



Dr. Victoria Esses says negative stories in the media have a bad effect on attitudes towards immigrants.  
MIKE DONACHIE/METRO

# Media has role in 'dehumanizing' immigrants: Prof

**Research findings.** Refugees and immigrants are seen as 'enemies at the gate'



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Negative attitudes towards immigrants and refugees can be partly blamed on the media, a Western expert has said.

Dr. Victoria Esses has been leading research into mass-media portrayal of people who have just arrived in Canada.

She talks of a "crisis mentality" in reporting in which such groups are shown as "enemies at the gate" attempting to invade Western

nations.

"I would say that attitudes (toward immigrants in Canada) are overall relatively positive and more positive than in other countries," she said of the general population. "But it's still the case that some immigrants are looked down on more than others."

She said some high-profile events, like the arrival of Tamil refugees in British Columbia by boat in 2012, can mean a spike in negative reporting.

Portrayals, Esses said, include suggestions that immigrants spread infectious diseases, that refugee claimants are often bogus and that terrorists may be coming in disguised as refugees.

Esses and colleagues wrote an article titled Uncertainty, Threat, and the Role of the Media in Promoting the De-

**Quoted**

**"If you dehumanize people, you don't have to treat them well."**

Dr. Victoria Esses, on the impact of negative perceptions about immigrants.

humanization of Immigrants and Refugees, published in this month's Journal of Social Issues.

Dehumanization is a strong term. It represents the most extreme attitudes towards immigrants and refugees, says Esses. It says they are not human.

"If they're not human," she explained, "they don't deserve what we have. They don't necessarily deserve benefits and this thinking is used to justify that."

## You're Invited! Saturday, October 5, 2013

5:30 p.m. to Midnight

Fleetwood Farms at the Plunkett Estate  
London, Ontario



Put your party boots on and rustle up the posse, 'cause you're all invited to the  
**3rd Annual Hospice Harvest Hoedown**

**Featuring:**

- Music and Entertainment by award winning country music artists **Doghouse Rose**
- Silent and Live **Auction**
- A country style **meal**
- **Prizes** for the best dressed - Western Gear of course!
- Shootin' Gallery - Fun **photos** of your posse
- Foot Stompin' **Fun!**

## Thieves targeting Western University students: Police

London police are warning students living around Western University to lock down their laptops after a string of recent thefts.

Police say thieves are gaining access to homes through unlocked windows and targeting Mac computers. The thefts — all of which targeted students — have happened on Friday and Saturday nights when people are away from home, police say.

**Safety precautions**

People are being advised to take the following safety precautions:

- Lock all windows and doors.
- Use cable locks for laptops

and activate the machine's GPS/locator feature.

- Store electronics out of clear sight.
- Record serial numbers for electronics.

People who notice suspicious activity in their neighbourhood should call 911 im-

mediately or contact police at 519-661-5670.

**METRO**

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