Constructions of Punjabi international students in Canadian news media

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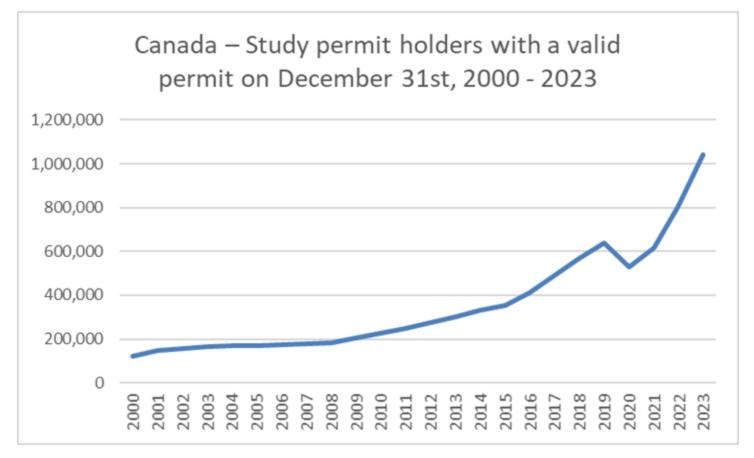


#### Background: International student framings

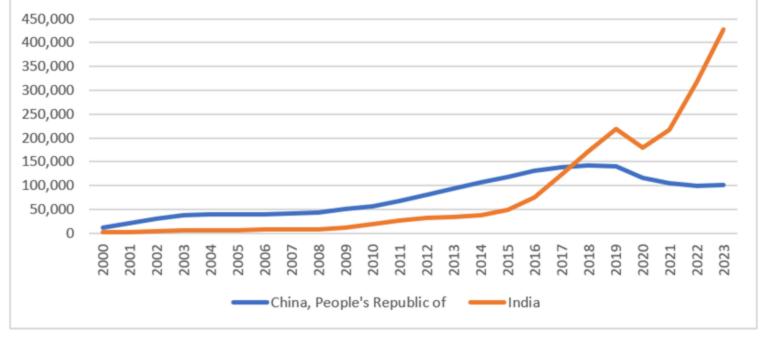
- From early 2000s to COVID-19 pandemic, international postsecondary students in Canada framed as economically valuable (tuition, labour, immigrant source)
- Framing shifted in post-COVID-19 recovery period
  - Diminished "quality"
  - Exerting "demands" on Canada (IRCC, 2023b)
- Why?

#### Background: International student growth

- Dependency on international students across the Global North
  - Differential tuition
  - Labour (before and after studies)
  - Pool of potential 'ideal immigrants'
- Growth in Canadian study permit holder #s
  - o 2000: 122,620
  - 2023: 1,040,985 (IRCC, 2024)
- In recent years, specifically:
  - o Colleges
  - o Indian international students
    - **2015: 48,755**
    - **2023: 427,085**

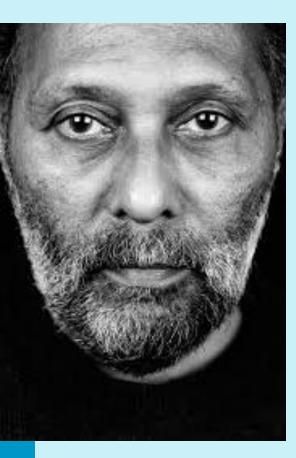


Canada - Study permit holders with a valid permit on December 31, 2000-2023 (Chinese and Indian citizens only)



#### Background: Focus on Punjabi international students

- Indian international students typically discussed as a homogenous group (in Canada); no disaggregated data
- Many international students are Punjabi; e.g., among non-permanent residents:
  - Punjabi most common mother tongue after English
  - Sikhism most common religion (Statistics Canada, 2022; 2023)
- Significant migration flows from Punjab to Canada
  - Decline/instability of agriculture sector
  - Aggressive recruitment
- Economic, academic, social, and psychological challenges (Apna Health; Baughan & Minhas, 2018; Kahlon, 2021; Marom, 2022b; Marom & Kahlon, 2023)



Stuart Hall (1974; 1993a, 1993b) **Identity created through hegemonic** discursive practices; allows dominant groups to maintain power Race = a discursive system situated in everyday social and economic relations Societies regularly subject to periods of moral panic "Othering" protects dominant group's sense of national and cultural identity **Colonial framings of international students** Cash, competition, charity (Stein & Andreotti, 2016) Labour (Coustere et al., 2024) Are Punjabi international students framed differently?



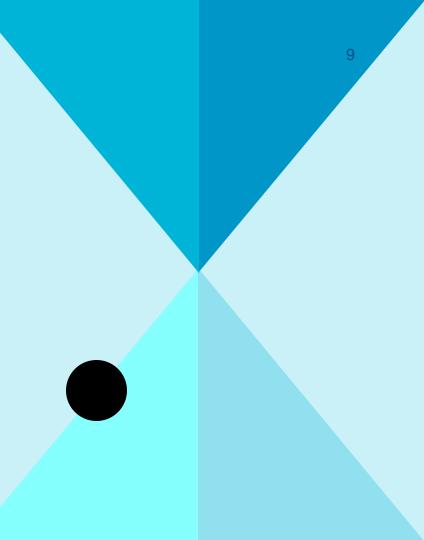
AMERICA YOU CAN BE MY EX-WIFE!

PRESIDENT TRUMP: 13 PAGES OF UNRIVALLED COVERAGE

How I V S punches lost their contective cool

Representation

Rather than "Why"? Who created the representation? How is "reality" represented?



### **Representation "Media" gives** meaning

Event has no fixed meaning until it is represented

#### In Brampton, international students up in arms over 'failing grades', protest

Ballinda: Afternment of its with aroun months, the intermaticaal undertis, matuly Parigable, by Canada's First motion, her co-tast dia fait they structure fulling grades of angely identical and

The students from \$1 Cla is College of Applied Aria and Technology, being operand is permentio with private-college hos Acurtain Academy claim that they have to been provided failing prodesign porresson.

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ALGOMA

Students of St Care Dollege of Applied Jack and Technology protect in teranstation on Thursday. The approved chadred; have unjet the tocal Pursido community to sequent their cause as the eduberts and those manting work permits or permanent residency have already been devestaked with changes in interlepation policy, sharraning work promite

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BREAKING THE BANK

#### Indian students in Canada are struggling to make ends meet as sources of income are meagre amid the ongoing Covid-19 crisis

Many students working part time have been laid off "temporarily"

They are not sure how many people will be hired back once the pandemic is past us

> With no means to return home in sight, many students are also battling extreme Ioneliness and mental health ssues



#### Photo-for representation A NEW initiative on education focused on India has been launched in Toronto. The Canada India Education Council (CIEC) was officially

STAFF REPORTER ANADA has applicationed to India

one, at a time when slobal so

attendedamong othensby India's Consul Gen-binds our diverse people together. It is ele-encal in Bretter, Nereti Staran, "This dynamic corridor has reached atip-ing point and with recent global shifts and pleased to extend ny warmest preetings to those attending the launch of the Canada-Exterively and cobosity to bread itself in In-India Education Council and would like to ia," said Pettigrew, raising a toast to the suc-contract the CIEC for their hard work and initiative,"

Necreurbaula, a seasoned India hand in the working event to be hold in Terrotto in Sep-clucation sector, will be the Chief Operations terrors which will being together education Officer & Executive Director. The Executive Committee childraged the attrached to both the contraining and children who insolection. It is and coverer who insolection. e and convert words into deeds. \*CIEC will be an independent national.

we'vely within the burgeoning Canada India ed-to everyone attending the Jaurch of eation corridor, CIEC will strive to enhance lies and create opportunities for academic in-titutions and learners from both constricts."

ICCC to award 11 people at June 12 annual gala night

IT'S that time of the year again and one erce (ICCC) will be announcing and ICCC, adding that the Chamber has co

rding 11 Canadians of Indian origin in ral categories. This year the ICCCS anal Awards and Gala Night is being a tarke Atten Convention Center on younger generation is really doing well, eld at the Metro Com said the first president arian of the Year, Lifetime evement, Male and Female Entre-eur of the Year, Male and Female "I am sure all the pioneers will say

t of other honours. "There will be awards also in the catets more than 1,000 elite of Canada in ing Federal and provincial leaders, ing business entrepreneurs, profes-Past keynote speakers and guests has included Prime Minister Stephen Harpe

arel Sibal, Federal Minis t together in a basement and conceptuould serve the needs of the East Indian whitnes del

"There were several religious and Itural organizations for the Indian mmunity and we felt there was a strong ness event," said Luthr

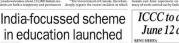
MORTH AMERICAN EDITION

Due to the corona crisis, all clients have rescheduled the work. So, no work now. We think this as a temporary lay-off, but are not sure how many employees will they take back

 Kranthi Bheemanandam. TELUGU-ORIGIN STUDENT IN CANADA



basis, including many individuals from the letters drafted by public service official ny torces.



**CANADA**Newsline

**Immigration minister Jason Kenney** 

apologizes to India for visa refusals

Indian High Commissioner S. M. Gasai

as a very important area of cooperation be-tween India and Canada. "This sector holds enormous potential which can be tapped our to mutual benefit. The launching of the CIEC is, therefore, very timely. I am sure it can make a Ideal Education Classer, resonance and the education of the resonance of t

cess of CIEC. Kam Rathee, past President of the Canada India Business Council, was an-nounced as the new President and Husain F. Neernuchwala, a seasoned India hand in the working event to be held in Toronto in Sep-

"CIEC will be an independent national, not-for-profit, membership-based, event-dri-twon organization established to operate east." "I hai led by Pettigrew.

leader of the Opporthe organization.

ition in a message sent to

Burt Day and the CEO of the Canadi ouncil of Chief Executives Them keynote speaker at the Gala. En anity. However, there was no Award winning news anchor and reports ration that served the Ravi Baichwal will be the master of eer



# Those in power create meaning

# Asserting dominance



### Othering



## Methodology: Corpus

- ProQuest Canada Newstream database search
- English-language newspapers (*Toronto Star, Vancouver Sun, Globe and Mail, National Post, Brampton Guardian, and Abbotsford News*)
- January 31, 2020 to January 31, 2024
- ("foreign students" OR "international students") AND ("India?" OR "Punjab?" OR "South Asian")
- Initial search: 291 articles
  - Removals:
    - 41 duplicates
    - 98 out-of-scope
- Final corpus: 152 articles



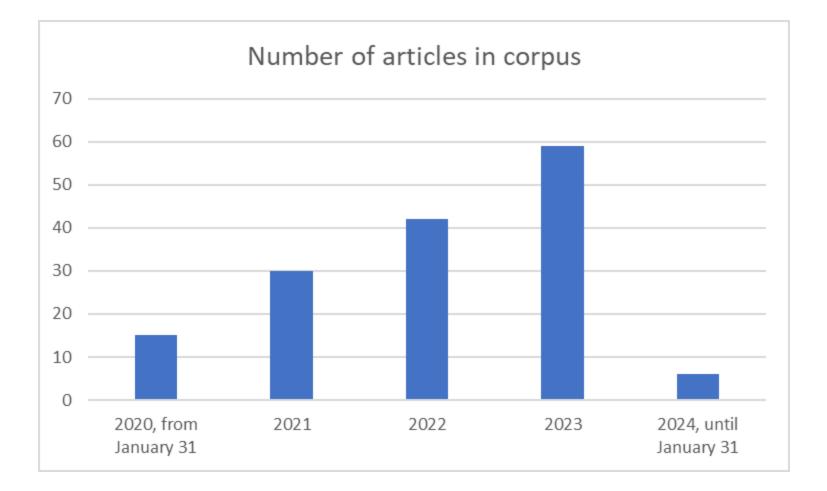
### THE GLOBE AND MAIL\*











#### Newspaper distribution of articles in corpus The Abbotsford News **Toronto Star** 3 57 National Post 7

Brampton Guardian 14 Vancouver Sun 16

## Methodology: Analysis

- Framing analysis (Entman, 1993)
- Four key frames:
  - 1. Victims
  - 2. "System abusers" or linked to fraud/criminality
  - 3. Commodities
  - 4. Straining Canadian infrastructure

## Findings: "Victim" frame

- Different aspects of their lives (e.g., as students, workers, potential migrants, and in their personal lives)
- In multiple arenas (higher ed, the workforce, the migration process)
- COVID-19/travel ban; poor living conditions (housing, food insecurity); economic exploitation
- Different/contradictory notions of accountability:
  - o victim blaming
  - blaming specific individuals or organizations (e.g., agents, private institutions)
  - o more abstract systemic analyses
- Underlying deficient/naive "easy target" discourse

### Findings: "System abuser" frame

- Sometimes interwoven with victimhood/exploitation narratives
- Key foci:
  - Canada's immigration system (backdoor entry, study permit as work permit)
  - Threat of asylum claims/overstaying
  - Fraudulent documents
- Punjabi international students connected to abuse/fraud in both explicit and subtle ways
- Class positionality evoked as "different" from other/previous/stereotypical international students

### Findings: "Commodity" frame

- Framed as commodities for dependent higher education institutions
- Also connected to frames of victimhood
- Focus on labour market participation/need to work

#### Findings: "Straining Canadian infrastructure" frame

- Emerged post-COVID-19 pandemic
- Especially in areas with high concentrations of Punjabi international students (e.g., Surrey, BC and Brampton, ON) (Stats Can, 2024)
- Focus on rental housing

### Conclusion

- Media coverage reproduced hegemonic understandings of Punjabi international students' value to Canada as a so-called "host" country:
  - Those perceived to be of high economic value with low social costs are welcomed
  - Those who are not become figures upon which the "host" country's problems can be projected
- Fragmented picture
  - o "Othered" victim clearly identifiable
  - Perpetrators largely obfuscated

## **Questions?**

Marom, L., Brunner, L. R., Chhina, G., & Fontaine, P. (Under review). Constructions of Punjabi international students in Canadian news media. In A. P. Kaur & I. S. Rajan (Eds.), *Punjabi diaspora: Socio-cultural, political and economic engagements*. Routledge.