community.

The outcome of the war in Vietnam is the so-called “Fall of Saigon” in 1975 where American forces withdrew from Vietnam following the 1973 Paris Peace Treaty. On April 30th, 1975, the last American military force withdrew and H ò Chí Minh’s military forces from North Vietnam took over the South. This was the end of a massively destructive and bloody war. An

estimated 3 million Vietnamese civilians died during the war. Faced with a devastated and impoverished nation under yet another uncertain government dependent on a military regime, a total estimated 2 million Vietnamese left Vietnam from the period of 1975 to 1990s as part of the “Indochina refugee crisis” and were also known as the “Vietnamese boat people”. On April 30th alone, 130,000 people left Vietnam, mostly evacuated by American forces (Nguyễn, 2009). To date, 220,000 Vietnamese persons are in Canada as part of an estimated 4 million who reside internationally to form the global Vietnamese diaspora (Molloy, Duschinsky, Jensen, & Shalka, 2017). While this number is not numerically significant compared to Canada’s overall population of 35.1 million (Statistics Canada, 2017), the Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity is what is of value to Canada. This is due to their representational significance which is traced from the following: their role in the ideological construction of the war in Vietnam during the Cold War period; their constructed legitimacy as authentic refugees as was reviewed in chapter 1; and their productivity in contributing to Canada’s international superiority as a progressive democracy, overshadowing and veiling its racial capitalism.

Canada in the Vietnam War

The co-constitutive relationship between Vietnam and Canada, and now the Vietnamese to Canada, must be considered within the larger international context of the Cold War. Canada’s relationship and involvement with Vietnam is embedded within the triangulation of Canada’s entanglement with the United States. It was during this time that Canada constructed its identity as a neutral and peacekeeping nation through its involvement in the Cold War and in Vietnam. I will argue later in this chapter that this identity serves to make the violence of settler colonialism in Canada invisible, and to bolster trade relations for capitalist expansion. Scholars challenge this

“‘selfless’ character of Canadian foreign policy” (Bothwell, 2000; Levant, 1986; Neufeld, 1995; Preston, 2003). Neufeld argues that while Canada had an interest in peace, humanitarian concerns were not considered a top priority (1995, p.8). During the war in Vietnam, Canada did not assume a neutral position but instead assessed its relational power internationally within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and with its dominant neighbour, the United States.

One of Canada’s most prominent and strategic roles in the war in Vietnam was as “international peacekeeper”. Price outlines that while Canada was reluctant to act in Southeast Asia, the reason it eventually played such a large role under Lester B. Pearson was the desire for “a foreign policy that was distinctively Canadian” (2011, p.301). Price calls this a peacekeeping “niche” that “was tailor-made to give the appearance of a middle force in international diplomacy” (2011, p.301). This appearance allowed Canada to distance itself from the overt aggression of American imperialism without actually challenging it, thus preserving the North American solidarity between the two states. Furthermore, Canada’s role supported its North American ally by providing the cover of peacekeeping to America’s aggressions as the Canadian peacekeeper’s relationship with the United States was often presented as evidence “of the non-imperial nature of US intervention” (2011, p.305).

Canada was selected as one of the member countries of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam (ICSC) from 1954 to 1973. The three-member countries to form the ICSC were strategically chosen according to international alliances and the chosen countries’ perceived political capital. As the United States’ closest ally, both geographically and economically, Canada was chosen as one of the three members to balance the other ICSC members: Poland as the Soviet Union’s ally and India as a newly decolonized former colony following the system of capitalist democracy but seemingly neutral in the Cold War. The ICSC

served as the monitoring and surveillance body on the ground in Vietnam. Its role was to implement the peace terms of the Geneva Accord. This meant ensuring the superpowers in the conflict, the United States and the former Soviet Union, adhered to the peace terms of the Geneva Accord as both had growing military presence on both sides of the demilitarized zone of Vietnam along the 17th parallel (Bothwell, 2000; Neufeld, 1995; Preston, 2003). Canada, in accepting this role, also evaluated its position in relation to both risks and rewards: as an ally to the United States, as a means to deter calls for direct military involvement in Vietnam, and as a nation that can increase its international influence and prestige without challenging its colonial history of white supremacy. Finally, beyond complicity, Canada directly perpetrated violence in Vietnam.

While there were no official Canadian military missions in Vietnam, Canada's actions supported the global war machinery and enabled the devastation of Vietnam ("Canada supplies the Vietnam war machine", 1975; Nguyễn, 2013; Price, 2011; Ziedenberg, 1995). Canada contributed to and sustained the chemical warfare in Vietnam. For example, Agent Orange, "the most infamous and dirtiest legacies of the Vietnam War" ("Was Agent Orange tested in Canada?", 1981), is a debilitating chemical weapon used widely against Vietnamese civilians of which masses are still suffering the consequences today. In the 1980s, journalists discovered that Agent Orange was produced in Elmira, Ontario, and tested in the Canadian military base in Gagetown, New Brunswick. The Canadian government also provided weapons to the Americans for use in its war (Price, 2011). Canadians themselves, some 30,000, volunteered to fight with the Americans in Vietnam. These actions by Canada contributed to the destructive outcome of the war in Vietnam and the large-scale human suffering. In contrast to its complicity in the war, Canada's celebration of itself as a refugee haven at the fall out of the war – the single largest

episode of human displacement seen to date – has been loudly and widely reproduced in order to overshadow this history of violence.

While Price (2011) outlined Canada's international political ambitions in taking up a peacekeeping role, critical race scholar Sherene Razack (2000) directly ties this role to Canada's white settler colonial project. She argues that Canada's peacekeeping is a recasting of the white colonial project, where the superior white colonizer is now tasked with a global burden of keeping order among native colonies. She states that this functions as a continuation of colonialism, "[I]n this era of globalization, the story line has shifted only slightly: in the neocolonial narrative, whites must now contend with the disorder and chaos wrought by natives left to their own devices after decolonization" (2000, p.129). While her analysis is concerned with Canadian atrocities in Somalia, her conceptualization complements Cold War historian Price's argument that peacekeeping placed colonial white supremacy into a different mold; as in the Cold War context, anti-communism was now a means to project white liberal values against a common enemy (Price, 2011, p.310).

The peacekeeping identity is also productive in erasing the historical genocide and continued violence of Indigenous peoples on the land. Paulette Regan similarly interrogates Canada's peacemaker role in relation to Indigenous peoples. She states that rather than confront their role as settlers, in which the violence and atrocities of genocide of Indigenous peoples must be accounted for, nationals portray themselves as peacemakers, "Who negotiate treaties and implement Indian policy intended to bestow upon Indigenous people the generous benefits or gifts of peace, order, good government, and Western education" (Regan, 2010, p.83). It is clear that Canada's peacekeeping identity, forged during the Cold War, is of great significance in projecting a superior national identity that provides Canada with an international moral high

ground. Furthermore, it erases acts of international complicity in Vietnam while preserving its relationship with the United States, bolsters its international prestige by projecting Western liberal values, but also provides a cover for domestic violence at home.

Canada's Response to the Indochinese Refugee Crisis

The period of the Indochinese refugee “rescue” from 1975 to 1995 of Vietnamese – and to a much lesser extent neighbouring Southeast Asian Laotians and Cambodians – continues to inform the national discourse of Canada as a refugee haven and our imagination about authentic “refugeeness”. Canada’s legacy of the Cold War is its humanitarian discourse, as it continues to claim itself a refugee haven, an identity forged during the Indochinese refugee crisis. Another arm of this legacy is that for Canada to be considered a refugee haven, there must be authentic refugees to rescue and shelter. Thus, Vietnamese Canadians continue to be known through their “refugeeness”. This logic persists in today’s context where Canada has once again become a refugee haven for another group of authentic refugees: Syrians. In the second half of this chapter, I will further analyze the celebration of Canada’s narrative as a refugee haven in the debates on the *Memorial to Victims of Communism*, to conflate and conceal Canada’s project of racial capitalism.

Among Western nations, Canada played a significant role in accepting refugees from Southeast Asian in the fallout of the war in Vietnam and the wars in neighbouring Cambodia and Laos. Given its domestic need for labour at a time when professionalization and skilled manufacturing was on the rise, as well as its position at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) which pressured all countries to accept refugees, Canada did make significant changes to its immigration act in order to admit Indochinese refugees. Key to the

formation of the modern Canadian immigration and refugee program, the 1978 Immigration Act processed refugees as a separate category for the first time (Somerset, 1982, p.109). The Private Sponsorship Agreement was also formed at this time, allowing individual Canadians and groups to assume financial responsibility of a refugee for a one-year time period, thereby embodying the nation as possessing core humanitarian principles. Canada agreed to match the number of refugees sponsored privately with the Government Assisted Refugee program in a “one-to-one” formula. This program succeeded beyond initial expectations and the original target of sponsored refugees doubled due to those who were privately sponsored (Chan & Indra, 1987). The initial target was set at 25,000 people, then 40,000. This number grew steadily and between the late 1970s to early 1990s a total of 125,000 Vietnamese refugees arrived in Canada. To the enduring pride of Canada, this private sponsorship system, a project that downloads international humanitarian responsibility to private citizens while acquiring hegemonic public consent, was internationally recognized. In this way, the Canadian “public” co-produces and knows the Vietnamese refugees before they have even arrived. In 1986, the UNHCR awarded the Nansen Refugee Award to the people of Canada. Yet even during this time, as a precaution, the government continued a discourse of “absorptive capacity” to communicate assimilative intentions towards the refugees and immigrants as well as expected drain and hardship placed on Canada (Somerset, 1982). This kept the option to curtail admission practices open.

Long before Vietnamese refugees came to Canada, both national and international media had made this group of people well known to the Canadian public. The war in Vietnam was the first to be televised, allowing the public to feel the pain and suffering of the Other. Images of self-immolated monks, bombs over rice paddies, and screaming women and children had filled television sets and cluttered newsstands long before the first refugees entered Canada. Western

Orientalism towards the Vietnamese people was paternalistic and cast them as “downtrodden and oppressed’ by “the horrible, torturing communists.” Vietnamese people were “cast as victims with agency, that is, they were hardworking and dreamed of ‘freedom’” (Price, 2011, p. 294). This ideological lens has the effect of enabling refugee sponsorship yet limiting the understanding of Indochinese refugees, thereby reducing them, simply, to victims of communism needing to be saved. Private citizens readily signed up to sponsor these refugees out of their perceived knowing and identification with these victims. Over 40 years after the end of the war in Vietnam, Vietnam and Vietnamese refugees continue to be dredged up in media and public discourse and held up as the measuring stick for determining an “authentic” refugee. Vietnamese as “Indochinese boat people” rests on the image of refugees on makeshift boats and continues to dominate the discourse of “refugeeness” in the public debates on who/what is considered a “legitimate refugee”, in contrast with a “bogus refugee”, an “economic refugee”, or an “irregular arrival” (Mountz, 2011). How Vietnamese Canadians construct themselves today continues to be informed by the Cold War legacy including Canada’s self-narrative as part of this legacy.

An additional effect of the Cold War legacy is the inclusion of the Vietnamese as particular ideological refugees of the Cold War period. This continues to dominate how Vietnamese Canadians narrate themselves and their identities in Canada. The construction of Vietnamese refugees as anti-communist freedom seekers persists today within the diaspora as a lingering legacy of the Cold War. Early Vietnamese migrants arrived in Canada as students under the Colombo Plan, a Cold War era aid program that was driven by anti-communist ideology (Lau, 2012). Intended in this paternalistic plan is the Western education of impoverished Southeast Asians, thought to be the key targets of communism. Devastated by the conflict and mass suffering of civilians in Vietnam, this early group of Vietnamese Canadian

students played a large role in petitioning for the admission of Vietnamese refugees after the Fall of Saigon (Dorais, 1998). This role is often overshadowed by the work of “Canadian” charities, such as Operation Lifeline or Mennonite and Christian sponsorship groups, in the retelling of the refugee rescue. The first group to leave Vietnam was the South Vietnamese elite, many of whom had direct involvement in the war as allies to the Americans (Nguyễn, 2009). Catholic Vietnamese and Chinese Vietnamese also quickly left under the threat of persecution from the new national regime. Others followed, some due to political allegiance, but many due to the harsh poverty and oppression in Vietnam, a country that was left devastated after nearly a century of colonialism and warfare. With each conflict, the borders between neighbours and enemies shifted. As the borders were redrawn and regimes of power replaced, these changes were inscribed into the bodies of the people themselves.

Today, it is common to hear members of the Vietnamese diaspora, especially those of the older generation, to identify themselves or others according to the years of these changes. “*Bắc 54*” (North 54) means one had resided in North Vietnam before 1954, which was when the Geneva Accord was signed, and France officially withdrew from the territory. These people are assumed to have migrated south following 1954 during the exodus of the Roman Catholic North Vietnamese and to be on the side of the Americans and South Vietnam. “*Bắc 75*” (North 75) means one had resided in North Vietnam before the Fall of Saigon thus physically on the side of the Vietnamese communist regime, regardless of where they were located mentally and spiritually. For many in the diaspora, these later Northerners are positioned as the enemy to the South Vietnamese even now and here, in Canada. This Cold War dynamic between Vietnamese-Canadians will be analyzed further in chapter 6 on community wellbeing and belonging.

This historical tracing of Canada's entanglement with Vietnamese Canadians from the early beginnings of the Cold War shows Canada's persistent moves to uphold international imbalance of power in favour of Western and European former colonizers and imperialists. Yet these moves of inequity such as the thwarting of Vietnam's decolonial movement, are veiled behind Canada's forged identities as peacekeepers and refugee rescuers. This saviour complex, which continues from colonial times, is reaffirmed along with the identity of the peacekeeper during the Cold War period, and during its aftermath with the refugee rescue. This identity serves both outwardly to bolster Canada's international prestige for the purposes of trade relations in capitalist expansion, and inwardly, to make invisible the violence of settler colonialism. As outlined in chapter 2, the project of racial capitalism is a major factor to the colonial project in Canada and continues unabated under different articulations. Using the critical lens of Cold War epistemology and racial capitalism, I now move to the current context of the *Memorial to Victims of Communism* debates. I argue that this current memorial and the ensuing debates around its construction, is the current representation of Canada's identity embedded in a racial capitalist democracy logic. As traced in the first half of this chapter, Canada's peacekeeper narrative and refugee rescue discourses have been very effective in veiling its complicity in contributing to events which led to the humanitarian crisis of the Indochinese refugees. This act of veiling continues to be reproduced in the current context where Canada's memorial to the victims of communism is steeped in celebratory discourses lauding Canada's democracy over communism, overshadowing the undertones of racial capitalist democracy that undergirds Canada's national identity.

Canada's Memorial to Victims of Communism

Over 40 years after the end of the war in Vietnam, Canada and Vietnamese Canadians continue to construct their identities through discourses asserted during the period of the Cold War. These public discourses are evident in the recent Canadian national project, the construction of the *Memorial to Victims of Communism: Canada, A Land of Refuge*. In the following analysis I ask, what image does the Canadian nation reassert of itself in its current national identity project? I argue that through the lens of racial capitalism and Cold War epistemology, Canada's national identity is forged by conflating democracy to capitalism and in contrast with communism. Currently, the Canadian Federal government led by Justin Trudeau is aggressively courting Asian markets via the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) a free trade agreement between Canada and 10 other countries in the Asia-Pacific region. This agreement is an "ambitious, next-generation trade agreement" that will be "Canada's first foothold into prosperous Asian markets" (Dawson & Bartucci, 2013). It is imperative that we examine how Canada produces its identity co-constitutive of its Asian diasporas, as well as internationally as part of the colonial continuation of Canada as a racial capitalist state.

To highlight this process, I examine Canada's latest identity building project, the *Memorial to Victims of Communism: Canada, A Land of Refuge*. A discursive reading of the text that emerged from this project reveals the maintenance of a Canadian national identity based on circulated confluences of democracy to capitalism and the processes of racial exclusion. As traced above, Canada's national identity developed during the Cold War reflects the image of a liberal and morally superior international peacekeeper, and a refugee haven. We see this enduring legacy of the Cold War in the latest national identity project, the development of the *Memorial to Victims of Communism: Canada a Land of Refuge*. Through this project, the Canadian state

imagines itself to be a refuge, a beacon of hope, and a modern world leader. Yet the discourses that come out of this text reveal an additional, uncomfortable layer of Canada's imagined saviour complex: Canada's ardent anti-communism bolsters its fervent yet silent capitalism that continues the colonial project of racial subjugation, and more specifically in this case, racial exclusion. This is done by conflating capitalism, the antithesis of communism, with democracy. The narrative suggests that while Canada has saved victims of communism and may have even benefitted from exhortations of "productive refugees" contributing to the nation, these same victims cannot access the symbolic and permanent markers of national belonging as represented by permanent memorials on prominent public lands. Canada's national identity as a democracy continues through celebratory discourses of refuge, hope, and freedom while the shadowy aspect of its identity, racial capitalism, becomes overshadowed. In the latter half of the chapter, I will briefly highlight the major events associated with the memorial and related public debates, which reveal a discursive construction of, first, racial belonging in Canada, and second, racial capitalism that is embedded within Canada's identity of "progressive democracy" (free, humanitarian, peacekeeping) through the conflation of democracy with capitalism.

The *Memorial to Victims of Communism: Canada the Land of Refuge (MVC)* is an ongoing project to construct a national monument in Ottawa. In progress for over 10 years, this project has been riddled with controversy and critique over the subject matter of the monument, the scale of the monument, and the political process in which the monument has been developed. The debate over this monument as captured by public talk and text is revealing of the articulation of Canada's national identity. I will present a brief chronological review of the memorial

highlights and a summary of the major controversies. I will discuss my analysis based on 66 media clippings⁵ dated from 2008 to 2017 to highlight Canada as an imagined nation.

Coverage of the MVC (Touminen, 2015) locates 2007 as the starting point for the conceptualization of the memorial. One year after the Federal election of 2006 that saw the Conservative party gain power under Stephen Harper, then Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Jason Kenney visited a much smaller memorial to victims of communism in Scarborough with then Czech ambassador to Canada, Pavel Vosalik. Kenney stated that a larger monument should be in Ottawa, thus prompting Vosalik to reach out to the Czech Canadian community. The response was positive. Prominent artist Zuzana Hahn and community leader Josef Cermak, who trace their roots to Czechoslovakia and Poland, formed the nonprofit, Open Book Group, with support from members of the Eastern European Canadian communities to spearhead the creation of this monument. By 2008, after some publicized conflict, several of the Open Book Group's members formed another charitable group, Tribute to Liberty, which then took the lead on the creation of the memorial. The current 9-member Board of Directors is a collection of high-profile leaders in law, finance and energy, who are also active in their ethnic communities including the Latvian, Estonian, Czech/Slovakian, Polish, Croatian, Vietnamese, and South Korean Canadian associations (tributetoliberty.ca). The intention of the memorial, according to the Tribute to Liberty is to “serve as a public reminder of the millions of forgotten victims of communism and will finally bring the suffering of these victims into the public's consciousness” (Tribute to Liberty, 2010). This intention places the crimes of communist

⁵ Media outlets include: Ekos Politics, Kanadsky Slovak, Estonian Life, ChinaView, Global News, The Canadian Press, Communist Party of Canada, Toronto Media Co-op, Canada.com, The Canadian Progressive, National Post, Maclean's, The Ottawa Citizen, Yahoo News, Metro News, Upnorth.eu, The Globe and Mail, The Star, CTV News, Financial Post, CBC News, Vancouver Free Press, Montreal Gazette, Canadian Architect, Hungarian Free Press, Ottawa Report, Epoch Times.

regimes and victims of such crimes in the forefront of a proposed national Canadian monument. The response from the public, however, questioned whether the subject matter of the monument deserved such a spotlight.

Federal leadership pushed ahead with this monument, supposedly a public initiative, despite a lackluster and even negative response from the public. A committee within Public Works met to examine the validity of this memorial as a national monument and the outcome was non-supportive:

The experts unanimously judged that the theme was not significant to Canadian history. Moreover, they considered that the subject was presented in a biased manner, and that the absence of a plurality of viewpoints would make this project a political gesture, rather than a commemorative one, thus it would risk dividing the population. (Casemajor, 2016)

Yet the Federal leadership pushed the project along as part of a larger agenda that paired ethnic voters with the Conservative government's legacy projects. High profile Speeches from the Throne by then Governor General David Johnston in 2010 and 2013 reaffirmed support for the memorial (Johnston, 2010, 2013). By 2017, 10 years after the initial planning for this monument, the memorial has an approved design and a designated site, but the monument itself still has not taken physical shape given major changes made to the memorial by the Federal government.

In 2012, the allocated site of the memorial was changed from the smaller Garden of Provinces and Territories to the prominent plot along Confederation Boulevard where Parliament also sits, adjacent to the Supreme Court of Canada, with considerable public critique. In 2013, Jason Kenney, the main political driver of the monument, moved the responsibility of commemorative projects in Ottawa from the arm's length National Capital Commission (NCC)

over to his own cabinet, the Ministry of Canadian Heritage. In 2013, Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird issued an internal memo to re-name the monument from the original title of *Memorial to Victims of Totalitarian Communism* to simply the *Memorial to Victims of Communism* (“How John Baird erased ‘totalitarian’”, 2015).

In 2013, the Federal government pledged \$1.5 million in support of the project, in addition to the cost of the land which some media sources estimated to be worth as much as \$16 to \$30 million (Butler, 2015). Since 2013 the amount of public money pledged has steadily increased to the latest amount of \$4 million. In the meantime, media coverage suggests that the charity Tribute to Liberty has had a hard time mounting public support and has only fundraised a little over \$1 million in donations for the project. This is despite repeated statements by the charity, Federal representatives, and those in support of the memorial that about 8 million Canadians can trace their roots back to a historical condition of victimhood under communist regimes and that this memorial is widely supported by the public. In early 2015, the project was quietly renamed again to *Memorial to Victims of Communism: Canada a Land of Refuge*.

Public texts covering the process of developing this memorial mainly focus on the political expediency of the ruling government, from the Conservatives under Stephen Harper to now the Liberals under Justin Trudeau. It is within this vigorous debate that narratives of the Canadian national identity emerge to show the prevailing neoliberal multicultural discourses on racial exclusion and the conflation of democracy to capitalism. These narratives have proven to be resistant to changes in government from Harper to Trudeau. Political analyses of the memorial have been covered by authors such as Kranjc (2015) and Weeks (2015) who contend that the memorial is a political maneuver, “[T]he memorial is instead viewed as an effort to appeal to the eight million Canadians – immigrants and offspring – who have an origin in

communist countries.” (Weeks, 2015, p.66). For a project that is credited to the charity of Canadians who have suffered under communism, the government has made several significant contributions to shaping the development of the monument: “What sets the Ottawa memorial to the victims of communism apart has been the unprecedented active financial, logistical and spiritual support provided by the Canadian federal government and its ruling Conservative Party” (Kranjc, 2015, p.2). The public has not failed to take note that the monument has been hotly debated. In the discussion and debates about the memorial, the fundamental discourse on multiculturalism is not challenged. Rather, it is elaborated and nuanced by voices debating both the support and critique of the project.

These elaborations reveal the often-overlooked neoliberal character of Canadian multiculturalism (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002; Chatterjee, 2015; Ku, Bhuyan, Sakamoto, Jeyapal, & Fang, 2018; Melamed, 2006). The ideology of capitalism is made invisible yet conflated with Canadian identity, as capitalism exerts itself through multiculturalism to continue the work of racial exclusion as a barrier to national belonging in Canada. While the government is critiqued for its overt and aggressive national identity building in the erection of the memorial, its perceived manipulation of state responsibilities in order to achieve its aims, and its political expediency in the use of public resources, what is informative about the public debate captured in media text is Canada’s constructed identity. Weeks discusses the significance of memorializing on national ideas of belonging and identity, “What is memorialized, in what manner, and where a memorial is placed, can indicate which events and people are considered meaningful to a society.” (2015, p. 68). The debate about the monument is extraordinarily revealing.

The more the critics of the memorial externalized its subject matter as outside of national belonging, the more its supporters repeated that the memorial's anti-communist message is very much at the core of Canadian national identity. Critics argue that the memorial is not Canadian and is promoted "by ethnic communities" regarding "foreign crimes of communism in foreign countries". This in turn forces supporters of the memorial to commemorate the victims of communism and frame it as anti-communist, thereby conveying the memorial as pro freedom and democracy. The supporters argue that these values are at the very core of Canadian-ness, thus the memorial itself reflects the very core of Canadian national identity. Even though Tribute to Liberty is formed by multicultural ethnic Canadian communities, the more xenophobic the backlash against the proposed memorial, the more its proponents rely on neoliberal discourses of democracy and anti-communism to insist the memorial's reflection of "true Canadian values" and its rightfulness as a major national monument. Yet this anti-communism is revealing of the pro-capitalist sentiment, a core Canadian value, but one which is overshadowed and concealed behind the aspirational values of liberty, freedom, and justice. Canada underscores a narrative of moral superiority despite its rootedness in capitalism. By hiding capitalism behind multicultural celebrations of liberalism and democracy, Canada holds on to its moral superiority. In order to trace this discursive maneuver, I first highlight the media texts that resist the subject of anti-communism as a significant story in the production of Canadian identity. Next, I outline the responses of memorial supporters who argue that anti-communism is indeed Canadian, as the memorial reflects Canadian values of liberty, freedom, and human rights. For this analysis, I draw on the critical race literature to support my theorization of the simultaneous conflation and concealment of capitalism to liberty, freedom, and justice as part of the ongoing project of racial capitalism.

Racial Belonging to the Nation

The discourse analysis of the *Memorial to Victims of Communism: Canada a Land of Refuge* reveals how Canada is imagined in the midst of this debate. It allows us to see how ethnic groups, which are credited with attempting to bring a memorial dedicated to the victims of communism, are externalized, ejected, and excluded from belonging to the nation. The ‘public’ responses to both the Department of Canadian Heritage online survey completed by more than 8,500 people in February 2018 and the Ekos Politics online polls in May 2015 consistently question whether commemorating victims of communism reflects the Canadian national identity (“Victims of communism”, 2015). The Department of Canadian Heritage survey showed most respondents preferred a monument that “would remind visitors about core Canadian values of freedom, democracy, and human rights. (Butler, 2016^a). The Ekos Politics online survey, completed by 2,116 people across Canada, revealed overwhelmingly negative responses to the plans for the memorial as “wasteful and unnecessary” (“Victims of communism”, 2015).

The debates surrounding the construction of this unpopular memorial capture discourses about multicultural belonging and Othering, xenophobia, and gatekeeping of what belongs inside Canada, and which ideas and entities are outside of Canada. A reading of the proposed memorial debates, both among supporters and critics, reveal a reliance on the discourse of multiculturalism in the imagined national belonging. As reviewed in chapter 3 on the theoretical literature, multiculturalism as a discourse continues the colonial project of white settler societies by simultaneously including and excluding racialized Others. Supporters of the memorial argue that a memorial to victims of communism, during the Cold War era, fits Canada’s national identity. On the other hand, critics of the memorial argue that while celebrating Canada’s identity as a land of refuge is indeed very fitting and deserving of a memorial, the subject matter of

communism and victims of communism is not “Canadian” enough to warrant such a prominent memorial.

Supporters of the monument also locate communist victimhood in bodies that are ethnic Canadian, “For a lot of immigrants like myself who came to this country, the *Memorial to Victims of Communism* gives them an opportunity to say thank you to their fellow Canadians, especially during this year, the 150th birthday of Canadian history.” (Zhou, 2017). Proponents state this memorial is by Canadians “on behalf of the eight million Canadians who are descendants of countries that lived through Communist terror, we are erecting a national monument for the victims of Communism.” (Kenney, 2014). They write the belonging of the memorial inside the identity of Canadians by relying on the discourse of multiculturalism that values contributing “productive” immigrants, and a refugee subject hood of victims to compliment Canada’s identity of being refuge. Proponents also strengthen the dominant discourse on refugees as enduring victims:

Those who sought refuge in Canada, along with their descendants, today form almost a quarter of the population and play an integral role in the social, cultural, economic and political fabric of our country. These diverse ethno-cultural communities remain grateful for the security and opportunity that they found in Canada, yet they are also united by personal and collective experiences of tragedy. (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2016)

Here, supporters of the memorial fall into the trap of externalizing communism and victims of communism as foreign outsiders. The national commemorative project further specifies a particular identity for immigrant groups, and this identity challenges the rhetoric of a neutral, invisibilized white Canadian and is thus resisted. These communities push to belong into Canada

by espousing the popular belief that immigrants must contribute and be productive to Canada, thus they seek to highlight their contributions to Canada. But by doing so, these communities pose further specifications to their identity thus making them contrast and stand out against the backdrop of neutral, non-specified Canadians.

Opponents to this memorial state that it is not Canadian enough and is not deserving of the government's commitment of material resources: land and money. They argue the "public land", and "public money" cannot be used for a project that does not feel "Canadian" enough as accused of the charity group behind it: "Tribute to Liberty represents a bloc of ardently anti-communist Canadians with roots abroad. Its board largely has personal connections to eastern Europe." (Bozickovic, 2015). Canada celebrates its commitment to victims of oppression, but this idea of refuge is fixed to a space of belonging just outside of the Canadian identity. When it comes down to access to coveted material resources such as prime land, these welcomed victims are externalized as grateful ethnic groups and foreigners, and just not Canadian enough. A reading of the media discourse reveals the public perception attributed to those outside of the Canadian identity: "ethnic communities", "Canadian cultural communities", "ethnic groupings", "ethno-cultural communities", "communities with strong ties to countries outside of Canada", "Canadian mosaic of ethnic groups", and "cultural community projects" are common ways to describe supporters of the memorial.

The anxiety, as demonstrated in the media and public surveys, is over the land: "The vigorous debate around this project is rooted in the value of the capital's public space as a place for representing our collective identity: memorial sites erected there institute a narrative and an iconography that contribute to forging patriotic emblems." (Casemajor, 2016). What is deemed not Canadian enough should not be granted this land as emphasized by critics of the memorial:

“Our national ‘acropolis’ deserves to be completed and embellished as proposed in our shared homegrown vision... the chosen site...was stolen from its intended use as the location for a future Federal Court building or other national institution” (Padolsky, 2014). Here what is *stolen* is public land, a high-profile place in the national landscape, with an estimated value as high as \$30 million (Curry, 2015). The irony here is the anxiety over the land as being *stolen* by the State from one intended usage or another absolutely overlooks and erases Indigenous peoples’ claims to the land.

This debate about land erases the claims of Indigenous peoples to this territory, as who it is stolen from is “homegrown” Canadians and who it is attempted to be given to, the memorial, is “not Canadian enough”. Virgin, new land is imagined as being threatened by an external foreign entity: Communism’s “darkness” has “infected” the memorial which is described as replete in “bleakness” “brutalism” in design is contrasted with the depictions of the chosen site, the “prime” land which is “a small park-like oasis along Wellington Street where, this past week, there were only squirrel tracks to be found on the fresh-fallen snow” (Macgregor, 2015). The criticism over the use of land grew so much that the Ottawa City Council voted and approved a motion to request the Federal government to relocate the planned memorial to a less desired space as the proposed site is “the most prominent street in our city for visitors and residents” (“City of Ottawa to ask feds to move memorial”, 2015). A memorial to victims of communism is not something the council felt was deserving of such prominence. The site is now envisioned as the acropolis, the figurative heart of the nation: “Located at the spatial and metaphorical heart of the nation, between its highest court and its archival repository, will now exist a monument dedicated to crimes committed by people from other countries in far off places” (Wright, 2015). The debate mapped this piece of land onto the body of the nation and a subject matter that is

deemed un-Canadian pushed forth by “not-quite” Canadians, must be resisted as one would resist an infection.

The Department of Canadian Heritage survey mentioned above suggests that rather than focus on victimhood under communist regimes, the memorial should be a place “to be grateful for Canada’s commitment to freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The memorial will prompt visitors to reflect on the meaning of liberty and remind them that the core Canadian values that unite us must continue to be vigilantly protected.” (Butler, 2016^b). Thus, the focus is on the celebration of Canada’s supposed national identity. Similar to the debate in the passing of the Journey to Freedom Day Bill (reviewed in the next chapter), we continue to see a public pushback to making national acts of recognition more Canadian. The way to do it, is to valorize Canada against a backdrop of unfortunate international events. In both processes, the pushback is to keep the spotlight on Canada and make the projects more about Canada. But what is considered “Canadian?” In relation to the Bill and the memorial, which are both seen as efforts by “immigrant groups”, the reliable pushback is to shine the light on Canada as a refuge *vis-à-vis* these immigrant groups. While these commemorative efforts attempt to highlight immigrant groups’ contribution to Canada, they continue to be pushed outside of the belonging to Canada. Yet the more the memorial is critiqued for not being Canadian enough, the more the proponents had to defend it by constructing and articulating what exactly Canada is imagined as: a refuge for victims of communism.

How does this discourse of Canada as a land of refuge, as played out in the media on the memorial, perpetuate the myth of immigrants and racialized persons as outsiders to the nation? This discourse of refuge, used in this site, sets the limits to belonging for racialized Others. Immigrants are rescued from communism and given a new life and new hope, but they can never

truly belong in order to attain the resources. Here, resources refer very clearly and emphatically to the land, as symbolized by the repeated debates focusing on this issue. This is the crux of Canadian multiculturalism. In order to belong, racialized bodies cling onto the promise of multiculturalism, they demonstrate their “cultural” heritage, and become willing accomplices in “selling” their diversity (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002). Through the Canadian identity of multiculturalism, racialized bodies cannot belong to Canada via the avenue of white settlerhood, the invisible norm against which multiculturalism is measured. These racialized bodies are not assumed as the “old-stock Canadians” to use Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s phrase (“Stephen Harper explains”, 2015). They are thus left with the only option of “being” multicultural. This multiculturalism must be demonstrated, must be made visible and embodied by racialized Canadians.

For the “ethnic communities” who erect the *Memorial to Victims of Communism: Canada a Land of Refuge*, their way of becoming Canadian is by reinforcing their victimhood (of communism) in gratitude to the Canadian nation. Their pushing for this memorial then reproduces the Canadian national identity as a free and safe haven for refugees of the world, erasing Canada’s participation in what brought these people here. But it is their entry to Canadian national belonging. Yet in this debate, the nation is telling them “no”. The Canadian nation is against the memorial for many reasons. It is against the memorial as it is not celebratory as its honest portrayal of suffering will cast a shadow over our Canadian identity – an identity of celebration. The Trudeau government runs with this, a celebration of Canadian values casts a rose coloured lens on Canada’s history of complicit acts. It erases Canada’s participation in the international conflicts, including the Indochinese refugee crisis, communist conflicts, and Canada’s part in what brought these people here. This government, whose celebration of

multiculturalism and diversity is limited to the “cultural” socks of its Prime Minister, requires a celebration of Canada by way of its victims saved. In chapter 5, I unpack the work of celebratory multiculturalism and heritage in re-narrating war on the April 30th “Fall of Saigon” commemorations. For the remainder of this chapter, I will focus on unpacking how the victims of communism narrative played out on the national stage of a national memorial, reaffirming neoliberal capitalism as embedded in Canadian identity.

The Cold War Epistemology of Racial Capitalism in Canadian National Identity

The debate surrounding the project of developing the *Memorial to Victims of Communism* is extremely revealing of Canada’s national identity, not in terms of what is said about being Canadian, but rather what is left unsaid. The backlash against the proposed memorial was so strongly xenophobic, and the response was almost entirely about the memorial not being Canadian enough. Furthermore, the response suggested that the memorial does not belong to the national landscape of Canada’s “acropolis” and is not deserving of the prominent space in which it was proposed. As a result, the proponents of this memorial had to emphasize the “Canadian-ness” of this memorial more so than for that of similar concurrent projects. For example, the War of 1812 Monument and the National Holocaust Monument were also developed at the same time, and yet much less is written to justify these monuments as they are presumed to be inherently reflective of Canada and did not have to be defended. These two projects encompass distinct historical periods and events whereas the *Memorial to Victims of Communism’s* ambiguity in timespan, events, and a denouncement of an ideology itself required more persuasion on behalf of the project’s stakeholders. I would also argue that these two events, the War of 1812 and the

Holocaust, have been accepted as part of the Canadian national identity within a white settler society.

The following section will unpack the argument that Canada's projected national identity as a democratic, refugee haven is silently conflated with a heralding of capitalism. I trace the discourses of democracy and communism, their lingering vestiges from the Cold War, and show how the democracy upheld in these debates is used synonymously with liberal freedom. Within the discourses of democracy is the form of liberal freedom that has prevailed since the Cold War – freedom of development and freedom of trade – and this freedom is what is conflated with capitalism. Capitalism then, becomes the necessary means to protect and increase the prosperity and security of Canada.

The Cold War binary, at a surface level, is always presented as democracy versus communism, but its underlying binary is in fact capitalism versus communism. As I show in the discourse analysis of the debates below, capitalism is hidden behind the discourse of liberal freedom within Canada's national democracy. Democracy is one of the fundamental values of Western modern states and is presumed as the only way to be. There are few "imaginary discursive positions" from which to critique the ideology and discourse of democracy (to borrow Chen's analytic prose, 2010, p.70). Chen insists that theoretical works are geographically and historically situated so as to resist universalized grand theories in his work on geocolonial historical materialism. Taking from this theoretical framing, if we can situate democracy, at least one discursive construction of democracy within the specific historical time period of the Cold War, then we can look for positions from which to evaluate and critique it. Chen argued that Marxism accomplished this very task. The gift of Marxism is "historical materialism, in its battle with idealism, radically historicized social activities and institutions. It saw capitalism as a

product of history, and hence able to be superseded.” (2010, p.70) I draw from key theorists in Cold War epistemology and racial capitalism to situate democracy, the modern discourse which was largely shaped during the Cold War era, in racial capitalism. From this vantage point, discursively constructed democracy proudly elevated as a core Canadian value can be critiqued.

In the media debates, the discursive move that conflates capitalism to democracy makes capitalism invisible to Canadian national identity. Rather than capitalism, it is democracy - freedom, liberty, and justice that is celebrated and contrasted with communism. Freedom here has an unspoken twining to capitalism - through economic freedom, opened markets, free movement of goods and money, and free trade. This particular type of freedom constructed during the Cold War, which represents a political means of structuring the economy, suggests that Western freedom entails not only free people but also free capital. This slippery dual reading of freedom, of people and material, is what allows the conflation of democracy and capitalism. The conflation of capitalism to democracy (liberty, freedom, and justice) allows Canada to envision free trade and capital progress itself to be the carrier of Western liberal values. It is this very conflation that allows Canada to preserve its identity as a staunch liberal and progressive democracy, while at the same time aggressively courting trade exchanges with countries widely condemned for their human rights offenses. The celebration of democracy against communism also hides the national capitalist identity.

Racism itself is also a key feature of Canadian national identity. I trace racism in the analysis of the media debates above, but here I want to tie it in with my tracing of capitalism. Racism continues in Canada and the United States, yet intertwining systems upholding white supremacy on the foundation of liberalism and capitalism thwart our ability to point to it, to call it out, and to redress it. Social, economic, and political exclusion based on race has long been

decried, yet it still occurs. Theorists including Theo Goldberg, Jodi Melamed, and Iyko Day vigorously analyze the ways in which race has been organized and understood through systems of neoliberalism, capitalism, and settler colonialism (Day, 2016; Goldberg, 2002, 2005, 2009; Melamed, 2006, 2015). Similar to the triangulation of subject identities by Day and Chen, the conflation of capitalism to modern Westernized values of freedom, liberty, and justice occurs through the denouncing of communism as an ideology and the upholding of the Cold War era binary of democracy vs communism. If democracy is the opposite of communism, and communism represents the evils of humanity, then democracy is the only “natural” option in the pursuit of freedom, liberty, and justice. Yet, the conflation of democracy to capitalism occurs when the value of freedom represents freedom of trade, freedom of economic “opportunities”, and freedom of capital. The taken for granted intertwining of capitalism with a particular type of freedom, which forms the bedrock of democracy, inextricably ties capitalism to democracy. This capitalist democracy works in accordance with Melamed’s and Day’s conceptualization of racial capitalism that racializes and Others communism as external to the Canadian national identity. It is something that is foreign to the nation, brought on by foreigners, and as such is treated with suspicion to be contained if not entirely excluded.

An economic reading of communism is that it is a social economic ideology; in its simplest terms, it can be understood as the common mass ownership of the means of production and equal mass distribution of outputs of labour. Its opposing ideology is capitalism, which is the private ownership of the means of production and private accumulation of outputs of labour. Yet, as constructed in the Cold War era, communism also became the polar opposite of democracy. Capitalism is the driver of mass global inequality, inequity, and degradation of the natural world, including human and environmental conditions. Corporations and states now aim towards

marketing themselves as driving socially responsible capitalism. A discourse analysis of the term communism in media texts on the debate of the *Memorial to Victims of Communism* positions it as the “natural” anti-thesis to Canadian core values: “Freedom, democracy, human rights and rule of law” (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2014, 2016). These four qualities have been established by the stakeholders of the monument – the government and charity, Tribute to Liberty, as what they call the “core Canadian values”. The denouncement of communism and celebration of “Canadian core values” as “freedom, democracy, human rights and rule of law” is a direct acknowledgement of the superiority of Western capitalism. Instead of celebrating Canada’s capitalism, the discussions on the memorial to victims of communism renounces communism and celebrates freedom, liberty, and justice. While communism is not in fact contrary to, nor does it foreclose freedom, liberty, and justice, the media debates position it as such.

If communism is the opposite of, or the limit to, “freedom, democracy, human rights and rule of law” then communism’s Cold War ideological opposite, democracy, is equivalent to the path to these liberal modern values, also identified as core Canadian values. As examined above, democracy forged during the Cold War became synonymous with freedom. Freedom then is conflated with capitalism in the freedom to develop and freedom of trade. While capitalism is the invisibilized and unacknowledged conflation of freedom as synonymous to democracy, it shows up in the media debates indirectly yet persistently.

The texts and speeches produced on this memorial first by the Conservative government, and then later by the Liberal government, actively propagate the idea that communism is exclusive of freedom, liberty, and justice. Under the Conservative government, public texts from the state often interchanged “communism” with “communist” and made little effort to

acknowledge the gross difference between the ideology and the totalitarian regimes it claims to be denouncing:

This national memorial will create awareness of the horrors of communism and pay tribute to the more than 100 million people worldwide who perished or suffered under communist tyranny. This new Capital landmark will recognize the role Canada has played in offering refuge to the millions that left behind torment and oppression for a new beginning in a free and democratic country.

(Solkoff, 2018)

A document produced by Public Works Canada in April of 2014 to procure bids for the design of the memorial was replete with language that casts down the general “communism” rather than the specific “*communist*” regimes as was the original stated intention of the memorial. In this document visitors to the memorial will, “Be grateful for Canada’s commitment to freedom, democracy, human rights and rule of law. Whatever its rhetorical promise, the reality of communism has resulted in suffering, oppression and deprivation”. (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2014).

Nathalie Casemajor critiques the discursive work of Western monuments against communism,

The American and Canadian monuments do not commemorate a historical episode delimited in space and time. Instead, they condemn all the crimes committed by any past, present or future communist regime. More broadly, they condemn communist thought outright, in all its forms, from its beginnings to its future developments...the notion of liberty is presented as the natural antithesis of communism. (2016, p. 2016)

The government of Canada's information package intended to solicit bids, making it clear that the memorial will be "a place of meaning for victims and their families and a gather place for communities commemorating their suffering under communism or protesting the ongoing suffering of those still living under communist rule." (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2014, p.4). Later, the Liberal government, in attempts to move away from the negative imagery of its predecessor, focused on the positive by emphasizing the latter half of the memorial's title, "Canada a Land of Refuge". Yet this move did not challenge the key message: Canada is against communism as liberty, freedom, and human rights can only be achieved through capitalist democracy. In the Cold War binary, democracy is consistently part of the rhetoric against communism, which persists today. The Cold War era usage of democracy almost as a synonym for freedom and liberty goes hand in hand with capitalism as the necessary means to bring prosperity to modern day North America.

Capitalism, while rendered invisible, continues to show up repeatedly as the core of Canadian national identity: it shows up in the discourses of opportunity and prosperity in Canada; in the heralding of the "victims of communism's", contribution to Canada; and finally, it shows up in the discourse of progress featuring these people first as victims and then as successful Canadians with a new future. The stated goal of the memorial is replete with this imagery of the progress discourse:

To honour all victims of communism by bringing their suffering into the public's consciousness and to memorialize the experience of millions of Canadians, their families and friends, with an emphasis on those who found refuge in Canada and who were provided with an opportunity to live in a free and democratic country

and to contribute to Canada's long-term prosperity. (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2014, p.4)

Communism, the ideology rather than the regime, is denounced as the root of material struggle and deprivation "whatever its rhetorical promise, the reality of communism has invariably resulted in the pervasive penetration of the state into all levels of civil society, reducing almost everyone to a daily struggle inflicting suffering, physical oppression, deprivation and psychological abuse" (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2014, p.3). Prosperity shows up again in an explicit association of freedom with economic growth. This association is featured in the 2013 Speech from the Throne, "Canadians know that freedom and prosperity march together. Our government will help the world's neediest by partnering with the private sector to create economic growth in the developing world." (Johnston, 2013). The flight from communism to capitalism in Canada then results in the utter saving of these victims by gifting freedom, opportunity, and hope:

And when these freedom-seekers arrived, many having risked their lives to get here, instead of communism's oppression, they found Canadian safety. Instead of communism's restrictions, they found Canadian freedom. Instead of communism's grim determination, they found Canadian opportunity. Instead of communism's fear, they found Canadian hope. (Harper, 2014)

When read alongside the Speech from the Throne that included an earnest endorsement and commitment to the building of the memorial in both 2010 and 2013, the themes of opportunity and freedom are intertwined with wealth, prosperity, hope, and with security of the future by hardworking families: The opportunity to build on our ingenuity, our immense natural wealth, and our values and stability the opportunity to secure the future, for our generation, and our

children's generation. It is the opportunity to lead the world in security and prosperity (Johnston, 2013). The 2015 elected Liberal government will continue the memorial plans but they have reduced it in size and budget. The Liberal government has also changed the focus to a celebration of Canada rather than a denouncement of communism. Although the Liberal party also imagines Canada through the discourses developed during the Cold War, it emphasizes a different angle of Canadian national identity also developed during this period: political neutrality.

Under the Liberal government, the additional title "Canada a Land of Refuge" is emphasized. But much like Canada's Cold War identity of championing freedom, justice, and liberty against oppression, tyranny, and evil, Canada as the land of refuge is also an identity nurtured throughout the Cold War and continues to shape how this nation imagines itself. The Liberal Federal government launched a new design challenge with the design theme chosen to be "the flight from oppressive regimes to the openness and democracy of Canada" (Zhou, 2017). Its chosen design reinforces the narrative of progress from the " "dark" " and past-tense of communism to the " "bright" " and future-tense of democracy: "The memorial would be split in the middle at winter solstice, the darkest day of the year, inviting visitors to step through in a metaphorical journey from darkness and oppression to lightness and liberty." (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2017).

With the change of focus, the speech acts continue to be coded with Western liberty: "The notion of liberty is presented as the natural antithesis of communism (erasing any reference to the historical categories of liberalism and capitalism in the process): *The Goddess of Democracy* is a stylized reproduction of the Statue of Liberty, the quintessential American symbol, and the group that is backing the construction of the Ottawa monument is called Tribute to Liberty."

(Casemajor, 2016, p.1). The colonial mission of uplifting and bringing democracy via capitalist opportunities to developing, racialized nations did not end during the colonial period but rather was reinvented with the active participation of many within immigrant diasporas. Due to the global hegemony of capitalist democracy, bolstered by its victory over communism during the Cold War, as human rights and justice based on socialist and economic redistribution is unimaginable to many, especially by those “rescued” by Western nations such as Canada, it is no surprise that these diasporas see free trade and capitalism as the way to bring freedom and counter communism. Capitalist democracy is the only discourse available to them through which they *know* freedom and human rights. Trade is used as a means of uplifting these nations and diasporas living within Western nations. For example, Vietnamese Canadians in Canada have been active participants in bringing this dream “back home” which will be analyzed in the next chapter.

The progress of the *Memorial to Victims of Communism* has been rife with controversy and criticism. This memorial has been in the planning stages for over 10 years when it was devised by then Minister Jason Kenney, most likely as a political maneuver. However, the debates around this memorial, both in defense and critique, has been instrumental in elucidating two key elements. First, the lens of multiculturalism as a logic of exclusion bars the subject matter (victims of communism) from national belonging. Second, this debate has shown the dual works of Cold War epistemology in the binary between communism and capitalism, and racial capitalism in the conflating discourses of freedom, liberty, democracy, and justice to capitalism. In effect, this analysis of the debate highlights the continued formation of Canadian national identity as both refuge and saviour, while distancing itself from the negative connotations of capitalism.

Summary

This chapter provides a brief overview of a complex and expansive literature concerning the events of the Cold War with a specific focus on Canada's involvement in both international conflicts and the Indochinese rescue period. This overview suspends the hegemonic discourse that reaffirms Canada's national identity as a neutral peacekeeping nation turned refuge. I have reviewed Canada's response against Vietnam's decolonial movement in 1954, Canada's self-interest in its role in the ICC, and the singular victimhood identity placed on Indochinese refugees. By doing so, I dispel the myths of Canada's goodness and take this as the starting point for the construction of Canada's national identity as mutually sustaining to Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity. This tracing sets the context for the following chapters by showing how the construction of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity weaved into Canadian national identity has resulted in the making of the current Canadian national identity. In the debates on the *Memorial to Victims of Communism*, I highlight the discursive conflation of democracy, and embedded within it, liberal freedom to capitalism in showing how these ideals are juxtaposed against descriptors of communism. I read this conflation through the lens of Cold War epistemology to show its insertion of the Cold War historical period into racial capitalism in Canada. I show that Canada continues to be imagined as politically neutral, peacekeeping, and a refuge to oppressed racialized Others. Canada is recognized in the public discourse as a free and democratic nation respecting human rights. The Vietnamese-Canadians as anti-communist freedom fighter, a subjectivity derived from the Cold War era, is instrumental to this national identity (and values) of Canada. The discourses supporting this national identity as gleaned from the public text are premised on racial belonging and a conflation of Western liberal ideals, most prominently, democracy, with an unspoken celebrated capitalism. My analysis elucidates racial capitalism

behind this national identity of Canada as a free and democratic nation. Capitalism is conflated with freedom and democracy, and immigrant Others continue to be barred from material and symbolic belonging to the national imaginary. In the next chapter, I will trace Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity as the Cold War neoliberal multicultural subject is revealed in the discourse analysis of the events around April 30th, the “Fall of Saigon”.

Chapter 5: The Cold War Neoliberal Multicultural Subject⁶

The Fall of Saigon is a tremendous historical and epistemological event for the Vietnamese diaspora, Vietnam, and global Western powers including Canada. On April 30th, 1975, South Vietnam surrendered to North Vietnam ending a 19-year civil war. This victory has great ideological significance within the broader Cold War context. It is the victory of a communist regime, North Vietnam, over the imperial American-backed South Vietnam. In the global context, this was a massive defeat of Western imperial capitalist democracy. In the local context, and for the Vietnamese people specifically, this event was the end of an unrelentingly devastating war with numerous atrocities against civilians perpetrated by all sides of the conflict. Over 40 years later, Vietnam and the Vietnamese people are still struggling to recover from the aggressions of this war. Yet this event was also the beginning of a long and brutal reunification in which the possibility of life in the newly decolonized, war-devastated country was so truncated that 1975 saw the start of a massive movement of people leaving Vietnam to form a significant part of the Indochinese refugee crisis.

In this chapter, I will trace the continued significance that the Fall of Saigon on April 30th, 1975 has had on Vietnamese Canadians' subject formation and Canada's national identity by analyzing the commemorations of this date. I will explore this central concern by using Cold War epistemology to conduct a discourse analysis of the talk and text produced in commemorative activities around April 30th. I explore how Vietnamese refugees, now Vietnamese Canadians, dually work within the discourse of themselves as politically exiled

⁶ Part of this chapter has been published under Ngô, A. (2016). "Journey to Freedom Day Act": The making of the Vietnamese subject in Canada and the erasure of the Vietnam War. *Canadian Review of Social Policy/Revue Canadienne de Politique Sociale*, (75), 59-86.

refugees of the Cold War, are presenting their demands for recognition, but are also subject to this discourse in narrating their identities to the public at community events and in parliamentary debates. I study two separate but simultaneously occurring sites of remembrance of this event: first, at the Annual April 30th commemoration put on by the Vietnamese Canadian community; and second, at the parliamentary debates on the passing of the “Journey to Freedom Day Bill” (S-219). These two sites mutually inform one another in sustaining and mobilizing the circulating discourses on Vietnamese Canadians and Canadian national identity. I argue that in both cases, Vietnamese Canadians are constructed as Cold War neoliberal multicultural subjects. This occurs through the Vietnamese Canadians’ own articulation of identity, working within the nation’s flattening of their identity, along preexisting frames of reference of Cold War epistemology and multiculturalism. I also argue that Canada actively invests in Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity as it bolsters its own narrative as an innocent peacekeeper and refugee rescuer. These narratives sustain Canada as a racial capitalist democracy as analyzed in the preceding chapter on the debate on the Memorial to Victims of Communism. The impact on the construction of subjectivity felt in the community will be elucidated in the next chapter on Vietnamese community wellbeing.

I will first provide a detailed review of the two field sites to show their discursive significance in the construction of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity. The Vietnamese subject has been constructed through the logic of the Cold War that flattens the subject as an anti-communist freedom fighter more than 40 years after the end of the war in Vietnam. Cold War subjectivity is complicated within the Canadian context of multiculturalism, thus Vietnamese’ anti-communism is re-written as a (cultural) heritage of celebrating freedom and democracy. Finally, in collusion with Canadian national identity as a capitalist democracy, Vietnamese

Canadian subjectivity takes on a neoliberal character, one that progressed from communism to capitalism and seeks to restore freedom and democracy back to Vietnam via capitalist trade with Canada. This complex construction of the Vietnamese subject, actively constructed by the Vietnamese to first articulate their own identity as political exiles of war, and secondly, to render themselves and their identities intelligible to the Canadian state, supports and bolsters Canada's continued identity construction. Within the April 30th commemorative event, the Vietnamese subject is knowable as the enduring Cold War refugee turned neoliberal multicultural subject. Below, I unpack this complex subjectivity through the discourse analysis of talk and text captured in the two field sites around the "Fall of Saigon".

Vietnamese Diaspora's Commemorations

The Vietnamese community's annual April 30th commemoration of the Fall of Saigon is the first site in this analysis, as captured by the talk and text produced over 7 years from 2008 to 2015. Each year, the Vietnamese mark "30 Tháng Tư" (April 30th) with a public event. This event has been captured in video coverage annually and made available publicly through media file sharing. In my analysis, I highlight the ruptures in this discourse and the uneven suturing of what is interpreted and reproduced. The dominant discourse of Canadian nation-building, an extension of Cold War epistemology, merges jaggedly with the Vietnamese community's discourse of anti-communism. I will trace this unevenness through an analysis of speech acts of both non-Vietnamese politicians and Vietnamese Canadians in attendance.

The commemoration of April 30th, 1975 is particularly important to Vietnamese Canadians today as they struggle to voice their losses, and to have them heard and acknowledged in the broader context of the Vietnam war and the Cold War. For example, this date is mourned

by the Vietnamese diaspora internationally but is paradoxically celebrated as the day of National Reunification in Vietnam. In the West, we know April 30th as “The Fall of Saigon” within a Western narrative of Vietnamese victimhood and Western rescue, but to the Vietnamese diaspora, we interchangeably know it as “*Tháng Tư Đen*” (Black April), “*Ngày Quốc Hận*” (the day of national hatred), and “*Ngày Bỏ Nước*” (the day we abandoned the country). In Toronto, and many parts of Canada, and internationally, the April 30th event is organized and hosted by the local Vietnamese diaspora with privately donated funding, but prominently features non-Vietnamese politicians as high ranking as the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Federal Senators, and Members of Parliament. It is organized as both a commemoration and a protest. The focus of the event is the mourning of a lost country (South Vietnam), protesting current day Socialist Vietnam, and calls for the diaspora to influence the Canadian government to “restore” human rights, freedom, and democracy to Vietnam using international political pressure. The themes of this event have been primarily around the anti-communist identity in the fight for freedom, human rights, and democracy for Vietnam, and secondarily, a celebration of Canada as refuge.

In Toronto, the annual event starts with an opening ceremony in Nathan Phillips Square consisting of welcoming remarks from the hosts, and the *Lễ Chào Cờ* (flag saluting ceremony) of the former Republic of Viet Nam (RVN). This ceremony is led by South Vietnamese military veterans, lined up by rank and in uniform, followed by the singing of the Canadian national anthem, and the RVN national anthem. It ends with a moment of silence for the fallen soldiers and civilians of the war in Vietnam. Speeches by invited guests, usually leaders of Vietnamese Canadian organizations and invited Canadian politicians follow. Mournful and nostalgic musical performances also occur of South Vietnamese war-time music pre-1975. Attendees number

around 600-800 each year from all parts of Ontario and Canada. Attendees can choose to sit in front of the stage in pre-arranged chairs or mill around to reconnect with other members of the diaspora. Around the periphery of the stage and seats are booths. These booths may sell merchandise with the RVN flag printed on it such as flags, umbrellas, scarves, lanyards, buttons, and pins. These booths may also be hosted by groups organizing petitions against Socialist Vietnam's actions regarding political dissenters such as activists and journalists. A classic example of discourses working through oppositions, there are also booths seeking donations for social, educational, or health aid projects in Vietnam, which on the surface appear at odds with the overall theme of protesting Vietnam. The ceremony in Nathan Phillips Square ends with a parade of the event, with participants taken down Queen Street to Old City Hall. This is a small parade that does not necessitate closing the street as it travels along the sidewalk, escorted by a few police officers.

Parade participants wave both the Canadian and RVN flags and carry signs and placards with slogans on themes of human rights, freedom and democracy for Vietnam. Participants may also chant these slogans as they walk. The parade ends in front of Old City Hall where speeches are again made, and the final ceremony is the laying of several wreaths at the World War I Cenotaph. This is a war monument dedicated to soldiers from World Wars I and II, and the Korean War, but on the day of the April 30th commemoration, the diaspora remembers the RVN soldiers who died in the war in Vietnam. This event elucidates the making of Vietnamese subjectivity, as a particular subject of the Cold War, multiculturalism, and neoliberalism, in collusion with, but also in collision with, Canadian national identity. It is a longstanding event that allows for analysis over a span of several years, which in this study is limited to 7 years (2008-2015). To recall, 2008 was the start of heavy Conservative support of the Vietnamese

organizations in the form of funding to its non-profits and in appearances at Vietnamese community events. 2015 was the 40th anniversary of the Fall of Saigon which saw two major nation-building projects related to the Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity – the Journey to Freedom Day Bill and the National Memorial to Victims of Communism.

At the same time, in 2015, parliamentarians also marked this date by debating a Bill that sought to officially mark April 30th as a day of recognition for Canada’s actions towards Vietnamese refugees. These two elements are separate but inform one another: the remembrance of a significant and highly politicized date inform the conversations that produce discourse on Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity as entangled with Canada’s national identity. Here, I will briefly review the “Journey to Freedom Day” Act and the related parliamentary process before moving into the discussion on discursive themes that arose on Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity from both data sets.

Parliamentary Passing of the “Journey to Freedom Day” Act

The Journey to Freedom Day Act marks every April 30th as:

A day to remember and commemorate the lives lost and the suffering experienced during the exodus of Vietnamese people, the acceptance of Vietnamese refugees in Canada, the gratitude of Vietnamese people to the Canadian people and the Government of Canada for accepting them, and the contributions of Vietnamese-Canadian people. (Bill S-219, 2015, p.4)

The Journey to Freedom Day Act (Bill S-219), which passed on April 23rd, 2015, is the national day of commemoration of the exodus of Vietnamese refugees and their acceptance into Canada. The seemingly innocuous act of a national commemorative day masks the politicization

of the Vietnamese subject and adds to the erasure of the Vietnam War, and with it, Canada's contribution to the war. Both discursive moves are part and parcel of Canada's identity project in relation to Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity, in which the former contributes to and sustains the latter. A critical review of the parliamentary debates during the twelve-month period resulting in the passage of this Bill reveals the systemic reproduction on a Cold War discourse in the making of the Vietnamese subject as Cold War neoliberal multicultural subject. Here critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a method takes me into a close semantic reading of the parliamentary speech. The power of parliamentary talk manifests in "the direct enactment or production of dominance, on the one hand, and the consequences of this speech in the process of the management of the public consensus on ethnic affairs, on the other hand" (van Dijk, 1993, p.270). Using Cold War epistemology as a theoretical lens and framed under the Foucauldian discourse analysis methodology (FDA), a critical review of the semantic shifts of the talks exposes the "discursive violence" (Jiwani, 2009) of this Bill in framing and fueling the discriminatory and negative attitudes within the Vietnamese community in Canada as divisions originated from the devastating war in Vietnam. This allows us to analyze the construction of the Vietnamese subject as entangled with Canada, along frameworks of meaning-making deeply rooted in the events and effects of the Cold War. In tracing the concurrent commemorations of this day from the community events to the parliamentary debates, I am interested in how Vietnamese subjects are now constructing themselves in response to the weight of an official commemorative day and how this works to support the Canadian national identity. Below, I will review the main highlights of the passing of the Journey to Freedom Day Act. The data used from this site are the parliamentary debates from the Senate (First, Second, and Third Readings of the Bill, Proceedings of the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights) which passed the

Bill and moved it forward to the House of Commons (First, Second, and Third Readings of the Bill, Proceedings from the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage). The data spans from April 10, 2014 to April 22, 2015.

This Bill, introduced in the Senate by Senator Thanh Hải Ngô of the Conservative Party on April 10th, 2014, was passed on December 8th, 2014. It progressed to the House of Commons and as sponsored by Member of Parliament (MP) Mark Adler of the Conservative Party on December 10th, 2014. It was finally adopted (“assented”) into law on April 23rd, 2015. This Bill was contentious both within the government and in the public realm, with concerns raised about its proposed name, its date of commemoration, and the contents of the Bill (Meyer, 2014). Within a twelve-month period, the Bill was passed in the Senate and the House of Commons, which at the time, were dominated by a Conservative majority in government.

Originally, Bill S-219 was titled the “Black April Day Act”, an expression that reflects the grief and mourning felt by the South Vietnamese refugees who lost their country on April 30th, 1975, when Saigon was formally overtaken by the North Vietnamese Hồ Chí Minh regime, following the United States’ official termination of their intervention in the Vietnam War. A review of this context was provided in chapter 2. Senator Ngô later changed the title to “Journey to Freedom Day Act”, a more neutral and celebratory title that dilutes the political significance of this Bill and also puts it in line with the discourses of multiculturalism. More discussion of this will follow in the latter half of this chapter that traces invited politicians’ jarring celebratory discourses at the annual event in which the Vietnamese in Toronto mourns the loss of South Vietnam. As discussed in chapter 2, the date of April 30th is of great political significance, as it is mourned in the international diaspora yet celebrated in Vietnam. Vietnamese Ambassador Anh Dũng Tô publicly stated that this Bill will hurt relations between Canada and Vietnam as the

celebration and official recognition of the South Vietnamese refugees' "Journey to Freedom" from a repressive regime on April 30th directly contradicts Vietnam's National Day of Reunification and narrative of national unity (Bryden, 2014). At the same time, Vietnamese-Canadians took to websites, media, and a community listserv to also express their reluctance in supporting this Bill in its entirety (Bùi, 2014), proposing instead the date Canada officially committed to admitting 50,000 Indochinese refugees: July 27, 1979 (House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, April 1, 2015, p. 6). The date of this proposed commemoration, while widely critiqued, remained unchanged.

Finally, the short preamble of this Bill was also deeply political for a National Day⁷. The preamble centered on a re-writing of history to attribute the cause of the boat peoples' flight by sea to the invasion of North Vietnam into South Vietnam.

Whereas on April 30, 1975, despite the Paris Peace Accords, the military forces of the People's Army of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front invaded South Vietnam, which led to the fall of Saigon, the end of the Vietnam War and the establishment of a single-party socialist government. (Bill S-219, 2014, p.4)

The language is reflective of the perspective of the West as it centers the "fall" of Saigon and the end of the "Vietnam war". The war is narrated as an "invasion" of communism from North Vietnam to the "democracy" of South Vietnam. As noted earlier in this chapter and in chapter 2,

⁷ "There is no central authority in Canada responsible for the proclamation of national days. Days declared special by any public body, including municipal, provincial or federal governments or even international bodies such as the United Nations, as well as any private association, cultural group or religious institution, can be recognized in Canada." The Library of Parliament, Ottawa, lists 70 National Days but notes that it is a not a comprehensive list (Hyslop & Virgint, 2015, p.1)

the date of April 30th marked the end of the decolonization effort by Ho Chi Minh's forces. Even the Vietnamese diaspora, while embattled against Ho Chi Minh's North Vietnam, refer to this as the war with America and prefer the Vietnamese references for this date such as Black April, the National Day of Hatred and/or Mourning, or simply April 30th. The Journey to Freedom Day Act kept this historically questionable account of North Vietnam's invasion into South Vietnam but changed the "single-party socialist government", a direct reference to communism, to the "Socialist Republic of Vietnam government". These significant conflicts in the process of passing Bill S-219 highlight how the negotiations of subjectivity within community interact with, contribute to, and are informed by parliamentary debates in constituting Canada's national identity. The conflicts contribute to the "conditions of possibilities" (Hook, 2001) within which circulating discourses on the Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity traverse the local sites of community mourning and commemoration to the site of parliamentary debates in a circulatory fashion. It is tempting for me as a Vietnamese Canadian enmeshed in this entanglement to focus solely on conducting a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the parliamentary debates as elite acts of power. Yet the Foucauldian discourse analysis methodological framework calls for attention to the process of subject making in the discursive practices of the Vietnamese Canadians in their own mourning and commemoration, i.e, how the parliamentary speech acts in the passing of the Bill produced and were produced by the Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity. As Vietnamese Canadian subjects, we are both captured in discourse and enact discourse in our subject-making practices (Macías, 2015) as we wrestle with grief that is often unintelligible, if not entirely unspeakable, outside the conditions of knowing.

In the following analysis, I unpack the talk and text at these simultaneously occurring events to trace three separate but interrelated facets of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity as the

Cold War neoliberal multicultural subject in Canada. The themes emerging from these speech acts are: the making of the Vietnamese anti-communist subject as the authentic Vietnamese; the re-writing of this event of national commemoration that discursively erases the devastating war in Vietnam and turns the diaspora's mourning into a celebration of freedom within the multiculturalism discourse; and, finally, the Vietnamese as the neoliberal subject of progress, transporting capitalist Western liberal democracy to "develop" Vietnam.

Vietnamese as a Cold War Subject: The Anti-communist and the "Heritage Freedom Flag Fighter"

During the commemorations of April 30th, at both sites of study, the Vietnamese subject continues to be constructed as anti-communist along a Cold War binary. The parliamentary debates reveal a Cold War epistemology in considering who the Vietnamese community is amidst criticisms of the Bill. The community commemoration reveals the subject making of the Vietnamese along this Cold War binary including the Cold War era subjecthood of freedom fighters.

Julie Nguyễn from the non-profit Canada-Vietnam Trade Council, was the only Vietnamese Canadian woman, and one of the few critical voices who presented as a public witness in the Bill S-219 debates. According to Nguyễn, "For the last 40 years, there has been only one accepted political voice in the Vietnamese Canadian community, and all other voices are suppressed." (House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, April 1, 2015, p.3). In this quote, the "only one accepted political voice" is the voice that publicly claims to be anti-communist. Her statement is not surprising as within the debates, Senator Ngô rejects nonconforming Vietnamese Canadians by stating: "For those who oppose the bill – maybe those

who came to Canada before 1975, are students in the Colombo⁸ plan, or for their personal interest of doing business with Vietnam – their personal interest compared to millions of Vietnamese who fled Vietnam on April 30, 1975 is unacceptable” (House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, April 1, 2015, p. 4). According to the Senator, those who oppose Bill S-219 are not refugees, or they have ulterior motives, or simply do not know any better. Dissident voices are those who do not reject communism and thus are not accepted as representing the true voices of Vietnamese refugees.

In the parliamentary debates, those who opposed the Bill in any form were positioned as communists, and thus, not members of the Vietnamese Canadian community. This is the binary of the Cold War and is theorized as a structure of sentiment in Cold War epistemology. In his study of Taiwan, Chen identifies how “the entanglement of colonialism and the cold war in Taiwan has produced and shaped local structures of sentiment, which, in turn, have become the emotional (more than the material) basis for political mobilization, the dominant forms of which are ethnic politics and ethnic nationalism” (2010, p. xiv). Chen’s theorizing of the subjectivity-producing effects of the Cold War can inform the messy aftermath of the Vietnam War on the lives of Vietnamese Canadians who today are wrestling with identity, belonging, and community building as they attempt to reconcile their past. In the localized setting of contemporary Taiwan, Chen deconstructs how a rigid choice had to be made by post-Cold War subjects “between unification with Mainland China and independence from it” (2010, p.117). This rigid choice between one and the other is a structure that is replicated today in the politics of the Journey to Freedom Day Act, where any critique is positioned as a nonconforming identity.

⁸ The Colombo Plan was an international agreement to deliver aid to Asian and Southeast Asian countries in the form of social and human development in the 1950s (Dorais, Beuys, Tàpies, & Twombly, 2000, p.9).

In response to public critiques that suggest that the Journey to Freedom Day Act is divisive of the Vietnamese community, MP Wladyslaw Lizon, after having talked about his family's own experiences of living under communism in Poland, stated "[t]his is not a bill to divide communities; we have to fully understand who is a part of the community and who is not" (House of Commons Debate, March 23, 2015, p. 12141). By first prefacing his statements with his own personal suffering under communism, MP Lizon encourages the listener to understand that the Vietnamese community suffered under communism, thus those who oppose the Bill must not have suffered and are consequently not part of the Vietnamese community.

At the House of Commons debate which was tasked to pass the Bill after it had gone through the Senate, MP Anne Minh-Thu Quach critiqued the limited public engagement of the bill. She stated, "A roundtable must be set up where everyone has the right to express their own views" and pressed for "at least...a parliamentary committee to properly study the Bill." (House of Commons Debate, February 5, 2015, p.11141). She added, "[W]e all know that at the Senate committee, only testimony in favour of the bill was heard." (House of Commons Debate, February 5, 2015, p.11140). In response, MP Adler, the sponsor of the Bill at the House of Commons stated: "I know what the hon. member is referring to. At the Senate committee a representative – I believe it was the Ambassador of Vietnam – submitted a letter on behalf of the communist regime of Vietnam to give its perspective on the Journey to Freedom Day Act, to which I understand it is vehemently opposed". When pressed by the Liberal MPs on the closed process of the passage of the Bill, Adler further argued, "I am a little perplexed that the Liberals would be interested in hearing the communist views of the Vietnamese government" (House of Commons Debate, February 5, 2015, p.11140). Here, Adler used the common-sense Cold War logic of positioning communism as antidemocratic to then broad brush all dissenting voices at

the Senate proceedings as holding “communist views”. At the same time, while these parliamentary debates construct Vietnamese identity, the community actively constructs its identity in the annual commemoration of the most significant day in the diaspora’s history. The complex subjecthood of the Vietnamese in Canada is reproduced through the April 30th commemoration as analyzed in the events, spanning 7 years.

The Vietnamese Canadian’s Cold War identity is prominent at the community’s annual commemoration of April 30th. The widespread display of the flag of the RVN symbolizes the anti-communist identity of the Vietnamese collective in attendance. As I illustrated in the above analysis of the discursive construction of Vietnamese subjectivity in parliamentary debates, anti-communism is the officially recognized political identity of Vietnamese Canadians.

In order to represent anti-communism as the official narrative of the authentic Vietnamese, the political story of South Vietnamese as anti-communist is conflated with stories of Vietnamese culture, origins, and tradition. In 2008, a female speaker called on Vietnam’s origin myths to encourage unity among the diaspora, to alleviate the suffering of those left in Vietnam by continuing to fight for freedom for Vietnam: “We have received freedom, warmth of body, and nourishment of stomachs here in Canada, now we as children of *Con Rồng, Châu Thiên* (Dragons and Deities) we cannot forget, together we commemorate our lost country, loved ones, those who died, and we thank Canada and its people for taking us into their arms.” (hantrinhduynguyễn, 2008, speech entirely in Vietnamese, translated by author). In her speech to remember the past and thank Canada for her future, this speaker brings up the origin myth of the Vietnamese people as birthed by the union of a male dragon spirit and a female deity. She takes this myth to symbolize the identity of the Vietnamese, the “we” here in Canada to remember “our” lost country. To this speaker, the present nation of Vietnam no longer represents

the true Vietnam as birthed by the union of dragons and deities. The idea of an authentic Vietnamese subject outside of Vietnam has been circulating in discourse and captured in this 2008 recorded community event which celebrates an anti-communist identity. This authentic Vietnamese subject as anti-communist reappeared in the parliamentary debates in 2015 and did seem unnatural to many of the parliamentarians participating in the debate as it fits into their own frames of reference of Canada granting refuge to refugees fleeing communism.

In the publicly captured videos at community events, Senator Ngô Thanh Hải operates as a community broker to temper and translate the desires of the community alongside the dominant discourses of Canadian identity. Critics of Canadian multiculturalism have evaluated the role of ethnic elites as community leaders and cultural brokers to being, at times, self-appointed subjects that manage and govern ethnic communities (Dhamoon, 2010, Fujiwara, 2012). Federal Conservative Senator Ngô Thanh Hải is arguably the most prominent Vietnamese Canadian political figure today. He is the author of the 2015 Journey to Freedom Day Act (S219), which recognizes the Vietnamese Canadian community nationally by way of Canada granting refuge. He is a regularly featured guest at the annual April 30th event and is provided with ample space to speak to the community. His influence extends beyond the event by way of media recordings of his speeches and interviews granted on-site. An elite from South Vietnam, Senator Ngô received his education outside of Vietnam, first in France before 1975 and then in Canada after leaving Vietnam immediately upon the Fall of Saigon. His work history speaks of high-ranking posts with then South Vietnamese government and international organizations such as the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Senatorngo.ca). Acting as a cultural broker, Senator Ngô calls on the authority of Canadian government officials to support the diaspora's political aims. Yet it is questionable how much clarity the Canadian government

officials have regarding the diaspora's political goals towards Vietnam, as well as how much clarity the diaspora has in understanding Canada's intended use for them.

Illustrative of the complexities of Vietnamese subjectivity, Senator Ngô paradoxically reveals the conflicting and conflated identities of the Vietnamese by attempting to flatten subjectivity with a label legible to the Canadian multicultural imagination. At once an example of what gets "lost in translation" but also an example of the lingering Cold War subjectivities, Senator Ngô's interview from the 2013 event (below) is very telling of the disturbing moves to interchange complex identities of the Vietnamese refugee in the English language. A main issue of contention within the Vietnamese diaspora is the display of the RVN flag. The display of the RVN flag in government and public spaces by registered charities and nonprofits has been widely debated in the Vietnamese diaspora, as to whether the display contravenes government policies on political neutrality. Specifically, the City of Toronto's Anti-Discrimination Act to guide the operations of not-for-profits and the Federal Charitable Revenue Act prohibiting political activities by registered charities have been the topic of conflicting interpretation.

When asked about a current petition by the Vietnamese diaspora to have then Prime Minister Harper recognize the RVN flag as the official flag of Vietnamese Canadians, Senator Ngô slipped in his articulation of the English label for the Vietnamese community's identity. He states:

In 2008, the Conservative government have already recognized this flag and called it the "**heritage freedom flag fighter**" of our people here...in 2012 Minister Kenney has sent a letter to all the "*Hội người Việt*" (Vietnamese associations) in Canada to declare that the three stripes yellow three strips red flag is the flag that the Conservatives have recognized and called that flag the

“Vietnamese heritage freedom flag fighter” and that flag has already been recognized. (Thoibao Media, 2013, original speech entirely in Vietnamese except for bolded text which was originally in English, Vietnamese translated by author)

The omnibus label of “Vietnamese heritage freedom flag fighter”, stated only in English with no Vietnamese translation by the original speaker, is a paradoxical pairing of two different terms of Vietnamese identity over two different historical time periods and contexts. No Vietnamese interpretation of this significant label was provided by the speaker during the entire interview. This suggests that the ontology of this label is derived from a Western epistemology and not a Vietnamese one. The “heritage flag” is a recent term utilized by representatives of the Conservative government and the diaspora to claim the display of the RVN flag as a matter of Canadian multiculturalism and heritage, rather than of political significance. This move contravenes municipal and federal policies limiting the political activities of registered nonprofits and also places the political identity of anti-communism within the heritage of the Vietnamese, making this identity a core part of Vietnamese culture rather than a political symbol.

The “freedom fighter” label, embedded in the reference to “Vietnamese heritage freedom flag fighter”, is a term first utilized in the Cold War era and picked up by American President Ronald Reagan to describe “rebel” groups resisting their communist governments (Scott, 1996). The “freedom fighter” label is placed on the South Vietnamese who were fighting the North Vietnamese decolonial forces and calls into question the type of “freedom” that is intelligible to Western imperialism. Senator Ngô’s blending of the two terms, one from today’s discourse of multiculturalism and one from 50 years ago in the height of the Cold War, reveals the murkiness

and entangled subjectivities of the Vietnamese diaspora, and that of Canada's relation to this community. It also reveals the enduring presence of the Cold War as a knowledge producer. The official recognition of this flag resonates deeply within this Vietnamese group hungry for state recognition of their cause. And yet this recognition itself is not true recognition. We, as Vietnamese Canadians, continue to know ourselves through the Canadian national agenda.

Regardless of the speaker's views on the use of the RVN flag, using the distorted terminology this government has placed on us or on a cherished symbol of identity (for many) reflects the tragic but persistent power of the dominant but invisible ideologies of this nation on our subjectivity. The Cold War rhetoric of freeing victims of communism at all costs freezes our identities and subjecthood into one that supports the Western imperial alibi for war in Vietnam. To be heard and to belong to Canada is to be fixed in this Cold War identity of freedom fighters that fits Canada's invisible ideology of capitalism conflated with democracy, which was traced in the previous chapter. Yet this Cold War rhetoric is adaptable and has been taken on as a matter of heritage as it supports the multicultural discourse in Canada, producing the Vietnamese Heritage Freedom Flag Fighter.

Senator Ngô is the Vietnamese community's most recognized politician. His combined use of a current day term espousing heritage and a Cold War era term of militant rebels in the phrase "Vietnamese Heritage Freedom Flag Fighter" reveals the entangled imageries of RVN fighters cum model multicultural citizens that this community subjects itself to, is subjected to, and reproduces. The above text illustrates the Cold War identity of the Vietnamese subject and the emerging nuancing of this identity with multiculturalism in the claiming of a political symbol, the RVN flag, as a matter of heritage. This is very problematic for the Vietnamese Canadian community as these dominant but invisible discourses have a significant impact on

community wellbeing, as analyzed in the next chapter. The next section further unpacks these entangled imageries and considers how the making of the Vietnamese as a multicultural subject through discourses of celebratory heritage, enacts the overshadowing, re-writing, and finally erasure of the war in Vietnam and with it, Canada's complicity.

Vietnamese as a Multicultural Subject: Why Mourn When we can Celebrate “Freedom Day”

In both sites of study of the April 30th commemorations, the Vietnamese subject is constructed as both a Cold War and a multicultural subject. This is done by celebrating Vietnamese heritage and freedom around this date. A celebration of the Vietnamese subject under the tenets of multiculturalism serves to erase the war in Vietnam as it refocuses a political date on the celebration of freedom. The resulting secondary effect is the eclipsing of a political and historical event, thereby obscuring Canada's participation and complicity in the war. Not only that, a celebration of Canada's refugees, the Vietnamese, repeats Canada's identity as an innocent refugee haven, an identity forged during the Cold War and a continuation of Canada's innocence as a settler society. The erasure of war and Canadian complicity operates in unison with the silent conflation of Western liberal ideals with oppressive capitalism as discussed in the previous chapter.

Parliamentary talk re-writes and eludes the events of the Vietnam War, choosing instead to discursively construct a “journey to freedom”. This project is reminiscent of the United States' official act to forget the “war with the difficult memory” (Espiritu, 2014, p.1). Espiritu (2006) queried the use of the Cold War and specifically the war in Vietnam as a meaning-making tool for the U.S., specifically the ‘we-win-even-when-we-lose’ syndrome. She argued how the American military intervention used to justify the liberation of weaker Others in Vietnam is the

same justification used in present conflicts such as the war in Iraq. Thus, the Vietnam War in the U.S. is simultaneously eclipsed and vindicated by the narrative of liberating racially inferior Others with the bestowing of democracy and the “gift of freedom” (Nguyễn, 2012). The focus on Vietnamese multicultural subjectivity facilitates the discursive erasure of the Vietnam War and Canada’s complicity in the war. Throughout the debates of the Senate and the House of Commons, utterances of the “Fall of South Vietnam” and when “South Vietnam fell” were repeated, but the events leading to the Fall were hardly discussed. This move hides the American atrocities of this war, from the carpet bombing of entire regions of Vietnam, the My Lai massacre, napalm attacks, wide unrestrained use of Agent Orange poison, and to the active land mines of which many are yet to be uncovered (Espiritu, 2014). This avoidance to hold America and its Western allies accountable to the fallout that was the “Fall of Saigon” is visible in the community commemorations where Vietnamese Canadians intertwine their mourning of a lost nation with protests against the proclaimed human rights violations by the governments of China and Vietnam. To dredge up American atrocities is to dredge up Canadian complicity.

Instead, we, in Canada, shine the spotlight on the Journey to Freedom. What pre-empted the need for the Vietnamese refugees’ journey is largely veiled behind discourses of democracy, freedom, and success. Yet this thin veiling of politics did not go unnoticed and prompted what the Canadian media called a “diplomatic splat”. Vietnam’s ambassador to Canada wrote of his critique of the bill, “The government of Vietnam disagrees with this negative and selective portrayal and has expressed its concerns privately and publicly...we believe that the passage of this Senate Bill S-219 would send the wrong message to the international community and the people of Vietnam” (Bryden, 2014). In the face of this public international critique, Senator Ngô

was very careful to make it clear that the Bill is not about the war or international politics, but instead the purpose of the Bill is to celebrate Vietnamese Canadians:

I'm talking about the refugees. I'm not talking about Vietnam. I'm not talking about the Vietnamese Communist regime. This Bill is concentrating on and focusing on the exodus of the Vietnamese people. More than two million people left Vietnam on that day. This Bill is recognized by 300,000 Vietnamese who came to Canada. ...The focus of the Bill has nothing to do with trade. It has nothing to do with the Vietnamese government. It has nothing to do with the Vietnamese soldiers. (House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, April 1, 2015, p.4)

Here, the use of “Communist” to describe the government of Vietnam, now officially recognized as a Socialist state, reignites Cold War politics while denying any potential political and economic impact of the commemorative bill on Canada’s relations with Vietnam. Yet in his plea to recognize the refugees, he ends up pointing to the variety of players and states that are implicated in the making of the refugee, the apparent focus of the commemorative day.

Finally, Canada’s complicity in the war in Vietnam is erased in parliamentary talk and reinforces a narrative of Canadian innocence fostered and sustained to hide both contemporary acts of complicity as well as historical and ongoing violence of a white settler colonial project. The debates of Bill S-219 show the parliamentarians’ choice to conceal history using discursive strategies of euphemisms and broad generalizations to narrate the story of a young nation that struggled to do more than its share in alleviating the global ‘boat people’ crisis. Repeated references to the youthfulness of the nation and the youthfulness of the Canadian public servants who laboured at the international refugee processing sites were described during the debates

(Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights, November 20, 2014, p.13.11) In the House of Commons debate, MP Bob Dechert borrowed the suffering of the refugees and claimed it for his own, stating “it is a Canadian story. It is a story that represents all of us. So many Canadians have come to Canada from places torn by war, from great adversity and oppression, and have struggled very hard through very difficult conditions to come to this country” (February 5, 2015, p. 11143). By the end of the proceedings in the passage of the Bill, parliamentarians were metaphorically patting themselves on the back. As Dion stated: “Since we did not participate, our country could have chosen to ignore these victims. If we are being honest, there were some people in Canada who did not want to get involved in the aftermath and consequences of a conflict we have no part in” (House of Commons Debate, March 23, 2015, p. 12137). These statements conspire to uphold what Dua, Razack, and Warner call Canada’s “national mythologies” of innocence, which are propelled to “erase the history of colonization, slavery, and discriminatory immigration legislation” (2005, p. 1). Except for one vague reference to Canada’s official role in the war in Vietnam highlighting its peacemaker identity in which it was involved with “supervisory operations to support the aim of establishing peace”, Canada’s role in the war was not debated (Bill S-219, 2015).

As highlighted in chapter 2, Canada did not assume a neutral position in the war. Yet, this debate and discursive construction of identity obscures not just Canada’s complicity in the war, but also Canada’s longstanding acts of violence as a settler colonial state. The façade of an innocent and neutral Canada has been chipped away by the robust scholarship in critical multiculturalism. The insertion of Cold War epistemology here allows for a deepened analysis of Vietnamese Canadians in a mutually sustaining relationship to the state, and highlights Canada’s continued nation-building exercise as a continuation of its colonial project. This celebration of

heritage which constructs the Vietnamese as a multicultural subject and erases Canada's complicity was not exclusive to the parliamentary proceedings but also seen in the community commemoration sites.

In the community, participating politicians saw the April 30th commemoration as an occasion to celebrate the Vietnamese' pursuit of a particular kind of freedom. The tracing of this theme reveals the limited understanding of this significant commemoration by the diaspora. April 30th represents the recall of a violent period of history in which Canada was complicit and the unresolved wounds were left in the diaspora. The lack of a deep, complex understanding of this history by Canadian non-Vietnamese politicians is poorly veiled by attempts to interpret this event as a celebration of heritage. This celebration reveals how Canadians outside of the diaspora have understood this event for the Vietnamese community. It reveals how what is uttered by the Vietnamese diaspora is repackaged in glaring ways to fit with the pre-existing narratives of Canadian multiculturalism and Vietnamese as 'boat people'. Politicians are encouraged and welcomed at these commemorations as they are perceived to give credibility to a relatively obscure event that is little known outside of the Vietnamese diaspora. The event is rarely advertised or promoted outside of the Vietnamese ethnic media. Canadian politicians are invited guests of the hosting organization and other Vietnamese community leaders. They are included in the ceremony and given a place in the procession line, a seat in the front row, and a spot on the agenda to make a speech. Politicians who have participated in past events have ranked from City Councilors, Members of Provincial and Federal Parliament, a Federal Senator, and occasionally Cabinet Ministers.

Liberal Member of Parliament Judy Sgro of the Humber River-Black Creek riding sees the Vietnamese community through a Cold War lens, as refugees and immigrants, albeit

successful immigrants today. She sees this event, one that she has been attending consecutively for 9 years given that her riding encompasses a large population of Vietnamese people and organizations, as a celebration. The possibility that a large immigrant group, one that has succeeded socioeconomically, may have something else to communicate beyond celebrating their “opportunity” to gain human rights, is contrary to the dominant notion of multiculturalism.

A celebration of freedom and democracy aligns so well with preconceived notions of this community as Cold War freedom fighters that Judy Sgro has coined her term for this April 30th day of mourning. She calls it “Freedom Day”.

I think it’s an extremely important day, it’s an opportunity for the community to come together but we must never forget the struggles of the past and the constant reminder of what Freedom Day is, it’s great for people who are not just of Vietnamese background, but who’ve come together to celebrate democracy and Freedom Day with the community. (SBTN, 2011)

Similar to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s 2017 Diwali mishap where he tweeted a celebratory message wishing all Indo-Canadians a “Diwali Mubarak”, the above example of the politician’s “lost in translation” is evidence of multiculturalism’s superficial recognition of its constituents (“Diwali Mubarak’?”, 2017). “Diwali Mubarak” is a curious twinning of the religious Diwali celebration by Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, and Sikh faiths with the Arabic Islamic word, “Mubarak”, for “blessings”. It is particularly uncomfortable due to the history of colonial conflict among the groups represented by these two separate words. The division among those who celebrate Diwali and those who trace their ancestry to Arabic and Islamic heritage were exacerbated during the British colonial rule over the territory of India. This division escalated into a historical episode of mass bloodshed during the 1947 British Partition of India in the

creation of Pakistan. As such, the twinning of “Diwali Mubarak” as a mishap on the national stage demonstrates a gross superficial recognition of cultural communities under the official multiculturalism discourse. Under the dominant narrative of diversity and multiculturalism in Canada, cultural difference exists at the superficial level of dress, food, art; it is something which can be celebrated. This false recognition and persistent celebration overwrite historical global oppression – and within it, Canada’s complicity - and eclipses the current day struggles of the communities involved. These officials use publicity opportunities to demonstrate their progressiveness by wearing a piece of culturally (in)appropriate attire without fully understanding the deep historical and political significance of it. By doing so, they add their formal power to one side of a debate without the commitment and investment in the community itself.

Similarly, in 2010, Lois Brown whom was then a Conservative Member of Parliament representing the Newmarket-Aurora riding, gave a speech and was later interviewed by the Vietnamese media. The interview captured during this event was aired and reflected her limited understanding of the intent of the April 30th event as a commemoration, a mourning, and a protest. She states, “It is delightful to be here with all these people here celebrating the 35th anniversary” (freespeechforvn part 3, May 11, 2010). She sees this event as a celebration of the Vietnamese story as model refugees who have integrated to achieve economic success: “I think it is an amazing success story, I think what we’ve seen are people who have come here as refugees 35 years ago, many of whom have built businesses and have become very successful entrepreneurs in our society and integrated and added much to the fabric of Canada” (freespeechforvn part 3, May 11, 2010). Note here that the story of capitalist success by refugees is what is reinforced as part of the “fabric of Canada”. When asked about her thoughts on the

politicized three stripes flag (as worn by herself in the form of a scarf), Lois Brown reveals her understanding of the flag as a cultural artifact to be displayed at a cultural celebration:

I think it's astounding to see all the people here who have come to Canada who have made a life for them who wanted to celebrate their culture and who wanted to celebrate their freedom...absolutely, we are here to celebrate freedom, many people came to Canada seeking freedom and the opportunity to have human rights and *that's what Canada is all about* and we're pleased these people have joined us. (freespeechforvn part 3, May 11, 2010, author's italics)

Here Canada is constructed as the place for freedom and human rights, but also for capitalist success. These are seen as at the core of Canada's identity and what "Canada is all about". The Vietnamese are constructed as those seeking freedom: their entry into the Canadian core identity, into the national belonging, is that of freedom seekers. And it is Canada that provides the freedom seekers the ability to thrive and "make a life" for themselves. In addition to this narrative, this speech betrays the exclusionary discourses of Canadian multiculturalism in the making of the self and Other. This was traced in the last chapter on the media debates of racial exclusion in the nation. The "we", Canada, are pleased to welcome "them", the Vietnamese, to join "us" for freedom and an opportunity to gain human rights. This is what Vietnamese Canadians have to work so hard for to belong to Canada, they must be freedom fighters and productive capitalists. Yet at this event, 35 years after many of them have arrived in Canada, Vietnamese Canadians are still "they" who join and are welcomed by "us", Canada.

Considered together, these discourses of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity, as both the Cold War freedom seeker and successful refugees able to celebrate their heritage, produce a very particular place of discursive belonging within Canada and entangled with Canada's national

identity. The celebrations of freedom, capitalist progress, and opportunities to have “human rights” also point to a neoliberal turn in the discourses on Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity. I will now move to the final section of the analysis of the April 30th commemorations to reveal the making of the Vietnamese as a Cold War multicultural subject within a neoliberal framework.

Vietnamese as a Neoliberal subject: The “Dream” of Democracy to Vietnam

The tone of neoliberalism within Vietnamese subjectivity has existed at the very heart of the Vietnamese Cold War and multicultural identity, and yet has not been clearly articulated nor illustrated. Neoliberalism supports this construction of the Vietnamese as Cold War subject that traces moving from victims of communism to successful capitalists as it celebrates the Western liberal ideals of freedom, democracy, and human rights. Yet neoliberalism posits that these ideals of freedom, democracy, and human rights is that which fits into the capitalist agenda.

The discourse of moving from refugees of communism to successful migrant in capitalist and business ventures, has previously been analyzed as the model minority discourse. Nuanced by critical refugee scholars, the model minority subject is shown to be different from the grateful refugee. The grateful refugee is hardworking, resourceful, and successful with little assistance from the state, and most importantly appreciative of, and committed to, the state that provided refuge (Nguyễn, 2013). Whereas the model minority excels despite migration and acculturation stress and the good refugee thrives despite the loss and terrors of displacement, the grateful refugee accomplishes both but is also endlessly, consistently, and deeply beholden to the rescuing state. Traced on the bodies of grateful refugees are the actions and consequences of the Cold War which continue to linger and to have very real material effects on the lives of those who have internalized the racist and imperialist inscriptions of their very selves as subjugated

persons who had to be given their humanity (Kim, 2010). Canadian scholar Vinh Nguyễn critiques the local context in his reading of Vietnamese Canadian literary works, by illustrating how “the grateful Vietnamese refugee, who is born from this gift of freedom, first through war then by refuge, is ensnaked [sic] in an endless debt-payment relationship to the state and its imperial logics” (Nguyễn, 2013, p.18). According to Mimi T. Nguyễn, grateful refugees, rescued from war and granted refuge, are given the gift of freedom which is “the right to have rights, the choice of life direction, the improvement of body and mind, the opportunity to prosper – against a spectral future of their nonexistence, under communism, under terror” (2012, p. 2). The Vietnamese Canadians’ stories of rags-to- riches, or the before and after framing, follow a postcolonial script of having lost democracy in their own homeland only to be gifted with a second life.

This grateful Vietnamese refugee was centered as the ‘natural’ identity of Vietnamese Canadians in the debates on the Journey to Freedom Day Act. Of the nine witnesses who presented in the passing of the Bill, seven located themselves as former refugees from Vietnam⁹. Regardless of their critique of the Bill, all of the former refugees outlined a similar description of the war-torn country they left behind, the perilous journey by boat to the nearest shore, and, finally, their bright and peaceful life in Canada. The most prominent of these witnesses is

⁹ The witnesses are (in order of appearance, all presented in person with one exception):

Vietnamese Ambassador Tô Anh Dũng (in writing)
Mike Molloy, President of the Canadian Immigration Historical Society
Can Le, Former General Secretary of the Vietnamese Canadian Federation
James Lam Nguyễn, President, Vietnamese Association Toronto
Julie Nguyễn, Co-Founder and Director, Canada-Vietnam Trade Council
Elizabeth McIninch, Director, Canada-Vietnam Trade Council
Trac Bang Do, President, Canada-Vietnam Friendship Association
Van Hoang Nguyễn, Member, Canada-Vietnam Friendship Association
Ba Ngoc Dao, President, *Communauté Vietnamiennne au Canada*

Senator Ngô, who repeatedly stated he owed his life, his children's and his grandchildren's lives and all he has been able to accomplish to the gift of democracy from Canada. He added: "I am able to proudly rise as a Senator and defend freedom, human rights and democracy without fearing for my life. Today, I can look at my family and know that I have been able to provide for them and ensure their wellbeing" (Senate Debate, April 30, 2014, p.1413). The stubborn reliance on these narratives alone without the larger discussion on the war in Vietnam, the global contributors of the war, and what drove hundreds of thousands of people to leave their homes, is problematic. This focus on rescue and refugee success in the debates results in a carefully constructed state narrative of an ideal journey to freedom that overshadows the ugliness of war. It is little wonder that this divisive Bill, despite its critics, is still roundly celebrated by Vietnamese Canadians for the little bit of official recognition they receive from the state.

While the above comments construct the Vietnamese Canadian subject as a grateful anti-communist refugee, further analysis of parliamentary text reveals that every Vietnamese subject, not just Vietnamese Canadians, are democratic. Senator Ngô portrays current day Vietnam as absolutely devoid of freedom, "But to the 90 million Vietnamese living in a Communist country, full of oppression and prohibition, freedom does not exist" (Senate Debate, April 30, 2014, p.1414). He describes Vietnamese refugees as people who fled their country when "invaded" by communist forces who now dream of returning to Vietnam to restore the rightful democratic order to the Vietnamese people still enslaved there by communism:

April 30 provides Vietnamese-Canadians with an opportunity to remember the suffering of their past, allowing them to officially express gratitude to Canada, and enabling them to advocate on behalf of those in Vietnam who don't enjoy

the basic human rights and religious freedom we enjoy here. (Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights, November 6, 2014, p.12.11)

These declarations were met with approval and support among parliamentarians as they collectively channel Canada's aspirations in Canada *and* in Vietnam. In support of bringing freedom to Vietnam, Minister of Foreign Affairs Stéphane Dion states in the House of Commons debate, "The goal is to bring people together, to leave nobody out. The goal is also to strengthen the bond between Canada and Vietnam, to strengthen the trade, cultural and scientific ties between our countries. Canada must stand up for human rights and justice in Vietnam as it does all over the world" (March 23, 2015, p. 12138). Dion's appeal for inclusivity and unity is belied by his reference to trade, as it is clear that human rights and justice in Vietnam are not the only values Canada is standing up for.

Kim (2010) argued that the narrative of progress for Asian Americans is different from other timelines of those striving for decolonization, and thus, must be analyzed under Cold War epistemology. Unlike other so-called developing nations relating to the West, the source of the Vietnamese subjects' oppression is not poverty but rather communism. To further this theorizing, the parliamentary debates construct Vietnamese refugees as not only being saved *by* democracy in gaining refuge into Canada, but Vietnamese refugees were in fact trying to save their own country *with* democracy. In the debates, Senator Ngô locates the Vietnamese refugee as democratic, as the subject who tried to fight off their Others (communist North Vietnam) alongside the U.S. and its allies. The Senator states: "The Republic of South Vietnam courageously fought to defend freedom and democracy for over two decades in order to prevent the spread of communism" (Senate Debate, April 30, 2014, p.1412). The Vietnam War, then, an international spectacle of human suffering, was in fact not the tragedy. The tragedy would be if

these Vietnamese refugees did not escape Vietnam in their journey to freedom to realize their dreams and potential in capitalism. As MP Peter Kent argues: “In fact, greater freedoms came to Vietnam not through war but through the pressures of capitalism, free enterprise, and the will of the people for better lives in Vietnam” (House of Commons Debate, February 5, 2015, p.11146). The Journey to Freedom Day Act brings democratic Vietnamese into the fold, as a colluding partner with Canada, to deliver democracy and trade back to Vietnam. Complementing the construction of the Vietnamese subject in relation to Canada is the discursive move to erase the history of an unfortunate war and a messy complicity.

As the Vietnamese diaspora protest human rights in Vietnam and urge the Canadian government to put pressure on Vietnam, they cite concerns of well-being and desires for socialist Vietnam to “open its doors”. The vision here is that trade with Canada is the carrot and the stick. If Vietnam does not comply with human rights demands, trade with Canada should be reduced or halted. The assumption is that trade with democratic Canada will bring change to socialist Vietnam on the basis of human rights. What does not seem to be considered here is the human rights violations of transnational corporations profiting from an unequal global distribution of wealth, a profit that transnational corporations actively work to protect. Trade with Canada may not bring human rights to Vietnam. In fact, it may undermine labour struggles in Vietnam as workers’ gains via collective actions are dismissed in favour of international political influence (Tran, Bair & Werner, 2017). Yet, these are not the types of human rights violations this Vietnamese diaspora group is concerned about.

I see that communist Vietnam should also follow the example of Burma... so that the land and country of our Vietnam can have freedom democracy and primarily can have a labour industry, the labourers in Vietnam in the country

can have an escape out of the tight grasp of the communist and can have a regime of democracy, a regime that brings a sense of *progress*, bring back a sense of wellbeing, labour and prosperity for the general people in Vietnam.

(Senator Ngô, Thoibao Media, 2012, author's italics)

The development of capitalist ideology and democracy as intimately connected following the Cold War was traced in the previous chapter. The Vietnamese refugee subject in Canada is made to *know* human rights only through capitalist democracy. Thus, for them, the violation of human rights with global trade is invisibilized and overshadowed by the violation of human rights within what they know as communist Vietnam.

Finally, the most prominent non-Vietnamese politician to regularly attend the April 30th event is Jason Kenney, a very active member of former Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Cabinet. The Vietnamese community knows Jason Kenney mainly during his tenure as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and later as Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship. He attended the April 30th event annually from 2008 to 2015 and has made speeches at each and every one of these events. Kenney attracted attention when, during the 2008 event, he proclaimed the RVN flag as the symbol of the Vietnamese community in Canada,

I am proud to be here with you to see this beautiful display of the Vietnamese heritage freedom flag, which is an important symbol to the entire Vietnamese community across Canada and throughout the world because it is a symbol of hope...you have not forgotten your past and you have not given up hope that one day, again, Vietnam will be a free and democratic country...I am proud of their [Vietnamese Canadians'] faithfulness to their past, represented by the

freedom flag, and I'm proud that they are not afraid to stand up for democratic values, and that makes them great Canadians. (Nth1963, 2008)

This moment was perhaps the first time a prominent Canadian politician made a firm stance publicly on what was previously an intra community conflict of the Vietnamese diaspora. This speech makes several discursive moves. First, it establishes that the RVN flag is the official flag of the Vietnamese Canadian community, thus suggesting that the officialized identity of the Vietnamese Canadians is the anti-communist identity that subscribes to the RVN flag. Second, this speech renames the RVN flag into the “Vietnamese heritage freedom flag” encapsulating a Cold War epistemology of multiculturalism – suggesting that this freedom fighting spirit is not just a Cold War political identity but rather a part of their heritage. Finally, what makes the Vietnamese “great” Canadians is their “democratic values”. In order to be great Canadians, Vietnamese Canadians must demonstrate these democratic values by attending anti-communist commemorations such as these, by rewriting their own losses and mourning as a celebration of freedom within Canadian democracy.

The above themes on the discourse of the Vietnamese as traced in speech acts made by Canadian politicians and Senator Ngô at the April 30th event, demonstrate the racialization of Vietnamese Canadians as Cold War subjects produced as the constant freedom fighter. But this racialization cannot be separated from the alliance of the diaspora's dream of bringing freedom, liberty, democracy, and human rights to Vietnam, with capitalist aspirations of accumulation by way of uneven, inequitable trade relations between countries of the global North and that of the global South. Access to the economies of the global South depend on the cooperation of the diaspora. This view suggests that trade with Vietnam is a human rights imperative; in order to help the country rise above their own socialist corruption and oppression, we must bring trade to

them. By opening their doors to trade with Canada, it allows us to influence them towards liberal civility.

Summary

In this chapter, I trace the construction of the Vietnamese Canadian as the Cold War neoliberal multicultural subject by situating my study on the April 30th, 1975 “Fall of Saigon” commemorative activities in Toronto and Ottawa. The discursive practices at both sites of commemoration – at the community site of mourning from 2007 to 2015, and the parliamentary debates on the Journey to Freedom Day Act inform one another in reproducing the Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity. The making of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity produces and sustains the Canadian national identity as a racial capitalist democracy, as argued in the previous chapter.

I argue that April 30th, 1975, “Fall of Saigon” is of great significance to both the Western international community and to the Vietnamese themselves. The American imperial defeat by the North Vietnamese is contrary to the Cold War rhetoric of democracy over communism, “good over evil” thus requires a Western rewriting and re-narrating of this date. Vietnamese Canadians whose subjectivity is informed as political exiles in this Cold War structure, must also rewrite their own subjecthood to both align with the Cold War structures of sentiment and Canadian requirements of multicultural subjects. This reproduction of identity is evident in the community commemorations and is persistent over the 7 years that this annual commemoration is studied.

At the same time, another commemoration of April 30th, 1975 “Fall of Saigon” was enacted in 2015, when first the Senate and then the House of Commons passed the Bill S-219, “The Journey to Freedom Day Act”. This commemoration constructed an authentic Vietnamese subject in as co-constitutive of an innocent Canadian state. Parliamentary debates constructs how

the national commemorative day positions the nation as innocent and humanitarian alongside a state-sanctioned Vietnamese identity, erasing the Vietnam War and Canada's complicity in it by shining the spotlight on the success of Vietnamese refugees and in turn, on Canada's compassion. While informed by community discourse on the Vietnamese subject, circulated at the context of elite talk and text, the implication of this Bill is disturbing. It further fuels inter-group political conflicts by legitimating one particular identity while at the same time disavowing the state's role in group division by maintaining its staunch hold on neutral heritage.

In the next chapter, I will show that Vietnamese Canadians continue to carry the baggage of trauma, distrust, and war-created divisions as they negotiate their subjectivity on the ground within a critical conflict in a Toronto-based agency. The impact on their wellbeing is that a divided community is one that cannot effectively respond to social issues in the climate of a shrinking social safety net where racialized populations are encouraged to seek informal supports within their ethnic communities.

Chapter 6: Community Wellbeing and Belonging

This final data chapter focuses on a service agency in the Toronto Vietnamese community as a local site of conflict. This analysis highlights community members' negotiation of their subjectivity against the backdrop of the national identity project constructed through the production of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity. I trace how the circulating discourses of the Vietnamese-Canadian as the Cold War neoliberal multicultural subject, produced in relation to Canada as a racial capitalist democracy, are mobilized by members of a community in an explosive conflict over identity entangled with belonging to Canada. What the Vietnamese Canadian community can say, and what can be heard, to be legible and intelligible by Canada, is conditioned by the knowledge production of the Cold War epistemology of neoliberal multiculturalism. As such, I theorize their articulations as “compositional”. That is, the subaltern can speak, and be heard, only within the dominant discourses of Western democracy in the Cold War rhetoric of freedom, independence, and human rights and Canadian racial belonging.

First, I will elaborate on the significance of this conflict to the community in order to link this chapter with the preceding two chapters on national and community identity building projects. Next, I will review the highlights of the conflict that occurred within a local agency in Toronto. I will present my analysis of the talk and text produced in this conflict by the senior and younger generation in their negotiation of identity and belonging as conditioned by discourses of the Cold War and multiculturalism.

In the summer of 2015, the Vietnamese community in Toronto experienced a major community conflict as they negotiated their subjectivity in relation to the Canadian nation. The main point of contention in this conflict is the display of the Republic of Viet Nam (RVN) flag

and how its use both enables and hinders the community's belonging to Canada. In this critical event, I trace the "structures of sentiment" (Chen, 2010) to show that this conflict was structured by the broader discourses of the Cold War and neoliberal multiculturalism. These discourses structure what can be said by these two groups but also what can be understood by Canada. The two previous chapters have traced community and national constructions of identity and subjectivity of both Canada and of Vietnamese Canadians, as mutually sustaining of one another and alongside Cold War and neoliberal multiculturalism discourses. In chapter 4, I highlight the racial capitalist democracy logic behind the construction of Canadian national identity through the Memorial to Victims of Communism project. In chapter 5, I trace the production of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity as the Cold War neoliberal multicultural subject. The critical event reveals the dominance of Cold War epistemology on racial capitalism and multiculturalism, both of which have been actively reproduced through projects of national identity building. Here, I show how these discourses structure and condition the local Vietnamese's negotiation of identity, a negotiation that I argue reaffirms the Canadian national identity and leaves a community divided.

The conflict between the younger and older generations in this critical community incident reveal the tensions of the Cold War binary and neoliberal multiculturalism as they negotiate their identities and belonging in Canada. Both groups are negotiating their identities after their objects of identification (Chen, 2010) which paradoxically are different expressions of the same object. Canada is the object of identification to both the senior and the younger generations. What divides them is how they can be *known* or *recognized* by the Canadian nation. For the senior generation, they can only be recognized by the Canadian nation through the Cold War binary as "freedom fighter" and "anti-communist". For the younger generation, this

recognition confines them to their "ethnicity" of a multicultural "Other" in the Canadian nation, a singular position which they actively resist in their pursuit to belong. For the older generation who lived through the Cold War period and survived the war in Vietnam, their way into national belonging is through the Cold War era subjectivity, represented by the anti-communist freedom fighter. Yet, as traced in the previous chapter, this is not a subject identity entirely imposed on them. This subjectivity operates with this generation's own grief over the loss of their former South Vietnam. As shown by critical refugee scholars, this subjectivity allows them to legitimately and intelligibly have their grief publicly recognized amidst the political backdrop of both Western narratives and contemporary Vietnam's narratives about the war in Vietnam. The challenge that this generation currently faces in reproducing this subjectivity is that it is contrary to the subjectivity that the younger generation subscribes to.

The younger generation has struggled to belong to Canada under the official victimhood narrative as racialized Asian "boat people". For this group, the seniors' Cold War era identity as anti-communists and freedom fighters differentiates Vietnamese Canadians as "ethnic" and moves them further from their desired identity as simply "Canadian". This analysis of identity formation further nuances Cold War epistemology's theory that suggests that the Cold War is in fact a knowledge producer of the psychic structure of identity politics (Chen, 2010, p.96) by folding multiculturalism into the identity negotiation. Both groups negotiate their identities and sense of belonging along different discourses that construct Canadian national identity: the older generation mobilizes discourses of freedom, human rights, and democracy, while the younger generation mobilizes discourses of anti-discrimination, inclusivity, and political tolerance.

The result is that this community continues to struggle and remain divided, while dominant state policies and discursive structures remain unchallenged – and even strengthened.

Not only does the community continue to struggle divided, but furthermore, the community division is sustained by the Canadian state through its construction of the Vietnamese subject and its conditional “multicultural” integration. Despite the senior generation’s emphasis on their Cold War identity as anti-communists, which is their way of belonging to an imagined Canada, they cannot belong to dominant Canada. This is because a distinct identity is contra to Canada’s ideals of integration and acculturation where those integrated into multicultural Canada are assumed to have subsumed their pre-migration identity. And while the younger generation press to distance themselves from the Vietnamese Canadians’ history of war and “refugee-ism”, they support the national discourse of a race neutral multiculturalism. By doing so, they strengthen the structure of racial dominance in Canada as this national discourse of liberal tolerance masks Canada’s complicity in the Cold War and the war in Vietnam, as was discussed in chapter 4. What follows is a review of the critical event that sets the stage for my analysis of the senior generation’s subject formation through the discourses of the Cold War and multiculturalism, and secondly, the younger generation’s subject formation.

Description of the Critical Event

On August 21, 2015, the 5-member Board of Directors of a community agency in Toronto (called the Agency thereafter) unanimously resigned in the face of public criticism from the general members of the Agency and the wider community regarding the decision to omit the Republic of Viet Nam’s (commonly referred to as the RVN or former South Vietnam prior to the end of the war in Vietnam in 1975) flag from its annual Lantern Festival. This lengthy conflict was instigated in August of 2014 when a video clip covering the annual Lantern Festival, as hosted by the Agency, was broadcast with what community critics called “communist” music

dubbed over it. One year later, the conflict eventually ended with the public dismissal of the Executive Director, and the unanimous resignation of the 5-member Board of Directors, both within the same month in August 2015. The data set spans 15 months from August 2014 to November 2015. For this site of analysis, I use public talk and text (circulated open letters, published newsletters, website, media coverage, media clips and minutes of meetings and proceedings) from September 11, 2014 to November 28, 2015. Included are my participant observations from August 23, 2014 to August 21, 2015. I also include excerpts from in-depth participant interviews conducted from September 18, 2014 to October 14, 2015. This range of data offers different perspectives from various players in this community conflict. What follows is an account of the events that occurred within this organization during a 15-month period that led to the loss of this Agency's leadership.

This Agency was founded in Toronto in the early 1980s as one of several groups organized by Vietnamese migrants, many of whom were refugees, who came together to mark cultural events in order to build their social network around a shared background. This Agency's mission statement reads: "Agency is committed to advancing education, providing supportive counseling, promoting healthy living, encouraging the integration of newcomer communities, raising awareness of domestic violence, and fostering community development" (VWAT Family Services, 2017). In 2005, this Agency experienced a crisis of stagnation. Its Board of Directors were mainly the original members from the 1980s and it was unable to grow its services and client/membership base. Public funding was limited to one small municipal fund which provided only enough revenue to hire a part-time staff member in a one room, rented office within another larger Agency. The older Board of Directors were tired of struggling to keep the organization afloat and wanted to introduce fresh energy and ideas into the Agency, thus invited new Board

members from the younger generation. From the period of 2005 to 2015, the composition of the Board of Directors changed from being entirely from the older generation (all Board members were over the age of 50) to being entirely of the younger generation (all under the age of 40).

On August 23, 2014, the Agency hosted its annual Lantern Festival in partnership with other local organizations in Toronto. At this festival, the RVN's flag was not on display. This is uncommon for organized Vietnamese agencies/associations in Canada, however, Agency had omitted the flag for several years prior to 2014, providing reasons external to the Agency's control, such as limitations set by the public venue on all displays of political symbols. Shortly after, a local Vietnamese media network, SBTN (Saigon Broadcasting Television Network, owned by Thoi Bao Media), posted video coverage of this festival on their YouTube channel but with post-1975 Vietnamese music dubbed over the footage. Post-1975 music produced in Vietnam was criticized as "communist" music since it occurs after the end of the war. The video clip was taken down immediately and Thoi Bao printed an apology in its newspaper on September 9, 2014.

On October 3, 2014, after criticism from the Agency's clients and members regarding this video clip and the lantern festival, the Agency staff and Board of Directors held an open community forum to address the discontent and complaints that had arisen since the incident with Thoi Bao. The majority of the critics are from the senior generation. These seniors formed a core part of the Agency's membership and volunteer body. They demanded an open discussion with the Agency leadership regarding its stance on the RVN flag. The seniors did not blame Thoi Bao for the incident but rather felt that the Agency left itself open to criticism from the diaspora by refusing to display the RVN flag at its events and in its office. Recall from chapter 5, the Vietnamese diaspora's official political identity is that of anti-communists.

On November 1, 2014, not satisfied with the responses from the Agency's leadership, the seniors' group wrote and circulated an open letter to the Vietnamese community titled "*Bất tín nhiệm* (*"distrust"*) of Agency". This was circulated to all the Vietnamese organizations/associations in the Greater Toronto Area, Ottawa, Montreal, and to individuals who had been active volunteers and supporters of Vietnamese organized activities. At this point, a conflict which started within one Agency had now spread to the Vietnamese diaspora throughout Canada. In this letter, the seniors presented 5 complaints:

1. The Agency did not display the RVN flag at community events
2. The Agency failed to uphold its responsibility of promoting Vietnamese culture
3. The Agency hired staff members who do not speak Vietnamese nor identify as Vietnamese
4. The Agency disseminated Vietnamese communist material
5. The Agency unethically collected a fee for membership and programs.

(*Nhóm Sống Vui Sống Khỏe [Live Happy, Live Well Group]*, 2014,
translated from Vietnamese by the author)

In addition to these complaints, the seniors called for the replacement of the Executive Director and the Board of Directors. They called on the wider Vietnamese community in Toronto to boycott this Agency until there was a change in leadership.

The conflict grew beyond the Agency over the course of the year and on July 30, 2015, the Agency's Board of Directors published an open letter on its website publicly stating its political stance, which was to refrain from displaying the RVN flag. The Board maintained that the flag is a political symbol and is contra to the policies of anti-discrimination by their social

service funders. Note, this Agency is not defending its right to display any other flag such as the current flag of Vietnam, but it is defending its right to NOT display the RVN flag. Recall in the preceding chapter that there is only one publicly accepted Vietnamese identity – the anti-communist identity – and this Agency is resisting its production. Yet to the seniors, by not displaying the RVN flag, the Agency is assumed to move towards Socialist Vietnam. Here the Cold War epistemology is very apparent through the legacy of this binary structure. According to this structure of sentiment, if the Agency does not actively profess an anti-communist identity, the only natural assumption is that it is aligned with communism.

The Board's open letter on their political stance was widely distributed among the Vietnamese community and by August 18, 2015, it drew the censure of Conservative Senator Ngô Thanh Hải. He circulated a letter to 29 other Vietnamese organizations in Canada in which he chastised this Agency for neglecting to display the RVN flag as a symbol of Vietnamese heritage. At this point, the Board of Directors fired the Executive Director. Shortly after, on August 21, 2015, the Agency's Board held its last open community forum to address the concerns of the seniors' group. At the end of this meeting the 5-member Board resigned, leaving this Agency effectively without formal leadership. A popular media outlet recorded the final meeting of the former Board of Directors and published the following summary on its broadcasting station and YouTube channel:

Despite having been granted many explanations and urgings on the duty to hang the yellow flag; the flag of refugees, the symbol of the community during celebrations, the Lantern Festival as organized by the Agency for several years has failed to hang the yellow flag and ceremonially salute the flag...After much furor, on August 21, 2015, an Advisory Council was convened to chair

an emergency meeting of the membership to elect a new Board of Directors, one that will meet the aspirations of its members. (SBTNOfficial, October 5, 2015, translated from Vietnamese by the author)

The quote implies that this group was given ample opportunity and instruction on their duty to hang and salute the flag of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) during celebrations and events, and in failing to do so, have been rightfully taken over by the authentic members of the Vietnamese community. Of note here, the reference to the pre-1975 capital of South Vietnam, Saigon, which was renamed H ồChí Minh city after 1975, is very common in the Vietnamese diasporas in the West. References to notable locations of pre-1975 Vietnam are taken for granted by members of the diaspora as natural, and throughout the United States and Canada, locations, organizations, and items are commonly named after the pre-1975 landmarks in Vietnam.

The Intergenerational Conflict

This conflict, sparked by an accidental dubbing of contested music over footage of the Lantern Festival hosted on August 23, 2014, was initially between the two generations of this Agency: the senior, founding generation and the younger generation of Agency leaders and staff. This group of seniors, so disheartened by what they saw as the misdirection of the Agency for failing to carry on their vision of the Agency within the community, took it upon themselves to boycott the Agency and to publicly call for various Vietnamese groups and organizations locally and nationally to do the same. It then escalated beyond the organization into the larger Vietnamese community, to ultimately end with the dissolution of the Agency leadership.

The community meetings, open letters, correspondences, and interviews conducted with participants of this conflict during the 15-month period resonated with strong feelings of anger,

betrayal, and disappointment. The seniors were committed and dedicated volunteers at the Agency. They used to meet once a week for mutual support with the assistance of an Agency staff. The seniors regularly brought in homemade dishes and vegetables from the community gardens to both feed others and to teach the younger staff about Vietnamese food. Their affection to members of the staff was reciprocated. For example, on several occasions, when a senior's spouse passed away, the staff collected donations and attended the funeral on their own initiative. The seniors' complaints center on their perceived disconnection with the younger generation around their identification of the "Vietnamese culture" and "heritage" which was projected and *reconstructed* from the Canadian national discourse of freedom and democracy.

To unravel the complex entanglements of sentiment and meaning making put forth by the seniors in their open letter, and in the subsequent dialogue throughout this conflict, I examine the common-sense conflation of Vietnamese culture and tradition with the legacies of the war in Vietnam by these seniors. I interrogate how they make their needs heard and intelligible in the Canadian context. I then move to analysis of the younger generation's negotiation of identity and belonging to Canada. As these two groups articulate and defend their identity, I ask: what subjectivity is being produced and how does it relate to broader discourses of Canada's national identity formation? Reading this conflict through a Cold War epistemology theoretical lens offers insight into the process of subject formation of two generations of Vietnamese Canadians in relation to Canada.

Senior generation: We are *Người Tị Nạn Cộng Sản* (Refugees of Communism)

The symbol of the RVN flag is mired in complicated sentiments that cannot be understood through a simple tracing of historical events in Vietnam related to the flag, nor can it

be explained by existing theories of refugeeness and multiculturalism, although some of these theories may provide partial explanations. Here, I analyze the participant data that equates the RVN flag with Vietnamese heritage using the theoretical lens of Cold War epistemology. I trace the historical and political conditions that conflate Vietnamese culture with a political symbol to understand the complex sentiments of Vietnamese seniors. Below I unpack the seniors' articulation of their sentiments regarding the flag as a key marker of their imagination of Vietnamese Canadian identity. It is this flag, as the key marker of their identity, that provides senior Vietnamese Canadians with perceived belonging to the Canadian nation.

The seniors imagine the identity of Vietnamese Canadians as freedom fighters from South Vietnam who are now political exiles of current day socialist Vietnam. They imagine Vietnamese Canadians are part of the global diaspora who fought for a Vietnam free from communism. They are part of the group who lost the war in Vietnam in 1975 but have established a free Vietnam outside of Vietnam. To them, the flag is a symbol of this lost but redeveloped “free Vietnam”: “The yellow flag with the three stripes [RVN flag] of the *ngư ời Việt tự do* (free Vietnamese people), [is] a symbol of independence, freedom, [and] human rights. The flag is the strength of the *cộng đ ồng Ngư ời Việt tị nạn cộng sản* (community of Vietnamese refugees of communism).” (Nhóm Sống Vui Sống Khỏe [*Live Happy, Live Well Group*], 2014, translated from Vietnamese by the author). To the seniors, the RVN flag is symbolic of themselves as a collective Vietnamese group, “It is a symbol of our mindset, our philosophy on life, it is not to divide or differentiate us” (member, community meeting, October 3, 2014, translated from Vietnamese by the author).

A distinction is made between the “free Vietnamese community”, those in Toronto, Canada, and internationally, as opposed to the unspoken but implicit “not free” Vietnamese society in the country of Vietnam under the “new” regime.

This is the heritage of the Vietnamese community not just here, in Toronto, in Canada, and international. It is the symbol that states, here is the free Vietnamese community, therefore when this flag was diminished by individuals or groups as simply the flag of the old regime, we feel that is extremely remiss and straying and we need to remind ourselves that this is the flag of freedom. (SBTNOfficial, 2015, translated from Vietnamese by the author)

Yet the seniors go even further, by stating that this flag is not only a symbol of Southern Vietnamese but of *all* Vietnamese, by evoking the flag as a symbol of Vietnamese heritage, tradition, history, and homeland. This echoes the debates seen at the commemorations of the April 30th “Fall of Saigon” events. This homeland is an engendered homeland:

We will try to learn to work as well as always stand up for the mission and preservation of cultural traditions, the history of Vietnam, the *Lá Cờ Vàng Di Sản* (Golden Heritage Flag) - expression of Tradition and Freedom... We will try to encourage and help young people learn more about the homeland, its history, and its association with the *thế hệ cha anh* (father's and brother's generation) to contribute to the community. (VWAT Family Services, 2015^d, translated from Vietnamese by the author)

By evoking this flag as symbolic of Vietnamese heritage and tradition, rather than limited to the former South Vietnamese, it is defended against accusations of political significance. The seniors argue, this flag is no longer a symbol of politics which is understood as “divisive” but rather it is a symbol of Vietnamese culture and tradition: “We are not putting out the flag to differentiate between Vietnamese, we are putting out the flag to differentiate from democrats to communists, not between Vietnamese” (member, community meeting, October 3, 2014, translated from Vietnamese by the author). “Free Vietnamese people” are independent, have freedom and human rights. The Vietnamese diaspora in Canada are “free Vietnamese people” thus, those in Vietnam are “not free” and do not have these core attributes. To the seniors, these attributes do not describe the Vietnamese diaspora’s current political situation but rather the tradition and the culture of the Vietnamese prior to the 1975 change in political regime. To follow the logic of this conflation, the tradition and culture of the Vietnamese people is represented by freedom and democracy, which, in turn, is represented by the RVN flag. The use of this flag to “differentiate from democrats to communists” assumes that communists are not true Vietnamese.

Note here the gendered distinction of freedom as a tradition. This may be due to the form of freedom that these seniors are aligned to. As explained above, freedom in this context is referred to as the Cold War era freedom which is very much an American imperial propaganda of freedom as a central part of the challenge that democracy posed against communism. This form of freedom is conflated with an active fight, a military resistance. This freedom in Cold War epistemology is a militarized freedom which cannot be unlinked from the organization of gendered roles within military struggles.

The Vietnamese diaspora is imagined as having carried with them the values of independence, freedom, and human rights, all symbolized by the RVN flag, when they fled Vietnam following the war:

We are *tị nạn cộng sản* (refugees of communism), so this flag demonstrates our identity, our mission is to use this flag and follow this flag. Because of communism I left, so if I don't follow this flag I will stay with the communists, even in your *giấy vàng* ("yellow paper" to refer to immigration document) it says that you are a refugee of communists. (member, community meeting, October 3, 2014, translated from Vietnamese by the author)

This identity so clearly and vehemently articulated by the senior speaker is defined by the Cold War binary of democrat and communist. These seniors left Vietnam following the national reunification under Ho Chi Minh's communist regime. They carried with them the flag of the former South Vietnam, thus this flag now represents what is believed to be the opposite of communist Vietnam: independence, freedom, and human rights.

How did the seniors articulate their idea of "Vietnamese culture", "Vietnamese tradition", and "Vietnamese heritage"? As they defend Vietnamese culture, tradition, and heritage, key phrases of "freedom", "independence", and "human rights" persistently stuck alongside the ideas of the Vietnamese collective. When one refers to culture, tradition, and heritage, ideas of customs, ceremonies, and expressions of values and beliefs of a group of people with shared ethnicities, languages, and ancestry come to mind. Yet, for these seniors, what is being defended so passionately in this critical event is not a ritual practiced in Vietnam, for example, of ancestor honouring, marriage traditions, or beliefs of reincarnation in the afterlife. Rather, they defend politicized ideas of freedom, independence, human rights, and persecution by a political regime.

What do the seniors mean when they say that they are the Vietnamese community defined by freedom, independence, and human rights, as embodied in the RVN flag of the South Vietnam lost in the war? Historically, Vietnam was first under Chinese rule as a tributary in a feudal-like system, then by the French as part of the larger colonial region known as Indochina, and finally, at the conclusion of the war in 1975, gained official sovereignty to become the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Lau, 2012). What kinds of freedom, independence, and human rights have these seniors known, envisioned, or remembered as the Vietnamese heritage of tradition? Here, the seniors' articulation of their identity spotlights the knowledge producing conditions of the Cold War in subject formation.

The Cold War acts as a knowledge producer in the making of Self and Other of East Asians, whom Chen (2010) terms "Cold War subjects" (the Self) alongside two powerful "Others" – the colonizer and the imperial West. Chen's (2010) site of study is the subject-formation of East Asians as documented in cultural, literary, and political works. He argues that decolonization of former colonies has yet to occur as the decolonial process of these former colonies was interrupted by the Cold War: "The structural effects of the Cold War not only shape national spaces but also work on the body, consciousness, and desire of ordinary people" (Chen, 2010, p.124). Chen demonstrates the living knowledge production of the Cold War, not as a historical event limited to a time and space, but as an epistemology which serves a functional and operational lens: "The effects of the Cold War have become embedded in local history, and simply pronouncing the war to be over will not cause them to dissolve. The complex effects of the war, mediated through our bodies, have been inscribed into our national, family, and personal histories. In short, the Cold War is still alive within us." (2010, p.118). The Cold War subject is one who is locked into the battle of trying to overcome colonialism and has not yet had the

opportunity to decolonize prior to the Cold War interrupting it:

The imperialist, colonial, or Cold War ‘subject’ here means a person who has been subjected to the ideological shaping forces and sociopolitical mechanisms of imperialism, colonialism, or Cold War. The person’s subjectivities, structures of sentiment, and cultural imaginaries have been constituted by these forces and sociopolitical mechanisms. (Lin, 2012, p.177)

Cold War epistemology acts as a “structure of sentiment” from which East Asian former colonial subjects, now Cold War subjects, understand themselves entangled with the imperial Western power embodied by the United States.

The Cold War was a period of international conflict in the scramble for control over former European colonies. For many of these former colonies, such as in Southeast Asia, the former colonial power was quickly replaced with an imperial American power. Instead of rejecting Cold War imperialism (United States), the colonized subject projects itself onto the United States: “If we wish to honestly understand the subjectivity of the self in East Asia, we have to recognize that the United States has not merely defined our identities but has become deeply embedded within our subjectivity.” (Chen, 2010, p. 178). The seniors embrace the RVN flag which to them symbolizes freedom, independence, and human rights as core to Vietnamese heritage. Yet, as Chen points out, it is the American imperial ideas of freedom, independence, and human rights that they subscribe to: “The emergence of America as the dominant symbol of the modern had to do with its image as liberator in East Asia and elsewhere” (2010, p.180). This logic is a Cold War legacy as freedom here was equated with democracy in the global fight against communism. These Vietnamese seniors have the lived experience of the violent war against North Vietnam which was a struggle to continue their way of life. At the same time, the

international Cold War discourse might have also conditioned their imagination of freedom. During the Cold War, imperial America depicted the South Vietnamese struggle as similar to their own pre-confederation fight for independence from Great Britain leading Ronald Reagan to famously confer the term freedom fighter onto the South Vietnamese (Price, 2011). As these seniors were fleeing the communist takeover of Vietnam, American militarized slogans of freedom and democracy became their object of identification almost overnight, since they were losing their familiar Vietnam including their status and material privileges, which was their previous grounding of identity.

As highlighted in chapter 5, the Vietnamese diaspora's identification with the freedom fighter label given to them by the Americans exemplifies this, over 40 years after the end of the war in Vietnam. They imagine themselves as political exiles who fought the communists for freedom, human rights, and democracy in Vietnam, and lost, thus they are refugees of communists: "We are *tị nạn cộng sản* (refugees of communism). The symbol of the *tị nạn cộng sản* is the yellow flag" (SBTNOfficial, 2015, translated from Vietnamese by the author). This structure of sentiment conditions the subject formation of the Vietnamese seniors but does little to assist them in coming to terms with their present challenges in negotiating the community identity, as

The colonized, like other subaltern subjects who are in the process of self-recovery... are seeking self-identification and self-affirmation. But until the structure breaks down, the object of identification for the subaltern subjects is always bound up with the subject in power...and the result is the reproduction and strengthening of the structure or regime. (Chen, 2010, p. 95)

The senior Vietnamese imagine themselves as different and distinct from the North Vietnamese

communists they had fought in the war, who they imagine are now the rulers of socialist Vietnam today. As they define themselves against this group, their subject formation is entangled with their object of identification. During the period of the Cold War, it was the Americanized forms of freedom, human rights, and democracy that became ingrained in the seniors' subject formation. In today's context in Canada, the seniors' subjectivity as Cold War anti-communists and freedom fighters which developed from an American influence now has a nuanced development in response to Canada's multiculturalism.

The way the seniors express their passion for their Vietnam, imagined as a lost country where the diaspora is all that remains of Free Vietnam, is constituted by the dominant discourse both nationally and internationally. The production of dominant discourses of Cold War identities intersecting with neoliberal multiculturalism were loudly promoted at the national and community sites of identity formation. The production of these discourses then becomes the lens through which to understand the Vietnamese community, and also the frame from which they are allowed to articulate their needs and desires. To Canada, the seniors are "compositional subjects" (Kang, 2002; Kim, 2010) who are, "At once a geopolitical structuring, an ideological writing, and a cultural imagining" (Kim, 2010, p.11). Due to the multiple ideological conditionings, the Vietnamese as Cold War neoliberal multicultural subjects are "compositional subjects" and can only be rendered "visible" and "intelligible" in Canada through an understanding of the Cold War. Within the same timespan that this event transpired, parallel political activities that construct Canada's national identity formation also took place, namely the controversial debating and passing of the "Journey to Freedom Day Act" and the equally controversial proposal for the national Memorial to Victims of Communism. These political activities produce the Vietnamese identity within the Cold War structure of communist vs.

anticommunist and have had a deep and influential impact on the Vietnamese diaspora's entanglements with one another.

To the seniors, their Vietnam no longer exists, thus the education of their Vietnam – its heritage, tradition, and culture embodied by the RVN flag – must be persistently transmitted so as not to lose itself:

We need to remember our country, why we are here. This flag shows that we are here for freedom... This is Vietnamese Agency, we didn't have the flag, and we didn't have the national anthem or the flag raising... That is very hurtful to us. We lost our assets, all sorts to leave our country, now we are losing our freedom to even raise our flag and our song. We need to educate our youth, why we are here, we need them to understand where they are from. (female senior, community meeting, October 3, 2014, translated from Vietnamese by the author)

This diaspora, now represented by the seniors in Toronto, is imagined to be those Vietnamese who believed in and fought for independence, freedom, and human rights. The people who stayed on in Vietnam following 1975 are then imagined as either the enemy (communists) or victims. Yet, to equate the Vietnamese heritage, tradition, and culture with the “Free Vietnam” that these seniors are defending, is to state that these seniors represent the Vietnamese diaspora in Toronto, in Canada, and internationally, and are the true Vietnamese as defenders of Vietnamese heritage, tradition, and culture.

If a Free Vietnam is the core heritage, tradition, and culture of the Vietnamese, then those who identify as the Free Vietnamese are the true Vietnamese. What is left in the current state of Vietnam today, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, is not the true Vietnam, but a new, post-war

Vietnam, post-Cold War communist entity from which the true Vietnamese fled. This speaks clearly to why the yellow flag symbolizes the Vietnamese “heritage” and “tradition” of freedom. The seniors believed that they escaped Vietnam for “freedom”, that’s why they are here and where they were from. As such, freedom becomes their “heritage” or “tradition”. Additionally, to the seniors, needing the youth to uphold the flag is not just about freedom or anti-communism, but about needing the youth to remember the hardship they went through and to remember their “roots” which is conflated here with “heritage”. For if the youth do not uphold the flag (which symbolizes the hardship that the seniors experienced), the seniors, their sacrifice and the respect and recognition they expect, will also be forgotten. That makes it very hurtful to them. Their need to be remembered, recognized and respected by the younger generation is coded in the rhetoric of anti-communism. This is the “cultural” transmission they want to impart on the young, to remember the parents and for which to be grateful. This is their educating mission here in Canada.

This analysis speaks to the broader study of Vietnamese subjectivity. Espiritu (2014) highlights the effect of multiple marginalization of the Vietnamese American community that contribute to the prioritizing of subject positions in order to belong to the American nation. She argues that the official anti-communist position of the diaspora, far from being simply residual politics of the war in Vietnam, is the means by which the Vietnamese diaspora can be intelligible within the official American narrative of the Vietnamese War: “we need to recognize that this ‘anticommunist’ stance is also a narrative, adopted in part because it is the primary political language with which Vietnamese refugees, as objects of U.S. rescue fantasies, could tell their history and be understood from within the U.S. social and political landscape.” (Espiritu, 2014, p.96). That is, the subaltern can speak, and be heard, only within the dominant American (and

Canadian) discourse of freedom, independence, and human rights. As a productive praxis, this anticommunist stance provides Vietnamese Americans with an avenue for belonging to the American imperial order, “Constituted as existing on the other side of freedom, Vietnamese could only be incorporated into modern subject hood as the good refugee – that is, only when they reject the purported anti-democratic, anti-capitalist (and this anti-free) communist Vietnam and embrace the ‘free world’” (Espiritu, 2014, p.101). She adds, the commemorative practices of this community such as the raising and saluting of the RVN flag, a popular ritual for many of the Vietnamese diaspora in the U.S., “Occur not in a vacuum but at the intersection of familial, local, national, international, and transnational dynamics” (Espiritu, 2014, p. 20).

The Canadian political context for immigrants and refugees cannot be analyzed separately from its official multiculturalism policy, at once a tool of knowledge production about Canada, its founding myth, and its racial subjects. While this community negotiates their subjectivity, the limits from dominant nation-building structures go uncontested. Multiculturalism has been a powerful tool in the making of Canadian national identity, constituted by this Vietnamese community, as it has allowed Canada to repeatedly reiterate itself as a benevolent saviour, a democracy fighting against communism within the colonial imagination: “The rhetoric of multiculturalism inherits its colonial categories that divide a population along the dominant axes of race and ethnicity, covering up the privilege position of the subject of articulation, and excluding other cultural differences such as class, gender, and sexuality.” (Chen, 2010, p.98).

During the same time period as this critical event, the controversial debating and passing of the Journey to Freedom Day Act occurred in parallel, which arguably reinforced the making of Canada and the erasure of the war in Vietnam, as traced in the preceding chapter (Ngô, 2016).

As early as 2008, then Minister of Immigration and Citizenship and Multiculturalism, Jason Kenney, publicly proclaimed at Vietnamese diasporic events that the RVN flag is the symbol of the Vietnamese Canadian community.

Marked as the “Vietnamese Heritage and Freedom Flag” the RVN flag has risen in prominence as officially accepted by the Canadian government and imposed as the symbol of the Vietnamese community in Canada. As a “heritage” flag, the RVN flag, which is representative of one side of the war in Vietnam, becomes neutralized and void of political significance. This is the work of multiculturalism: a heavily politicized symbol such as a flag can be cleansed of any political significance and rebranded as “heritage, tradition, and culture” of a particular “special interest” group. These political actions that encourage a particular Vietnamese identity within the Cold War structure of communist vs. anticommunist have had a deep and influential impact on the Vietnamese diaspora’s entanglements with one another. This is the rewriting of the RVN flag by Canadian multiculturalism, and yet for the seniors, this flag is not apolitical. In fact, it is very political for them as it represents the loss of their country.

The identity of the Vietnamese diaspora, as supported by the Canadian state, was brought up by participants throughout the critical event as a justification for the validity of the seniors’ position. Minister Kenney and Conservative Senator Thanh Hai Ngô, the author of the “Journey to Freedom Day Bill” were repeatedly cited from the start of the conflict in the seniors’ *Letter of Distrust of Agency* to the very last open meeting of the old Board of Directors and the community. The seniors stated in their letter: “Today, the flag has been recognized by the Minister of Immigration and Citizenship and Multiculturalism of the government of Canada and Senator Ngô as an important symbol of independence, freedom, human rights, and strength of the community of Vietnamese refugees of communists in Canada.” (Nhóm Sống Vui Sống

Khỏe [*Live Happy, Live Well Group*], 2014, translated from Vietnamese by the author). At the community forums, participants were incredulous that Agency staff and the Board demonstrated a hesitation towards displaying the RVN flag: “Even Senator Ngô himself wears the flag, we are a small organization why can’t we have the flag?” (member, community meeting, October 3, 2014, translated from Vietnamese by the author).

As the conflict escalated outside of the Agency stakeholders into the larger Vietnamese community, Senator Ngô took to the Vietnamese Canadian listservs to admonish the Agency:

I am disappointed to hear that the Agency Board of Directors decided it will not honour the flag as a legitimate symbol for our community during an important holiday tradition. Refusing to display the flag for such unfounded reasons is a regrettable decision that affects the cultural events that give the flag it’s meaning. I hope that all Vietnamese-Canadian organizations will display the flag freely and without reservation at their upcoming Lantern Festival and at all future cultural events. (Ngô, 2015)

Staying close to the precepts of multiculturalism, Senator Ngô escapes possible censure and accusations of politicking by clarifying the display of the flag for “holiday tradition” and “cultural events”.

In 2009, an older email from Jason Kenney to the Whitehorse Heritage Festival Society regarding a similar disagreement on the display of the RVN flag was re-circulated on the community’s listserv. Here, the Minister used his federally elected position to add credence to his support of one particular part of the Vietnamese diaspora’s identity: “As a Member of Parliament and as the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism and I recognize the yellow flag with the three horizontal red stripes is a symbol of the Vietnamese community in

Canada.” (Kenney, 2009). Furthermore, Minister Kenney stated that an attack on the RVN flag as the symbol of the Vietnamese Canadian community is an attack on multiculturalism itself: “Our government recognizes the flag as an important symbol of the Vietnamese-Canadian community’s independence, strength, and belief in national unity and attempts to disparage it are a deeply troubling attack on one of Canada’s ethnic communities and on the principles of multiculturalism” (Kenney, 2009). Here, a heavily politicized symbol becomes cleansed of its historical and political baggage and constructed as cultural heritage through the discursive work of multiculturalism.

At the final open community meeting between the Agency’s Board of Directors and general members of the Vietnamese Toronto community, proponents of the display of the RVN flag immediately took up the words of Senator Ngô and Minister Kenney. A community member cited Senator Ngô’s email:

The Honourable Jason Kenney’s official letter in 2009 stated that Canada recognizes the Yellow Flag as a Heritage and Freedom flag symbolizing our Vietnamese community. Bill S-219, recognizes April 30 as ‘Journey to Freedom Day’ to commemorate the journey of many Vietnamese people to escape the communist regime. The bill is now in our Canadian law. (member, community meeting, Aug 21, 2015)

Another member stated: “You should know that on April 22nd, 2015, Bill S-219 was passed by the Canadian parliament and the Senate to recognize April 30 as “The Journey to Freedom Day” and we have the right to fly our heritage flag everywhere across Canada.” (member, community meeting, Aug 21, 2015). The passing of the Journey to Freedom Day Bill was a momentous act for the Vietnamese diaspora due to its high level of recognition received in Canada. The official

sanction of the political symbol of the RVN flag to represent Vietnamese heritage, tradition, and culture has pushed this issue beyond the confines of the Agency. For the Vietnamese community members present at this meeting, the “right” to fly the RVN flag is now required under the “Canadian law”.

In relation to Canada, the use of this RVN flag allows the older generation a sense of belonging to the nation. To the seniors, the flag is a political symbol of Vietnamese heritage and tradition and represents freedom, human rights, independence. Read through Cold War epistemology, the RVN flag that is thought to represent freedom, human rights, and independence, is conflated with Vietnamese culture. This subject position of democratic freedom fighter is legible to, and supported by, the Canadian state, which has actively made itself a democratic liberal state. This flag symbolizes the war in Vietnam, the history of the war, and the history of the Vietnamese as refugees, which implies the downgraded status of victims. This flag supports a distinct Vietnamese identity as survivors and refugee boat people in Canada. As this flag contributes to these particular distinctions of identity, it allows the older generation a place in Canada as refugees to the humanitarian refugee state, but never a place of belonging as true Canadians. With the flag, it is a conditional belonging, conditioned on the premise that the older generation have a place in the nation as anti-communist refugee boat people. The paradox is that as the older generation utilizes the discourse of multiculturalism to bolster their position in the community identity negotiation, they are strengthening this structure of power that enforces their conditional belonging to Canada.

In this conflict, the older generation cling to the multicultural tenets of celebration of heritage and diversity in an attempt to appeal to the younger generation. Dominant normative values and practices form the “true” Canadians against the “cultural” practices and values of

multicultural Others. Multiculturalism provides the grid and structure for the inclusion and regulation of difference from racialized groups and in doing so as an official discourse, delegitimizes values and practices outside of dominant norms as group culture or special interest groups. It is a framework that tolerates certain forms and degree of acceptable difference from racialized groups within a nation, as individual cultures upholding the dominant normative values of the nation. In his analysis of literary works Nguyễn stays close to the productive work of Vietnamese subjectivity, one of grateful refugees to the Canadian nation: “these narratives help to confirm liberal ideals of freedom, democracy, and equality. They function as proof of the inclusive, tolerant, and fundamentally non-racist constitution of the Canadian and American national space” (2013, p. 17). As the older generation upholds multiculturalism in their conflict of identity negotiation with the younger generation, they reaffirm this structure of power, one that ultimately bars them from belonging to the Canadian nation.

Younger Generation: Constructing the “Other’s” “Other”

The younger generation imagines the subject of the Vietnamese Canadian to be the idealized model minority (productive, successful, acculturated), different and distinct from the older “anti-communist” generation who they see as hanging onto homeland politics. This group did not live through the war and only consumed the war through the broken stories of their elders and through the dominant narrative of American heroism, which structure the Cold War discourse and Canadian rescue narratives. As the younger generation construct themselves differently from this group of senior “anti-communists” and reject the official narrative of the subjugated “Vietnamese boat people”, white, liberal, tolerant and inclusive Canada becomes

their object of identification to which they yearn to belong. To them, this belonging can only happen if Vietnamese Canadians let go of their “homeland politics”.

The younger generation in this conflict see the seniors as victims of the war in Vietnam who are unable to heal from the war,

Here’s a lot of hurt and pain the people are still holding onto from the war and because they feel I think they feel betrayed by us... [these] people in Canada escaped Vietnam...so that we would have to prove how Vietnam has done such a wrong to people and how we have to fight for freedom. (Participant #1).

Another participant spoke of how the seniors now suffer since they are unable to integrate into Canada, unable to let go of their past and are in what this participant calls a dream, “Because they keep to themselves in that, they don’t change, you know, everything changed in the world but they don’t change themselves, they want to keep themselves in that time, that, um, life dream” (Participant #6). In this conflict, the younger generation perceives the inability of the senior generation to “move past” the war in Vietnam and lingering sentiments as a significant barrier to progress and growth of the Agency and the larger Vietnamese Canadian community.

Seeing the seniors as victims of the past, the message is that these seniors must be educated of the Canadian multicultural way in order let go of their past and acculturate. The position of the younger generation in the critical conflict with the senior generation assumed the work of benevolent educator. Through emailed correspondences, open letters to the seniors, and at community meetings, the message was that the seniors needed to be educated on the democracy process, the laws in Canada, and the peaceful negotiation process. They spoke of the conflict and consequential dialogue as a “healing process” to the seniors (Agency leader, community meeting, October 3, 2014), based on the assumption that the seniors are working

from a place of pain and trauma not unlike the characterization of refugees in the media and dominant literature.

The younger generation only sees the seniors' fixation on Cold War identities of anti-communism. As such, they read the seniors' demands and deep attachments to the RVN flag as simply a resentment for having lost the war to Socialist Vietnam. From the perspective of educating the seniors, an Agency leader explained how she made sense of this explosive conflict with this group of people so close and beloved to the Agency: "But when we have a problem, when we have a conflict, we quickly contributed to the communist. We didn't really, didn't really want to sit down and to talk together how are we going to make peace and how are we doing to move forward." (Participant #4). Here the participant was speaking of the current community conflict and about the Vietnamese community as unable to reach a peaceful existence but rather externalize the blame to communism. This emphasis on peace and it being unreachable by the seniors becomes part of the younger generation's educating mission towards the seniors. Interestingly, education is also the seniors' mission towards the younger generation.

The seniors, through their anti-communist stance, mark themselves as democratic. Yet here, the younger generation state that they perceive the seniors as being undemocratic towards them,

Since they don't know democracy process, it's not that they are going to Cold War and when you win, when you go to war you have to win or if you lose you die... We are bending backwards trying to lift them up, they, it seems like they don't really know what is the peace process. Always prepared for war."

(Agency leader, community meeting, October 3, 2014)

This was spoken in English by a member of the younger generation towards the end of the community forum where a heated exchange resulted in many seniors walking out of the meeting. Here, by conjuring the Cold War, the younger generation is saying that the seniors who are so fixated on being anti-communist do not really understand democracy (and by extension, Canada). This inadvertently marks the seniors as the “Other” of Canada, while the younger generation who grew up in Canada have a better understanding of Canada and are ‘more’ Canadian – they understand the democracy process and the peace process. That’s why they can be in the position to educate and uplift the senior generation from their past fixed in the Cold War to more fully integrate into the Canadian mainstream society. As such, the Canadian-ness of the younger generation was established through the construction of the seniors as the “Other” of this democratic nation. This is a sad double-othering process reflective of the intergenerational tension in this community. The “Other” constructs their “Other” in their longing to be “Canadian”, rather than deconstructing the Self-making of white settler colonial Canada.

Within the speech analyzed above, the younger member positions herself in relation to the seniors and becomes the white Canadian subject to help lift up the uneducated Vietnamese seniors to better integrate into mainstream society by learning the proper “process” of mediating conflict. Further, the emphasis on the “peace” process relies on Canadian discourses of nation-building as a peaceful nation and an international peacekeeper. This national peacekeeper identity was so fervently pursued and upheld during the Cold War period as examined in chapter 2. Reading the seniors as uneducated, this speaker assumes they have not had direct experience with the “democracy process” and do not know how it operates. Read as victims, the seniors are traumatized victims, so they are “always prepared for war” thus they do not know peace and do not know when someone (the younger generation) is trying to help them. This speaker

understands the seniors as victims, who were formerly oppressed and need facilitation of their emerging skills to exercise their rights in a “peaceful and free nation”. She states, “I am happy the community is engaging in discussion and bringing about their capacity and right to pose questions within a democratic space. We have the right to speak and to hear. And this is an opportunity to exercise this right in a peaceful and free nation” (Agency leader, community meeting, October 3, 2014).

The younger generation read the seniors as Cold War subjects, contrasting themselves with this identity: the seniors are read as both traumatized by the lack of peace and democracy and also unwilling to move past the events of the war in Vietnam. As the seniors become Othered in the eyes of the younger generation, stuck in the past, unwilling and unable to integrate into the Canadian way of life, the Otherness of the senior generation constitutes the Canadian-ness of the younger generation. At the open community meeting, the younger generation, who form the majority of the Agency’s Board of Directors and staff, argued with the seniors that “the [RVN] flag works to divide this community”. A study participant further emphasized this position during the in-depth interview that was conducted during the same period and spoke directly of this conflict. The participant stated, “We want to tell others, I mean, other communities, other ethnic groups in Canada that we are here, we are present, we can contribute and are contributing to the social fabric of Canada and instead of working together to make that point, we keep tearing each other apart, criticizing each other because this event has a flag or no flag” (Participant #4). The tragedy seems to be that while the seniors tried desperately to connect to the younger generation by drawing them back to where they were from and why they were here (the reconstructed “tradition” or “heritage” so-to-speak in fleeing communism for “freedom”), the younger generation felt more distanced from them during this conflict, as they

only wanted the seniors and the Vietnamese community to move forward from the past (as symbolized by the yellow flag), and be “uplifted” in order to be integrated into the mainstream “inclusive” Canada.

Additionally, the younger generation sees the seniors as oppressors trying to exclude Vietnamese members on the basis of discrimination and if not checked, may even risk the agency’s funding and charitable status. This younger generation identifies with the Canadian social political climate that exhorts values of inclusivity, diversity, and tolerance. They write the mandate of the Agency in support of acculturation and the colonial myth of the good life in a developed country amidst global conflicts:

The Agency has a mandate to help all community members, whether displaced or transplanted such as Vietnamese refugees in the 1980s or Vietnamese recently immigrated ..., we provide services and programming which work towards the successful acculturation of newcomers and immigrants... to seek a better life in Canada. In this world of constant global conflicts and civil wars, a flag is a very political symbol, not just for the Vietnamese Canadians, but for many other groups as well. (VWAT Family Services, 2015^a)

This generation knows the senior generation as Cold War victims through the Canadian lens that views Vietnamese Canadians as poor, boat people refugees and losers in the narrative of the war in Vietnam. They resist these identities and work to achieve belonging into Canada through the Vietnamese Canadian identity of progressive and successful migrants.

Throughout the conflict, the younger generation urge the seniors to “let go” of the past, in order for the Agency and the Vietnamese community to “reach our common goal as we all want to have a strong Vietnamese community, proud to walk along side with other ethnic groups in

order to contribute to our new country Canada” (VWAT Family Services, 2015^a). Further, in addressing the relation between the senior and the younger generation, “We invite members to support our youth with an open heart and allow youth to get to know their ethnic cultural background and be proud of their heritage without being pulled into the historical and political division of Vietnam.” (VWAT Family Services, 2015^a). The existing Vietnamese community, the current one in conflict, is one that the younger generation is not proud of as it is not a contributing member of Canada’s ethnic groups. Here, the dominant expectation of ethnic groups contributing to Canada only after they have resisted being “pulled back” by their past histories and political claims, is unchallenged and even strengthened by this position. When the war is dismissed, Canada’s implication in this war and in the community division also become invisible and remain unexamined. From this position, the seniors are to blame, not the Canadian state that produces and sustains the Vietnamese subject as “war victims”, “freedom fighters”, and “refugees”.

Commonly citing the threat to the Agency’s viability as coming from state funding bodies within an economic climate of defunding of ethnocultural organizations, special interest groups, and their activities, the younger generation look to address that threat from inside the community. The younger generation imagines this can be achieved by bringing the senior generation into their line of thinking, embracing Canadian multiculturalism which they state means political neutrality, care and concern for the welfare of those Vietnamese in Canada and not Vietnam, inclusivity, and unity: “A portion of newcomers are not comfortable with the Freedom and Heritage flag and compromising their perspective to fit the dominant boat people perspective maybe viewed as problematic by funders” (VWAT Family Services, 2015^c). The assumption here is that the seniors’ fervent hold onto and demands for the display of the RVN

flag is inherently divisive and discriminatory: “Although we are cognizant of the significance of the Vietnamese heritage flag, there is a potential that it may be perceived and interpreted as a political statement thereby possibly alienating and excluding those individuals who identify as Vietnamese but not necessarily with the Vietnamese Heritage flag” (VWAT Family Services, 2015^b). Underlying the message of safe spaces and anti-discrimination is the assumption that the seniors need to be educated on anti-racism, Canadian laws including human rights, and inclusivity which is described as part of the “Canadian culture”. This is parallel to the constructed “core Canadian values” as being “freedom, liberty, human rights, and the rule of law” within the national debates on the *Memorial to Victims of Communism*. Interestingly, while the threat to a strong Vietnamese community has been identified as state austerity and a frayed social safety net, the blame for a subjugated Agency and community is the seniors, and not oppressive state policies, thus the target of intervention is on the acculturation of the senior generation.

The younger generation believes that the use of the RVN flag impedes their belonging to Canada. They see the flag as a political symbol of the war in Vietnam and is incompatible to “Canadian” values of inclusion, racial and cultural tolerance, and anti-discrimination. Therefore, they reject the use of the RVN flag as a symbol of their identity but in doing so, they reject this particular part of the history of Vietnam and the Vietnamese part of themselves. By rejecting distinctive characteristics of Vietnamese Canadians and enforcing a homogenous “de-ethnicized” Vietnamese identity that fits into “mainstream” society, they are inadvertently supporting the dominant discourse of the idealized Canadian (inclusive, tolerant, peaceful), an identity that they ultimately cannot belong to due to race.

Canadian policies used to bolster these identity negotiations at this site of conflict contradict one another. The younger generation relies on policies of social service (anti-discrimination, inclusivity, political neutrality). The Agency's latest annual report consisted of a regular message from the Board which reads as the Agency's determination to move away from the past. The younger generation urges the seniors to adapt a "vision, mission and strategic plan [that] must strongly highlight Agency as settlement and community building Agency, not a cultural centre [sic], to ensure continued eligibility for current funding and a broad range of future funding." (Old Board recommendations to new Board, October 16, 2015). The message conveys ideas of moving forward and a higher achievement of success which privileges settlement, integration, and adaptation. The predicted outcome for the Agency's clients and communities is to grow and succeed in acculturation with pride in contributing to Canada.

For my last area of data analysis, the critical conflict of an Agency in Toronto, I will switch my focus from the tension between the senior and younger generation, to the tension between this Agency itself and the wider Vietnamese Canadian community. Here I will consider how gender showed up in this conflict and how patriarchy was mobilized to chastise and discipline this Agency.

The gendered hierarchy of the Agency made these series of events possible where this Agency, a women's Agency, was found to be remiss of its duty and responsibility to uphold the tradition of the diaspora and was subsequently punished. Throughout the conflict, this duty and responsibility to uphold the tradition of the diaspora was not resisted by either generation. What was debated was whether the RVN flag represented the tradition and heritage of Vietnamese Canadians. The role of women remained unchallenged. The older generation speaks passionately of the Agency's duty to educate the younger generation of the political standpoint and mission of

the community of refugees. Importantly, this is a gendered duty as one of the seniors' chief complaints (Nhóm Sống Vui Sống Khỏe [*Live Happy, Live Well Group*], 2014) of the Agency leadership is its failure in its duty to generate this education.

In the letter's second accusation "Agency is failing in its duty to promote Vietnamese culture", the target of this accusation is the Executive Director, referred to as "Madam" Executive Director, a person whose female gender and age category should have conferred her adequate knowledge and history of the war in Vietnam to ensure that she understands the need to transmit Vietnamese culture and tradition to the younger "inheriting" generation. In the open community meeting, a senior woman targeted the Executive Director (ED). She angrily demanded,

I know you are all younger, but [ED] you are not young, and even the younger ones can speak Vietnamese but why do you speak English together? And use English in flyers. You need to hire people who speak Vietnamese, do not hire people from other countries, need to hire people who are refugees themselves so that they understand the feelings of those other refugees I'm so angry!

(member, community meeting, October 3, 2014, translated from Vietnamese by the author)

In this senior woman's eyes, the ignorance of the younger generation related to the display of the RVN flag is allowed and tolerated, but for the ED, on account of her age group, it is not. The language spoken, and the languages hired for, are also indicative of the failure of the Agency to translate the knowledge and tradition of the seniors' Vietnam to the younger generation and to the community. Finally, the need to have someone who mirrors the lingering sentiment of

refugee subjectivity is also seen as very important. But this exchange occurs within the larger context of a gendered hierarchy of formal Vietnamese organizations in the diaspora.

Recent studies on diasporas articulate a community caught in layers of marginalization. Duong and Pelaud (2012) reflect on a recent clash with Vietnamese American anticommunist protestors in California when the authors curated a display of Vietnamese arts from current day Vietnam. They highlighted the gendered tension within the patriarchal imagination of the Vietnamese organizations that is envisioned as a family unit, leaving the female gender in a subjugated position. They stated that while male transgressors of the official anti-communist identity of the Vietnamese American community were also strongly critiqued, the backlash against these authors as women “pivoted on our symbolic roles as dutiful daughters of the community. As women, we had betrayed the ideal of Vietnamese diasporic womanhood, our loyalties tainted by our collaboration with Vietnamese artists whose work was deemed offensive to an anticommunist community.” (Duong and Pelaud, 2012, p.247)

Duong and Pelaud positioned themselves as insiders yet outsiders to the diaspora and reflected that the ideal of the “*cộng đồng*” or community as a family unit as problematic:

It assumes that the spaces of the family and community are always safe and that members need to prove their filially to the communal family. As a result of these dynamics, a ‘paternal hierarchy’ of power, in which gender inequalities are reproduced, becomes sanctioned and normalized within community politics. (2012, p.248)

The exchanges in this critical incident of the Vietnamese community in Toronto is both to remind the younger generation of the tradition and culture of Vietnam, but also to remind the women of their role in upholding their duty and responsibility as mothers of culture and tradition.

In her celebrated text, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Spivak articulates: “Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the ‘third-world woman’ caught between tradition and modernization” (1994, p.102). Indeed, it is this Agency, which is the only one in Canada that specifically targets Vietnamese Canadian women as a client group, that is tasked with the preservation and transmission of Vietnamese tradition and culture. This is also what the senior and young generations are caught in during the conflict: “tradition” for the seniors and “integration” for the young generation as both a means of becoming legible and aligned with Canadian national identity. Yet, due to the gendered nature of the helping profession and social services, the young women who lead and staff this Agency also represent the future care for this community.

As Vietnamese women whose role it is to transmit the culture, tradition, and teachings of their Vietnam to the younger generation, these seniors have tasked the younger generation the duty of upholding what they deem are the traditions and culture of their South Vietnam in this diaspora that is imagined as the authentic Vietnamese culture. In this critical event, the wide and severe punishment of this Agency for its failure to fulfill the maternal role of transmitting the tradition and culture of this diaspora was the public chastisement from a sitting senator, the public boycott of the Agency, the media broadcasting of the Agency’s conflict, and finally the eventual removal of the Agency’s entire leadership. In the negotiation of identity between the senior and younger generations, this role of transmitting the tradition is not disputed and the outcome of this conflict, the removal of the Agency’s leadership, leaves the gendered hierarchy in the Agency unchallenged, if not strengthened.

Summary

The work of the state is both capillary and diffuse in struggles for recognition among immigrant groups. Goldberg articulates this duality of the state acting upon immigrant groups but also through the groups: “There is a deep tension here between the state as a set of institutions representative of specific political interests, or a site around which the struggle for such political representation takes place” (2002, p.237). Here, the state acts upon the Vietnamese diaspora by holding access to material resources but also through it as the diaspora negotiate and reproduce its subjectivity.

As the Vietnamese work to gain official recognition, they are working within the discourse in which their subjectivity is produced to the service of the state. Chen’s Cold War epistemology theorizes the structure of sentiment, “the subaltern subject can easily be locked within a single structure, noticing only the existence of the opponent and indulging in struggles internal to that structure, never stepping out of the structure to see the existence of other subaltern subjects.” (2010, p. 96). As such, structures of power that condition the unraveling of this conflict between the senior and younger generation remain invisible, unchallenged, and at times even strengthened. As they negotiate their identities, both sides are utilizing current Canadian policies to bolster their positions. Discourses and messages from the Journey to Freedom Day Bill and the Memorial to Victims of Communism debates are dropped into the conflict even without the awareness of the participants. As such, Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity, as Cold War neoliberal multicultural subject, is elucidated by this conflict. The compositional nature of their subjectivity – what renders them legible and intelligible to Canada – is defended by both sides of the conflict, as both negotiate their belonging to Canada via different faces of Canadian multiculturalism. While this conflict impacts identity negotiation,

figurations of belonging, and subject formation, this community remains divided and continues to struggle while the dominant state policies and structures are upheld. Ultimately, while the older generation press for a distinct identity with which to belong to an imagined Canada, they cannot belong to white Canada. And while the younger generation press to distance themselves from the past and support the national discourse of a race neutral Canada, they strengthen this discourse of race that bars them from belonging.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Throughout this dissertation, I have shown how the simple postcolonial adage “we are here because you were there” is laden with multifaceted operations of power and responsibility but also contains a multitude of possibilities. Instead of a direct causal relationship, Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity is intimately intertwined with Canada’s national identity building, both past and present. In answering my research question, “What are the socio-political conditions of community conflicts within the Vietnamese community and how are these conflicts related to the processes of Canadian national identity formation?” I found that Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity is produced and sustained by Canada’s national identity formation. The production and sustainment of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity as a Cold War neoliberal multicultural subject reveals the racial capitalist democracy logic of Canadian national identity as free, democratic, humanitarian, benevolent, and peace-keeping. I showed this through a discourse analysis of the different sites of negotiation: the national debate on the Memorial to Victims of Communism captured in media texts; the community site narrative of the April 30th, 1975 “Fall of Saigon” and the “Journey to Freedom Day”; and in the local dynamics of identity negotiation between two generations of the Toronto Vietnamese community. These mutually informing sites produce discourses that collude, but also at times collide with one another.

This study makes significant practical and theoretical contributions. It challenges the existing discourses of Canadian national identity formation. Specifically, it reveals the lingering Cold War logics in Canadian immigration discourse and the sustained colonial entanglements between immigrants and Canada. It unsettles Canada’s narrative of a benevolent refugee haven and unpacks the complex mutually sustaining relations of the state and subject-making. It points

to the broader Canadian historical, social, and political processes from colonial continuities, international Cold War entanglements which centers American imperialism, and Canada's economic ambitions towards Southeast Asia. I reiterate the critical works that implicate Canada as part of the Cold War complex by historically tracing Canada's involvement in the Cold War, to the Vietnam War, and entangling this history with current national identity building projects. Indeed, Canada played and continues to play a significant role in the Cold War complex. This historical tracing started with the Cold War to the recent signing of the Comprehensive and Progressive Transpacific Trade Partnership (2018) is also a tracing of the continuation of Canada's racial capitalist project from colonialism to present day. The Vietnamese Canadians themselves are also implicated as their own subjectivity, produced and sustained within pre-conceived historical and political conditions of knowing, in turn then constructs and upholds Canadian national identity. These conditions of knowing are embedded in the challenges faced by this immigrant community.

Yến Lê Espiritu has long challenged us to complicate the possible narratives for the Vietnamese refugees. The Vietnamese are one of the most researched and documented refugee groups in North America, yet they are rarely allowed to occupy subjectivities beyond victims and/or aggressors of a war. In her recent work, Espiritu challenges us to account for how refugees are subjects of their own meaning-making

The messiness, contingency, and precarious nature of refugee life means that refugees, like all people, are beset by contradiction: neither damaged victims nor model minorities, they – their stories, actions, and inactions – simultaneously trouble and affirm regimes of power. (2014, p. 2)

This study takes up Espiritu's challenge as it centers Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity and the consideration of the community's wellbeing while complicating their subjectivity as both troubling and reaffirming structures of power by tracing it in relation to Canada's national identity building.

The contributions of this study inform our social work practice and knowledge production of immigrants in Canada. First, my research challenges current state practices and policies with refugees which may undergird the barriers these groups experience in community building and development. In the delivery of state resettlement programs, it calls into question the expectation of newcomer groups to come "baggage free" in order to join this "multicultural family" in Canada embedded within immigration integration programs. By highlighting this tension, this study implicates social work in regard to its knowledge production about the Vietnamese community, and calls attention to the importance of unpacking the historically and larger socio-political contexts the Vietnamese community and other immigrant/refugee communities brought with them and continue to be reproduced and sustained by the Canadian state when we serve these communities. This work of unpacking is indeed challenging, and the path is rarely clear. Yet, if we are to work with communities, we need to understand the sociopolitical context in which a community has formed in Canada, but also utilize this knowledge in our work in alliance building, both within and between groups. Community coalition and capacity building must be informed by the complicated understanding of power relations that form the conditions for conflict in this community. This study reveals the heterogeneity of an immigrant group and the marginalization of voices within this community. This analysis of the intra-group conflicts within the Vietnamese community may be extended to our understanding of barriers of alliance building between racialized groups as it reveals the

broader sociopolitical processes and colonial entanglements that are embedded in the challenges faced by immigrant communities.

Secondly, an empirical grounding and focus on Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity expands theorization in immigrant and postcolonial studies from the perspective of the Southeast Asian diaspora, especially with regards to Cold War epistemology that governs the mutually sustaining relations between immigrant communities and the Canadian state. Through this study, my theoretical contribution is to insert Cold War epistemology into current discussions of racial capitalism and multiculturalism. By unpacking the making of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity, I showed that this group is racialized within a Cold War knowledge project. Through their racialization as anti-communist freedom fighters, Vietnamese Canadians are enfolded into the Canadian multicultural mosaic in a very productive way. This subjectivity is used to both bolster Canada's self-narrative as a peacekeeper and refugee haven, a narrative that has traces of white settler colonialism and one that masks both the historical and contemporary violence towards Indigenous and racialized persons in Canada.

Additionally, Cold War epistemology, in particular Kuan Hsing Chen's (2010) work on decolonization, provides a framework from which to critique the long-held dominance of Western democracy. While I would not suggest my work offers significant challenge to this dominance, my tracing of Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity points to the problematic superiority of Western democracy by showing its close relationship to the American imperial conceptualization and use of freedom. This American imperial freedom that marks the Vietnamese as "freedom fighters" during the Cold War and has lingering impacts on their subjectivity today, is very much conflated with capitalism. Thus, Canadian national identity constructs Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity as productive, a productivity that is desirable

because it provides an opening for Canadian capitalist ventures into Vietnam. In other words, Canada becomes a partner to the diasporic community bringing democratic freedom, via trade, to socialist Vietnam. This study moved through the different data sites using discourse analysis to trace the power embedded within everyday talk and text.

In this study, I first expanded on the robust critiques of the literature on refugee settlement and integration to trace how Vietnamese Canadians *must* be know-able through their refugeeeness in order to support a Canadian national identity that is premised on lingering Cold War identities. Rather than being “strangers at the gate” (Beiser, 1999), the common figure of the bedraggled refugee who appeared out of nowhere, Vietnamese refugees are presented as known figures, discursively constructed and Othered by the Canadian liberal narrative. The construction of Canada’s national identity relies on a Cold War era narrative that represents the Canadian nation as liberal democratic peacekeepers. I used Cold War epistemology to expand on a postcolonial framework in order to include the perspectives of Asia and Southeast Asia. Cold War epistemology here offered an analytical lens to tracing the construction of Vietnamese Canadians’ as the anti-communist freedom fighters and the simultaneous productivity of this construction to national identity. At the same time, this construction of the anti-communist freedom fighter works well for some of the Vietnamese Canadians who do continue to identify as political exiles from the civil war in Vietnam which ended in 1975. For this research, Cold War epistemology centered the historically mediated entanglements between Canada and Vietnamese Canadians.

I analyzed the co-constitution of Vietnamese Canadians to the state that emphasized the Cold War and unpacked Canada’s hidden involvement and complicity in the Vietnam War. It allowed me to articulate how the intragroup relations and community conflicts within the

Vietnamese community are produced by the state-sanctioned discourse of the Vietnamese subject as informed by Cold War ideology. It also explained the active participation of Vietnamese Canadians in constructing themselves politically in line with the nation-building project at the expense of their fellow community members. But much rather like Canada's Cold War identity of championing freedom, justice, and liberty against oppression, tyranny, and evil, Canada as the 'land of refuge' is also an identity nurtured throughout the Cold War which continues to shape how this nation imagines itself.

My use of Cold War epistemology allows me to theorize three nation-building processes in my analysis of subject formation. The first process is the limited structuring of individual and group sentiment. Here, identity, subjectivity, imaginaries and desires are limited or bound by the structured politics of the Cold War. The Cold War is theorized as having interrupted the processes of decolonization. The colonizer and colonized are therefore locked in a fixed identification process. Thus, the sentiments of resentment and desire are entangled and are difficult to break out of. The second process is the understanding of how individuals and groups can be legible and intelligible to the state as "compositional subjects" (Kang, 2002; Kim, 2010, p. 11). Due to this ideological conditioning, the Vietnamese (as anticommunist) are "compositional subjects" which can only be "visible" and "intelligible" in Canada through an understanding of the Cold War. This concept of composition allows for the tracing of social, historical and political conditions that pose identities as particular objects and subjects of consciousness and knowledge. Following the Foucauldian use of compositions, it is the tracing of "terms and conditions by which objects have been rendered legible, visible, and intelligible" (Kang, 2002, p.17). The third and final process suggests that Cold War epistemology unsettles the hegemony of the West as a military power. Western imperialism in East and Southeast Asia

has largely been exercised in the name of “containing communism” as the physical and ideological threat to neoliberal democracy. Cold War epistemology demonstrates that this Cold War discourse goes beyond a historical event and has seeped into the psyche of the Western colonizer and Asian subjects. It reveals the invisible Cold War logics operating in state policies towards immigrants and Asian communities. I also juxtaposed the Cold War as a knowledge project on the theoretical lens of racial capitalism and multiculturalism to fully capture Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity.

I engaged with the literature on racial capitalism that expands on race-based critiques of multiculturalism by pointing to the neoliberal function of this race-based technology, key to Canadian white settler dominance. Multiculturalism in Canada serves two functions: first, it is an official policy which dictates how Canada’s Others are to be dealt with in prescribing the practices and policies in which these Others are subjects; secondly, it is also a lens in which to view and produce Canada’s Other, thereby producing Canada’s Self. It has long been critiqued as a racist policy which hides and disavows its function as a governing technology of racial exclusion behind liberal exaltations of diversity, heritage, and culture. Multiculturalism worked to recast a political symbol, the former Republic of Vietnam’s flag, into something positive and benign, a symbol of heritage. Yet, that is just one part of the picture. Vietnamese Canadians’ identity conflict is useful and productive to the Canadian national identity project as this diaspora is enlisted in Canada’s global expansion ambitions.

Racial capitalism explores how capitalism operates and relies on the organizing structure of race. As capitalism requires the accumulation of excess, it depends on systems of inequity that allows the hyper-accumulation by one entity resulting in the hyper-extraction from another. The inequities of race and of capitalism become fused to reproduce one another. This study nuanced

this by tracing how it is that Vietnamese Canadians become incorporated into Canada's identity building project as a particular raced subject based on the frames of reference and structures of sentiment derived from the Cold War as a project of knowing. The Vietnamese Canadians' anti-communist identity made them a perfect partner to Canada's nation-building based on neoliberal discourse of liberty, freedom, and democracy hiding its fervent capitalism. The Vietnamese diaspora's "dream" of "restoring" democracy to socialist Vietnam played right alongside Canada's neoliberal dream of global capital expansion. In this unnatural pairing, the former's dream of bringing democracy to Vietnam requires the latter's bringing of trade to Vietnam to "open its doors".

In addressing observed community conflicts that negatively impact individual and community health on the ground, I conducted a critical ethnography and discourse analysis of Vietnamese identity formation and subsequent intra-community entanglements showing how they are both influenced by and influencing the Canadian national identity narrative. I focused on everyday interactions within the local Vietnamese community as related to state activities to unpack a Cold War logic embedded in Canada's immigrant policy and practices, and the resulting effect on the well-being of the community. While separate, these events are related to one another and together form a certain discourse or knowledge about the Vietnamese subjectivity in Canada.

I collected data over 12 months which includes: recordings of community events, meetings, community listservs, celebrations and parliamentary debates around the passing of a Bill. The first was the proposed National Memorial to Victims of Communism, a project that began in 2008 and is still ongoing, with much controversy and debate around the meaning of such a memorial. The second site focused on the marking of the anniversary of April 30th, the

“Fall of Saigon” through both community initiatives and official policy. I captured the local community debates as the Vietnamese diaspora commemorates the anniversary via a full day annual event. In 2015, the Canadian parliament commemorated the day with the now passed national commemorative day bill, entitled the Journey to Freedom Day Act, that recognizes the acceptance of Indochinese refugees into Canada in the late 1970s and early 80s. I analyzed parliamentary debates to trace what discourses are constructed and sustained about the Vietnamese and Canada. The last site of data collection is the local Toronto Vietnamese community. In 2014, the leadership of a local agency was under fire – first from its membership and then later from the larger community – for refusing to display the flag of South Vietnam at its events. After 12 months of intense conflict, heated community meetings, and accusatory open letters circulated throughout the national diaspora, the leadership of this agency was entirely replaced. Throughout this time period, I conducted 16 in-depth interviews in both Vietnamese and in English, attended and analyzed community open forums; analyzed circulated open letters by the Vietnamese in Toronto, reports by the Vietnamese and English media, and media generated by the public such as YouTube videos. This data allowed me to trace the subject-positions made possible within and between these sites to explore sociopolitical, historical discourses and their influence on the production of subjectivity. This is not the end of the story as my study left out an important consideration.

One of the regimes of power that I was unable to fully engage with due to the limitations of the dissertation is settler colonialism in its current context. While I did trace the Canadian national identity project as rooted within colonial white settlerhood, I was unable to do more. My study dipped into this important body of literature, particularly the role of Asians as a group of raced settlers. Iyko Day highlights this in her critique of the binaristic lens of settler-Indigenous.

She does so by triangulating the role of “Alien Others” in settler colonialism: “While scholarship on the settler-Indigenous dialectic has been tremendously valuable, it often falls short of clarifying the role that nonwhite migration plays within such a framework or how it intersects with other aspects of white supremacy.” (Day, 2016, p.19). Asian migrants, many of whom were involuntarily incorporated historically into the settler colonial structure as indentured labourers, or in contemporary events arrive as displaced persons and migrant workers, are inevitably complicit in the colonial project. Jodi Byrd refers to this racialized group as “arrivants” to attempt to capture the complexity of their role in the ongoing colonialism of Indigenous land (Byrd, 2011). Vietnamese Canadians are a particular group of “arrivants” and an analysis of their subjectivity through a settler colonial lens would be very rich. It would also point to future directions for work on alliance building across groups.

This research has been a journey for me. I moved from being an outsider to the Vietnamese community, to the valued insider when I used my Canadian education to ‘help’ the community, to again being an outsider. In the midst of private family silences around the war and the refugee period, community members – the elders who participated in my interviews and shared their personal stories – have filled that role of educating and sharing that I personally craved. My subjectivity is embedded within that of my participants, my community. I now feel responsible for these stories, and the weight of being the ‘next generation’ to continue and carry on the stories of the older generation. The focus is not on the community conflicts but rather on how structures of power conditioned, enabled, sustained, reproduced, and reaffirmed these conflicts. Conversely, I traced what structures of power *were* sustained, reproduced, and reaffirmed *by* these conflicts. My work was not simply trying to make meaning from my

participants' narratives, but more importantly, tracing those narratives to processes and relations of power in the Canadian context.

This study was but a snapshot into the complex community dynamics and national identity building. The living discourse continues to evolve in response to current events. For Vietnamese Canadians, the aging of the original refugee cohort has a significant impact on the shifting subjectivity. For Canada, which recently signed onto the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (a free trade agreement between Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam), the national identity project as an investment into material power continues. As for the elderly woman described in my introductory vignette from the 2015 Journey to Freedom Day celebration in Ottawa, I thank her for serving as community critic in my imagination. She stayed in the periphery of my mind as the representative of my Vietnamese Canadian community. I always wondered what she would think of my work as I attempted to fully and richly, but critically, narrate the phenomenon of Vietnamese Canadians in relation to Canada.

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Appendix A: Semi-structured Interview Guide

Introduction/Preamble

*Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview
This interview will be audio taped to facilitate transcriptions of your responses
Before we start this interview, I want to explain a little more about the project and this interview*

Review the informed consent and seek written consent for audio taping and use of the data
I expect that this interview will be about 60 to 90 minutes

Before beginning the interview distribute honoraria to the participant in an envelope with a thank you card

Any questions regarding the process or the project before we get started?

Focusing points:

**Keep in mind types of questions: introducing, follow-up, probing, specifying, direct, indirect, structuring, silence, and interpreting* (Kvale, 1996, p. 133)*

1. Purpose of community events

- *Why did you attend/not attend this event?*
- *Why do you think it is regularly hosted and attended each year?*
- *Are these events welcoming to all? In what ways?*

2. Community representation at events

- *Do you think many people regularly attend X event?*
- *Do you know of people who do not like X event? Vietnamese community events in general?*
- *Who did you see are the main groups at X event? Which groups do you think were missing?*

3. Community identity

- *If we asked anyone off the street what they thought the Vietnamese were like, what do you think they would say?*
- *How do you think the Vietnamese community is fitting into Canada?*

4. Displays and demonstrations of identity

- *How did you like the decorations/booths in attendance/staging of displays of culture?*
- *What do you think these displays are trying to show?*
- *Are these displays accurate to showing who the Vietnamese are in Canada?*
- *What did you think about the opening ceremonies and speeches by the organizers?*
- *Do you think most people would agree these displays accurately reflect who the Vietnamese are?*

5. Role of government officials at events

- *Why do you think X politician was invited?*
- *Why do you think they came?*
- *What do you think of the speech? What do you think they were trying to say?*
- *What is the value of the Vietnamese community to the Canadian state?*

Closing

Thank you for your time and sharing of your insightful thoughts and feelings. Before we end this interview, is there anything else you would like to add/clarify/expand on in what you have shared with me?

Can you think of anyone at this time who you would recommend for me to interview?

You have given me permission to contact you for follow-up or clarification from this interview, is that okay?

Appendix B: Permanent Residents to Canada by Source Country (Vietnam)

	<i>South Vietnam</i>	<i>North Vietnam</i>	
1974	12	373	
1975	12	2269	
1976	22	2269	
1977	216	243	
1978	659		
1979	19,859		
1980	25,241		
1981	8,251		
1982	5,945		
1983	6,467		
1984	10,997		
1985	10,379		
1986	6,626		
1987	5,665		
1988	6,180		
1989	9,402		
1990	9,167	Total refugee class	130,254
1991	9,028		
1992	7,740		
1993	8,331		
1994	6,244		
1995	3,944		
1996	2,490		
1997	1,787		
1998	1,631		
1999	1,397		
2000	1,801		
2001	2,097		
2002	2,282		
2003	1,686		
2004	1,803		
2005	1,852		
2006	3,153		
2007	2,574		
2008	1,784		
2009	2,171		
2010	1,942		
2011	1,723		
2012	1,731		
2013	2,112		
2014	2,495	Total other classes	73,798
<i>Total in Canada (as of 2014)</i>			<i>204,052</i>

*source (prior to 1981)

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* source (1982-2004)

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* source (2005-2014)

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Appendix C: Concurrent Timeline of Events

Canadian participation in Cold War and war in Vietnam	1954 -	
“Fall of Saigon”	1975	
	1990	130,254 Vietnamese refugees in Canada by the end of the Indochinese Refugee Program
Tribute to Liberty formed with sole purpose to spearhead <i>Memorial to Victims of Totalitarian Communism</i>	2008	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism proclaims the RVN flag as “the symbol of Vietnamese community in Canada”
Speech from the Throne pledged support	2010	
Site chosen at Gardens of the Provinces and Territories	2012	
Site changed to adjacent Supreme Court of Canada	2013	
\$1.5 mil. pledged by Federal government Project changed to <i>Memorial to Victims of Communism</i> Design competition Federal funding increased to \$3 mil	2014	Senator Thanh Hải Ngô introduces <i>Black April Day Act</i> to Senate of Canada, later renames to <i>Journey to Freedom Day Act</i> Member of Parliament Mark Adler sponsors bill into House of Commons Local conflict erupts with Seniors’ <i>Letter of Distrust of Vietnamese Toronto Agency</i>
Liberal government formed with “Refugees Welcomed” platform Commitment to scaled down monument	2015	<i>Bill S219 Journey to Freedom Day Act</i> accepted into Legislation Conflict beyond agency into community, Senator Ngô’s letter Agency’s Executive Director removed, and Board of Directors unanimously resigned
Site changed back to Gardens of the Provinces and Territories	2016	
New design competition closed Federal funding decreased to \$2 mil.	2017	
Ground breaking ceremony Signed Comprehensive and Progressive Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (CPTPP)	2018	Est. 220,000 Vietnamese Canadians with increasingly different sociopolitical positionings to Cold War

16 in-depth interviews conducted
ongoing Vietnamese community annual commemorations of April 30th

*Memorial to Victims of Communism (ch.4), April 30th Commemorations (ch.5), Critical Event (ch.6)