

100 years of immigration in Canada

by **Monica Boyd and Michael Vickers**

Record numbers of immigrants came to Canada in the early 1900s. During World War I and the Depression years, numbers declined but by the close of the 20th century, they had again approached those recorded almost 100 years earlier. Despite the superficial similarities at the beginning and the end of a century of immigration, the characteristics of immigrants are quite different. This change reflects many factors: developments and modifications in Canada's immigration policies; the displacement of peoples by wars and political upheaval; the cycle of economic "booms and busts" in Canada and other countries; Canada's membership in the Commonwealth; the growth of communication, transportation, and economic networks linking people around the world.



These forces have operated throughout the 20th century to alter the basic characteristics of Canada's immigrant population in five fundamental ways. First, the numbers of immigrants arriving each year have waxed and waned, meaning that the importance of immigration for Canada's population growth has fluctuated. Second, immigrants increasingly chose to live in Canada's largest cities. Third, the predominance of men among adult immigrants declined as family migration grew and

women came to represent slightly over half of immigrants. Fourth, the marked transformation in the countries in which immigrants had been born enhanced the ethnic diversity of Canadian society. Fifth, alongside Canada's transition from an agricultural to a knowledge-based economy, immigrants were increasingly employed in the manufacturing and service sectors of the economy. This article provides an overview of these important changes over the last 100 years.

The early years: 1900-1915

The 20th century opened with the arrival of nearly 42,000 immigrants in 1900. Numbers quickly escalated to a record high of over 400,000 in 1913. Canada's economy was growing rapidly during these years, and immigrants were drawn by the promise of good job prospects. The building of the trans-continental railway, the settlement of the prairies and expanding industrial production intensified demand for labour. Aggressive recruitment campaigns by the Canadian government to boost immigration and attract workers also increased arrivals: between 1900 and 1914, more than 2.9 million people entered Canada, nearly four times as many as had arrived in the previous 14-year period.

Such volumes of immigrants quickly enlarged Canada's population. Between 1901 and 1911, net migration (the excess of those arriving over those leaving) accounted for 44% of population growth, a level not reached again for another 75 years. The share of the overall population born outside Canada also increased in consequence, so that while immigrants accounted for 13% of the population in 1901, by 1911 they made up 22%.

Most of the foreign-born population lived in Ontario at the start of the century, but many later immigrants headed west. By 1911, 41% of Canada's immigrant population lived in the Prairies, up from 20% recorded in the 1901 Census. This influx had a profound effect on the populations of the western provinces. By 1911, immigrants represented 41% of people living in Manitoba, 50% in Saskatchewan, and 57% of those in Alberta and British Columbia. In contrast, they made up less than 10% of the population in the Atlantic provinces and Quebec, and only 20% in Ontario.

Men greatly outnumbered women among people settling in Canada in the first two decades of the 20th century.¹

CST What you should know about this study

This article draws on numerous data sources, with the principal sources being the 1901 to 1996 Censuses of Population and immigration statistics collected by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. It also draws on research by historians and sociologists specializing in immigration issues. A full bibliography is available on the *Canadian Social Trends* website at <http://www.statcan.ca/english/indepth/11-008/sthome.htm>

Immigration: the movement of people into a country for purposes of legal settlement.

Net migration: the difference between immigration and emigration (the flow of people leaving the country permanently).

Immigrants/foreign-born: principally people who are, or have been, landed immigrants in Canada. A landed immigrant is a person who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Some are recent arrivals; others have resided in Canada for many years.

Non-permanent residents: people from another country who live in Canada and have work, student, or Minister's permits, or claim refugee status. They are not included in the immigrant population after 1986, except in growth projections.

Refugee: according to the 1951 United Nations Convention on refugees, a refugee is a person who "...owing to well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country..." As a signatory to this convention, Canada uses the UN definition of a refugee in assessing who is eligible to enter Canada as a refugee.

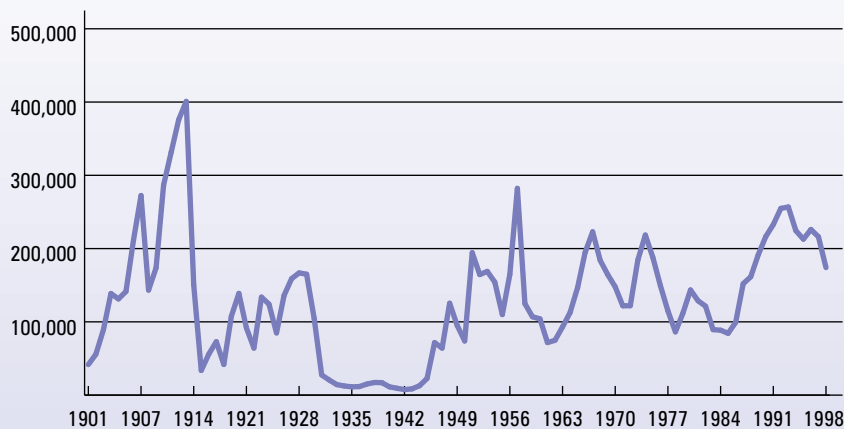
Visible minority population: the *Employment Equity Act* defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." The visible minority population includes the following groups: Blacks, South Asians, Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, Southeast Asians, Filipinos, Arabs and West Asians, Latin Americans and Pacific Islanders.

The 1911 Census recorded 158 immigrant males for every 100 females, compared with 103 Canadian-born males for 100 females. These unbalanced gender ratios are not uncommon in the history of settlement countries such as Canada, Australia and the United States. They

often reflect labour recruitment efforts targeted at men rather than women, as well as the behaviour of immigrants themselves. In migration

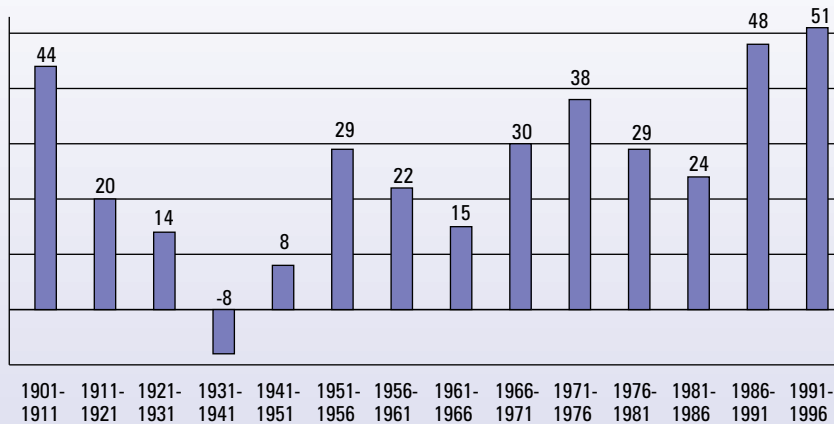
1. Urquhart, M.C. and K.A.H. Buckley. 1965. *Historical Statistics of Canada*.

Number of immigrants



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Facts and Figures 1998: Immigration Overview.

Immigration as % of population growth



Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 11-402-XPE.

flows, particularly those motivated by economic reasons, men frequently precede women, either because the move is viewed as temporary and there is no need to uproot family members, or because the man intends to become economically established before being joined by his family. By the time of the 1921 Census, the gender ratio for immigrants had become

less skewed, standing at 125 immigrant males for every 100 immigrant females. It continued to decline throughout the century, reaching 94 per 100 in 1996.

Of course, women also immigrated for economic reasons in the early decades of the century. There was strong demand for female domestic workers, with women in England,

Scotland and Wales being most often targeted for recruitment. Between 1904 and 1914, “domestic” was by far the most common occupation reported by adult women immigrants (almost 30%) arriving from overseas. Men immigrating from overseas during that period were more likely to be unskilled and semi-skilled labourers (36%) or to have a farming occupation (32%).² Historians observe that, contrary to the image of immigrants being farmers and homesteaders, immigrants at the turn of the century were also factory and construction workers. And although many did settle in the western provinces, many also worked building railroads or moved into the large cities, fueling the growth of industrial centres.

Immigration from outside Britain and the U.S. begins to grow in 1910s

At the start of the century, the majority of immigrants to Canada had originated in the United States or the United Kingdom. However, during the 1910s and 1920s, the number born in other European countries began to grow, slowly at first, and then rising to its highest levels in 1961 and 1971.

This change in countries of origin had begun in the closing decades of the 19th century, when many new groups began to arrive in Canada — Doukhobors and Jewish refugees from Russia, Hungarians, Mormons from the U.S., Italians and Ukrainians. This flow continued up until World War I. It generated public debate about who should be admitted to Canada: for some writers and politicians, recruiting labour was the key issue, not the changing origins of immigrants; for others, British and American immigrants were to be preferred to those from southern or eastern European countries.

2. Ibid.

Elderly immigrants

Most immigrants in Canada are adults between the ages of 25 and 64. However, the proportion of immigrants who are aged 65 and older has increased considerably over the decades, from less than 6% in 1921 to 18% in 1996. Two main demographic trends explain this development. The first is the ageing of the longer established immigrant population, many of whom arrived in Canada shortly after the Second World War. The second trend is the growth in the proportion of recent immigrants who are elderly; this has resulted from immigration policies that put greater emphasis on family reunification, thereby allowing Canadians to sponsor elderly relatives as immigrants.

Elderly immigrants from developing countries, who comprise the majority of more recent arrivals, exhibit a greater degree of income polarization than those from developed countries, who have generally lived in Canada much longer. Among immigrants from developing countries, the difference in the share of overall income held by those in the top income quartile and by those in the bottom quartile is much greater than the difference for other immigrants. This may be because many immigrants either have not worked long enough to have made significant contributions to public or private pension plans, or they have not resided in Canada long enough to qualify for basic old age security benefits. The educational attainment of immigrants at arrival also influences their income through its effect on their work history, further contributing to this polarization.

As with Canadian-born seniors, an important issue for elderly immigrants is the decline in their incomes as they age. Income security is particularly important for elderly immigrant women who, like Canadian-born women, live longer than men and so must stretch their retirement benefits further. A 1989 study found that elderly women who had arrived in Canada since the 1970s were more likely to have low incomes than women or men who were either Canadian-born or long-term immigrants. Furthermore, recent immigrants from developing countries were at a greater disadvantage than recent immigrants from developed countries.

However, concerns about the growth in the number of elderly low-income immigrants should be tempered by recent research on migration flows, which indicates that a considerable proportion of older immigrants leave Canada, perhaps to return to their countries of origin. Indeed, by age 75 net migration is negative, that is, more immigrants in this age group leave Canada than arrive.

- For more information, see K.G. Basavarajappa, 1999. *Distribution, Inequality and Concentration of Income Among Older Immigrants in Canada, 1990*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11F0019MPE, #129; M. Boyd, 1989. "Immigration and income security policies in Canada: Implications for elderly immigrant women," *Population Research and Policy Review*, 8; M. Michalowski, 1993. "The elderly and international migration in Canada: 1971-1986," *Genus*, 1L, 1-2.

By comparison, immigration from Asia was very low at this time, in dramatic contrast to the situation at the end of the 20th century. Government policies regulating immigration had been rudimentary during the late 1800s, but when legislation was enacted in the early 1900s, it focused primarily on preventing immigration on the grounds of poverty, mental incompetence or on the basis of non-European origins. Even though Chinese immigrant workers had helped to build the transcontinental railroad, in 1885 the first piece of legislation regulating future Chinese immigration required every person of Chinese origin to pay a tax of \$50 upon entering Canada. At the time, this was a very large sum. The "head tax" was increased to \$100 in 1900, and to \$500 in 1903. This fee meant that many Chinese men could not afford to bring brides or wives to Canada.³

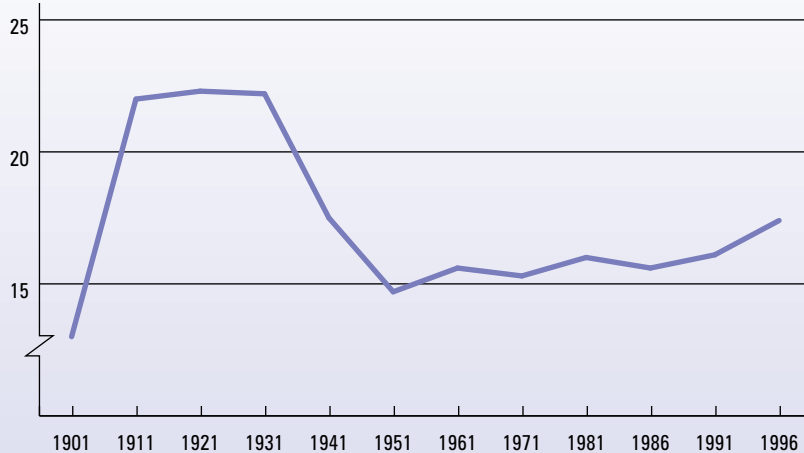
The *Act of 1906* prohibited the landing of persons defined as "feeble-minded," having "loathsome or contagious diseases," "paupers," persons "likely to become public charges," criminals and "those of undesirable morality." In 1908, the Act was amended to prohibit the landing of those persons who did not come to Canada directly from their country of origin. This provision effectively excluded the immigration of people from India, who had to book passage on ships sailing from countries outside India because there were no direct sailings between Calcutta and Vancouver. Also in the early 1900s, the Canadian government entered into a series of agreements with Japan that restricted Japanese migration.⁴

The Wars and the Great Depression: 1915-1946

With the outbreak of the First World War, immigration quickly came to a near standstill. From a record high of

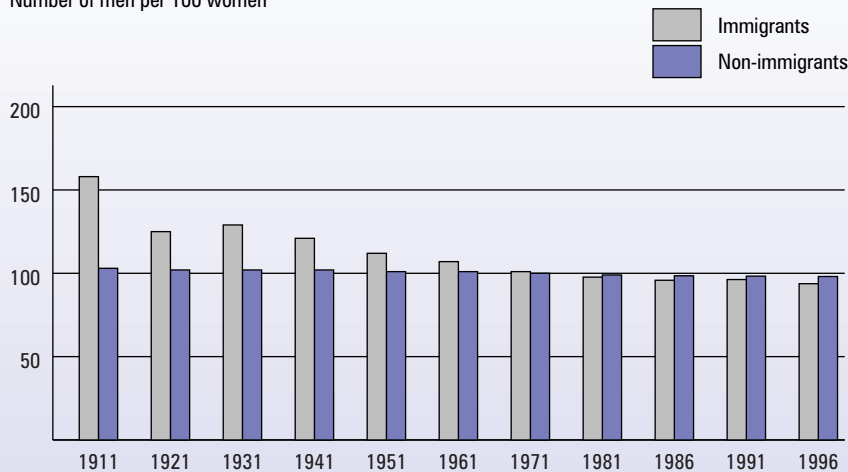
3. As evidence of this fact, the 1911 Census recorded 2,790 Chinese males for every 100 Chinese females, a figure far in excess of the overall ratio of 158 immigrant males for every 100 immigrant females.
4. It should be noted that although Asians were the most severely targeted by efforts to reduce immigration by non-Europeans, other ethnic groups such as blacks from the United States and the Caribbean also were singled out. Calliste, A. 1993. "Race, gender and Canadian immigration policy," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 28; Kelley, N. and M. Trebilcock. 1998. *The Making of the mosaic: A history of Canadian immigration policy*; Troper, H. 1972. *Only farmers need apply*.

% of immigrants in total population



Sources: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 99-936 and Product no. 93F0020XCB.

Number of men per 100 women



Sources: Statistics Canada, Catalogue nos. 99-936, 93-155, 93-316 and Product no. 93F0020XCB

over 400,000 in 1913, arrivals dropped sharply to less than 34,000 by 1915. Although numbers rebounded after the war, they never again reached the levels attained before 1914. As a result, net immigration accounted for about 20% of Canada's population growth between 1911 and 1921, less than half the contribution made in the previous decade. However,

the influence of earlier foreign-born arrivals continued, reinforced by the more modest levels of wartime and post-war immigration: at the time of the 1921 Census, immigrants still comprised 22% of the population.

The number of immigrants coming to Canada rose during the 1920s, with well above 150,000 per year entering in the last three years of the decade.

But the Great Depression and the Second World War severely curtailed arrivals during the 1930s and early 1940s — numbers fluctuated between 7,600 and 27,500. Furthermore, there was actually a net migration loss of 92,000 as more people left Canada than entered between 1931 and 1941. The 1930s is the only decade in the 20th century in which this occurred. By the time of the 1941 Census, the percentage of the total population that was foreign-born had fallen to just under 18%.

While more men than women had immigrated to Canada in the first three decades of the century, the situation was reversed when immigration declined in the 1930s and 1940s. During this period, women outnumbered men, accounting for 60% of all adult arrivals between 1931 and 1940, and for 66% between 1941 and 1945.⁵ As a result of these changes, the overall gender ratio of the immigrant population declined slightly.

While lower numbers and the predominance of women among adult immigrants represent shifts in previous immigration patterns, other trends were more stable. The majority of immigrants continued to settle in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Increasingly, though, they gravitated to urban areas, foreshadowing the pattern of recent immigration concentration in large cities that became so evident in the last years of the century.

Britain was still the leading source of immigrants, but the arrival of people from other parts of the globe also continued. During the 1920s, the aftershocks of World War I and the Russian Revolution stimulated migration from Germany, Russia, the Ukraine, and eastern European

5. Urquhart and Buckley. 1965.

countries including Poland and Hungary.⁶ During the Depression, the majority of immigrants came from Great Britain, Germany, Austria and the Ukraine. Fewer than 6% were of non-European origin.

Public debate over whom to admit and the development of immigration policy to regulate admissions was far from over. Regulations passed in 1919 provided new grounds for deportation and denied entry to enemy aliens, to those who were enemy aliens during the war, and to Doukhobors, Mennonites and Hutterites.⁷ The 1923 *Chinese Immigration Act* restricted Chinese immigration still further.⁸ Responding to labour market pressures following the Crash of 1929 and the collapse of the Prairie economy, farm workers, domestics and several other occupational groups, as well as relatives of landed immigrants, were struck from the list of admissible classes. Asian immigration was also cut back again.⁹

Then, with the declaration of war on Germany on September 10, 1939, new regulations were passed which prohibited the entry or landing of nationals of countries with which Canada was at war. In the absence of a refugee policy that distinguished between immigrants and refugees, the restrictions imposed in the interwar years raised barriers to those fleeing the chaos and devastation of World War II. Many of those turned away at this time were Jewish refugees attempting to leave Europe.¹⁰ War-related measures also included the forced relocation — often to detention camps — of Japanese-Canadians living within a 100-mile area along the British Columbia coastline. It was argued that they might assist a Japanese invasion.

The boom years: 1946-1970

The war in Europe ended with Germany's surrender on May 6, 1945; in the Pacific, Japan surrendered on

August 14. With the return of peace, both Canada's economy and immigration boomed. Between 1946 and 1950, over 430,000 immigrants arrived, exceeding the total number admitted in the previous 15 years.

The immediate post-war immigration boom included the dependents of Canadian servicemen who had married abroad, refugees, and people seeking economic opportunities in Canada. Beginning in July 1946, and continuing throughout the late 1940s, Orders-in-Council paved the way for the admission of people who had been displaced from their homelands by the war and for whom return was not possible.¹¹ The ruination of the European economy and the unprecedented boom in Canada also favoured high immigration levels.

Numbers continued to grow throughout most of the 1950s, peaking at over 282,000 admissions in 1957. By 1958, immigration levels were beginning to fall, partly because economic conditions were improving in Europe, and partly because, with the Canadian economy slowing, the government introduced administrative policies designed to reduce the rate of immigration. By 1962, however, the economy had recovered and arrivals increased for six successive years. Although admissions never reached the record highs observed in the early part of the century, the total number of immigrants entering Canada in the 1950s and 1960s far exceeded the levels observed in the preceding three decades.

During this time, net migration was higher than it had been in almost 50 years, but it accounted for no more than 30% of total population growth between 1951 and 1971. The population effect of the large number of foreign-born arrivals was muted by the magnitude of natural growth caused by the unprecedented birth rates recorded during the baby boom from 1946 to 1965.

Many of the new immigrants settled in cities, so that by 1961, 81% of foreign-born Canadians lived in an urban area, compared with 68% of Canadian-born. The proportion of the immigrant population living in Ontario continued to grow, accelerating a trend that had begun earlier in the century; in contrast, the proportion living in the Prairie provinces declined.

Such shifts in residential location went hand-in-hand with Canada's transformation from a rural agricultural and resource-based economy in the early years of the century to an urban manufacturing and service-based economy in the later years. Postwar immigrants were important sources of labour for this emerging economy, especially in the early 1950s. Compared to those arriving at the turn of the century, the postwar immigrants were more likely to be professional or skilled workers and they accounted for over half of the growth in these occupations between 1951 and 1961.

Although the largest number of immigrants arriving after World War II were from the United Kingdom, people from other European countries were an increasingly predominant part of the mix. During the late 1940s and 1950s, substantial numbers also

6. Kelley and Trebilcock. 1998; Knowles, V. 1997. *Strangers at our gates: Canadian immigration and immigration policy, 1540-1997*.

7. Kalbach, W. 1970. *The impact of immigration on Canada's population*. Knowles. 1997.

8. Avery, D.H. 2000. "Immigration: Peopling Canada," *The Beaver*; Kalbach, W. 1970.

9. Kalbach. 1970; Statistics Canada. *Immigrants in Canada: Selected highlights*. 1990.

10. Abella, I. and H. Troper. 1982. *None is too many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948*. Kelley and Trebilcock. 1998; Knowles. 1997.

11. Kalbach. 1970; Knowles, 1997.

arrived from Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Poland and the U.S.S.R. Following the 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary, Canada also admitted over 37,000 Hungarians, while the Suez Crisis of the same year saw the arrival of almost 109,000 British immigrants.¹² During the 1960s, the trend increased. By the time of the 1971 Census, less than one-third of the foreign-born population had been born in the United Kingdom; half came from other European countries, many from Italy.

New policies help direct postwar immigration trends

Much of the postwar immigration to Canada was stimulated by people displaced by war or political upheaval, as well as by the weakness of the European economies. However, Canada's postwar immigration policies also were an important factor. Because they were statements of who would be admitted and under what conditions, these policies influenced the numbers of arrivals, the types of immigrants, and the country of origin of new arrivals.

Within two years of the war ending, on May 1, 1947, Prime Minister MacKenzie King reaffirmed that immigration was vital for Canada's growth, but he also indicated that the numbers and country of origin of immigrants would be regulated. Five years later, the *Immigration Act* of 1952 consolidated many postwar changes to immigration regulations that had been enacted since the previous Act of 1927. Subsequent regulations that spelled out the possible grounds for limiting admissions included national origin; on this basis, admissible persons were defined to be those with birth or citizenship

12. Kalbach. 1970; Kelley and Trebilcock. 1998; Avery. 2000; Hawkins, F. 1972. *Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern.*

Children of immigrants

One of the main reasons why people choose to uproot themselves and immigrate to another country is their desire to provide greater opportunities for their children. Thus, one of the main indicators used to measure the success of an immigrant's adaptation to Canadian society is the degree of success that their children achieve.

Such success is measured primarily in terms of socioeconomic factors, such as increased educational attainment and level of occupational status, compared with the preceding generation. Analysis of data from the 1986 and 1994 General Social Surveys indicate that second generation immigrants (Canadian-born children with at least one foreign-born parent) are generally more successful than their immigrant parents, and equally or more successful than third generation children (both of whose parents are Canadian-born).

These findings are consistent with the "straight line" theory of the process of immigrant integration, which asserts that integration is cumulative: with each passing generation since immigration, the measurable differences between the descendants of immigrants and the Canadian-born are reduced until they are virtually indistinguishable. However, this theory's dominance has been challenged in recent years by analysts who argue that it is based primarily on the experiences of immigrants who were largely white and European, and whose children grew up during a period of unprecedented economic growth. They argue that this theory applies less well to more recent immigrants because it ignores changes in the social and economic structure of Canada in the latter half of the 20th century. Also, it discounts the impact of barriers facing young immigrants, who are predominantly visible minorities, in their ability to integrate successfully.

Possible evidence of such barriers to the integration of the children of immigrants may be seen in an analysis of ethnic origin data for Canada's largest cities from the 1991 Census. This study found that among members of the so-called "1.5 generation" — the foreign-born children of immigrant parents — non-European ethnic origin groups were more likely to live in households that were more crowded and had lower per-capita household incomes than those with European origins.

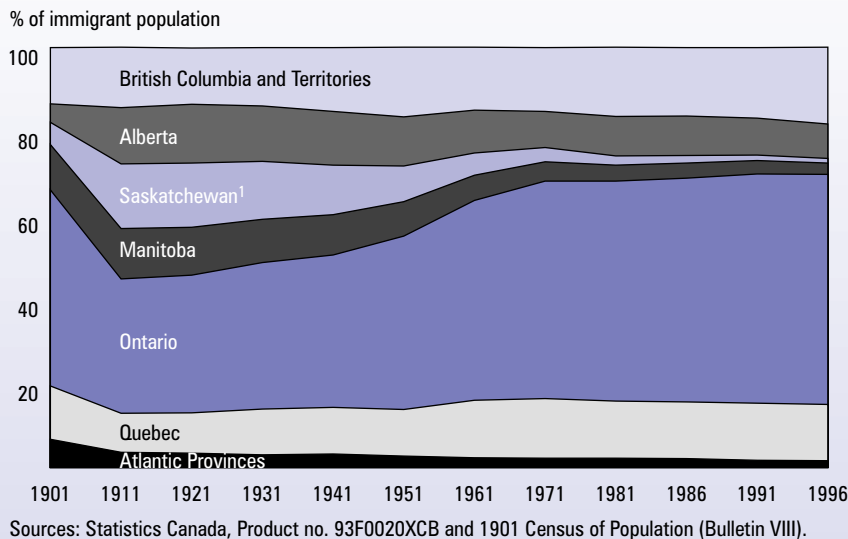
- For more information, see M. Boyd and E.M. Grieco. 1998. "Triumphant transitions: Socio-economic achievements of the second generation in Canada," *International Migration Review*; M. Boyd, 2000. "Ethnicity and immigrant offspring," *Race and Ethnicity: A Reader.*

in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa and selected European countries.

In 1962, however, new regulations effectively removed national origins as a criterion of admission. Further regulations enacted in 1967 confirmed this principle and instead introduced a system that assigned points based on the age, education, language skills and economic characteristics of applicants. These policy

changes made it much easier for persons born outside Europe and the United States to immigrate to Canada.

The 1967 regulations also reaffirmed the right, first extended in the 1950s, of immigrants to sponsor relatives to enter Canada. Family-based immigration had always co-existed alongside economically motivated immigration, but now it was clearly defined. As wives, mothers, aunts and sisters, women participated in these family reunification endeavours:



women accounted for almost half of all adult immigrants entering Canada during the 1950s and 1960s. As a result of this gender parity in immigration flows, gender ratios declined over time for the foreign-born population.

Growth and diversity: 1970-1996

In the 1960s, changes in immigration policy were made by altering the regulations that governed implementation of the *Immigration Act* of 1952. But in 1978, a new *Immigration Act* came into effect. This Act upheld the principles of admissions laid out in the regulations of the 1960s: family reunification and economic contributions. For the first time in Canada's history, the new Act also incorporated the principle of admissions based on humanitarian grounds. Previously, refugee admissions had been handled through special procedures and regulations. The Act also required the Minister responsible for the immigration portfolio to set annual immigration targets in consultation with the provinces.

From the 1970s through the 1990s, immigration numbers fluctuated. The

overall impact, however, continued to be a significant contribution to Canada's total population growth that increased as the century drew to a close. During the early and mid-1970s, net migration represented nearly 38% of the total increase in the population; with consistently high levels of arrivals between 1986 and 1996, it accounted for about half of the population growth. These percentages exceeded those recorded in the 1910s and the 1920s. The cumulative effect of net migration from the 1970s onward was a gradual increase in the percentage of foreign-born Canadians. By the time of the 1996 Census, immigrants comprised just over 17% of the population, the largest proportion in more than 50 years.

Having an immigration policy based on principles of family reunification and labour market contribution also recast the composition of the immigrant population. It meant that people from all nations could be admitted if they met the criteria as described in the immigration regulations. The inclusion of humanitarian-based admissions also permitted the entry of refugees from countries outside Europe. As a result,

the immigrants who entered Canada from 1966 onward came from many different countries and possessed more diverse cultural backgrounds than earlier immigrants. Each successive Census recorded declining percentages of the immigrant population that had been born in European countries, the United Kingdom and the United States.

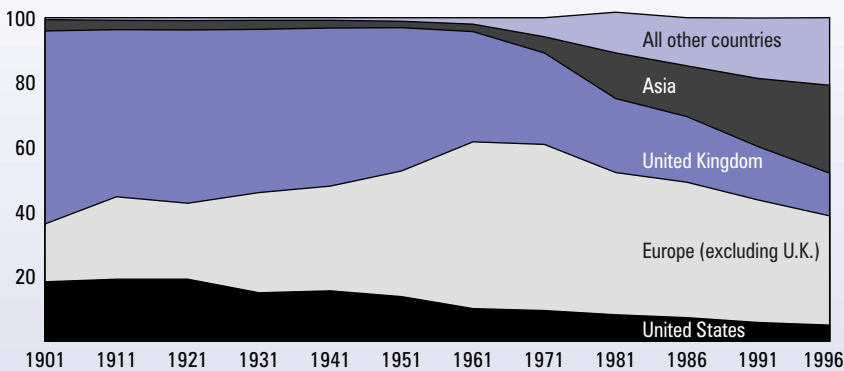
Meanwhile, the proportion of immigrants born in Asian countries and other regions of the world began to rise, slowly at first and then more quickly through the 1980s. By 1996, 27% of the immigrant population in Canada had been born in Asia and another 21% came from places other than the United States, the United Kingdom or Europe. The top five countries of birth for immigrants arriving between 1991 and 1996 were Hong Kong, the People's Republic of China, India, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Together, these five countries accounted for more than one-third of all immigrants who arrived in those five years.

Immigration the largest contributor to growth of visible minority population

The visible minority population has grown dramatically in the last two decades. In 1996, 11.2 % of Canada's population — 3.2 million people — identified themselves as members of a visible minority group, up from under 5% in 1981. Immigration has been a big contributor to this growth: about seven in 10 visible minorities are immigrants, almost half of whom have arrived since 1981.

Most immigrants live in Canada's big cities, with the largest numbers concentrated in the census metropolitan areas (CMAs) of Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver. This continues the trend established earlier in the century. Proportionally more immigrants than Canadian-born have preferred to settle in urban areas, attracted by economic opportunities

% of immigrant population



Sources: Statistics Canada, Catalogue nos. 99-517 (Vol.VII, Part 1), 92-727 (Vol.I, Part 3), 92-913 and Product no. 93F0020XCB.

and by the presence of other immigrants from the same countries or regions of the world. In 1996, 85% of all immigrants lived in a CMA, compared with just 57% of the Canadian-born population. As a result, the largest CMAs have a higher concentration of immigrants than the national average of just over 17%. In 1996, 42% of Toronto's population, 35% of Vancouver's and 18% of Montréal's were foreign-born.

The attraction to urban centres helps to explain the provincial distribution of immigrants. Since the 1940s, a disproportionate share has lived in Ontario and the percentage has continued to rise over time. By 1996, 55% of all immigrants lived in Ontario, compared with 18% in British Columbia and 13% in Quebec.

Recent immigrants' adjustment to labour force can be difficult

Just as immigrants have contributed to the growth in Canada's population, to its diversity and to its cities, so too have they contributed to its economy. During the last few decades, most employment opportunities have shifted from manufacturing to service

industries, and immigrants are an important source of labour for some of these industries. However, compared with non-immigrants, they are more likely to be employed in the personal services industries, manufacturing and construction. Moreover, the likelihood of being employed in one industry rather than another often differs depending on the immigrant's sex, age at arrival, education, knowledge of English and/or French and length of time in Canada.

Living in a new society generally entails a period of adjustment, particularly when a person must look for work, learn a new language, or deal with an educational system, medical services, government agencies, and laws that may differ significantly from those in his or her country of origin. The difficulty of transition may be seen in the labour market profile of recent immigrants: compared with longer-established immigrants, and with those born in Canada, many may experience higher unemployment rates, hold jobs that do not reflect their level of training and education, and earn lower incomes.

In 1996, immigrants aged 25 to 44 who had arrived in the previous five

years had lower labour force participation rates and lower employment rates than the Canadian-born, even though they were generally better educated and more than 90% could speak at least one official language.¹³ Both male and female immigrants who were recent arrivals were more likely than the Canadian-born to be employed in sales and services occupations and in processing, manufacturing and utilities jobs. However, the proportion of immigrant men in many professional occupations was similar to that of Canadian-born men; in contrast, recent immigrant women were considerably less likely than Canadian-born women to be employed in occupations in business, finance, administration, health, social sciences, education and government services. Recent immigrants also earned less on average than the Canadian-born.¹⁴

In the past, the disparities between recent immigrants and the Canadian-born have often disappeared over time, indicating that initial labour market difficulties reflect the adjustment process. The differences in the 1990s may also result from the diminished employment opportunities available during the recession, also a period of difficulty for the Canadian-born who were new entrants to the job market. Nevertheless, the gaps in employment rates and earnings widened between recent immigrants and the Canadian-born during the 1980s and 1990s, suggesting that newcomers were having an increasingly difficult time in the initial stages of labour market adjustment.

13. Badets, J. and L. Howatson-Leo. 1999. "Recent immigrants in the labour force," *Canadian Social Trends*, Spring 1999.

14. Picot, G. and A. Heisz. 2000. *The performance of the 1990s Canadian labour market*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11F0019MIE00148, #148.

Summary

Few would quarrel with the statement that the 20th century in Canada was an era of enormous change. Every area of life, ranging from the economy to family to law, was altered over the course of a hundred years. Immigration was not immune to these transformative forces. The size and character of immigration flows were influenced by economic booms and busts, by world wars and national immigration policies, and indirectly by expanding communication, transportation and economic links around the world.

The ebb and flow of immigration has presented the most volatile changes over the last 100 years. The century began with the greatest number of immigrant arrivals ever recorded. Thereafter, levels fluctuated, often with dramatic swings from one decade to the next. The lowest levels were recorded in the 1930s during the Depression. By the close of the century, though, the number of immigrants arriving annually were again sufficiently large that net migration accounted for over half of Canada's population growth.

Other changes in immigration are better described as trends, for they followed a course that was cumulative rather than reversible. The high ratio of men to women immigrants dropped steadily throughout the century. There were two main reasons for this decline. First, the number of men immigrating fell during the two wars and the Depression; and second, the number of women immigrants increased in the last half of the century as a result of family reunification after World War II and of family migration, in which women, men and their children immigrated together.

Even in the 1900s and 1910s, the foreign-born were more likely to live in urban areas. After the initial settlement of the Prairies in the early 1900s, the trend toward urban settlement

Non-permanent residents

One category of newcomers to Canada that has grown considerably in recent years is that of non-permanent residents. Although they accounted for less than one per cent of the total national population (or 167,000 persons) at the time of the 1996 Census, the importance of these people, particularly to the labour force, is growing.

Non-permanent residents comprise a diverse group: they include highly skilled managers and technicians, semi-skilled agricultural and domestic workers, refugee claimants and foreign students. They differ from landed immigrants in that they are more likely to be of prime working age (20 to 49 years old) and men significantly outnumber women. They do, however, resemble recent immigrants in that they have congregated primarily in Canada's largest urban areas: nearly three-quarters of them live in the CMAs of Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. Temporary residents probably congregate in the cities because that is where the work is (for temporary workers) and where the major educational institutions are located (for foreign students). Refugee claimants also tend to settle in larger cities, partly because they represent the principal entry points to the country, and partly because work and support services are more likely to be available.

The largest group of non-permanent residents is that of persons admitted for temporary employment. Since the early 1980s, the number of temporary workers has exceeded the number of working-age immigrants (15 to 64 years), sometimes by a ratio of more than two to one. Although foreign managers and business people have historically resided in Canada to direct the operations of foreign-owned enterprises, the image of temporary workers also includes persons from developing countries working in low-skilled jobs. However, in the wake of the FTA and NAFTA agreements, and with the growing demand for labour from information technology industries, this image of the temporary worker is quickly being replaced by one of highly skilled managerial or technical employees.

Another significant group of non-permanent residents is composed of persons waiting for rulings on their refugee claims. Indeed, one of the largest single increases in the number of non-permanent residents occurred in 1989. Almost 100,000 refugee claimants and out of status foreigners were given the opportunity to apply for permanent residence from inside Canada, under a special Backlog Clearance Program and were given the right to work without having to apply for Employment Authorization.

- For more information, see M. Michalowski, 1996. "Visitors and visa workers: Old wine in new bottles?" *International Migration, Refugee Flows and Human Rights in North America: The Impact of Free Trade and Restructuring*; C. McKie, 1994. "Temporary residents of Canada," *Canadian Social Trends*, Spring 1994.

accelerated. By the 1990s, the vast majority of recent immigrants were residing in census metropolitan areas, mainly those of Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal.

Government policies regulating who would be admitted and under

what conditions also evolved. Much of the effort during the first 50 years of the century focused on restricting immigration from regions of the world other than the U.S., Britain, and Europe. This position changed in the 1960s, when national origin was

removed as a criterion for entry. The policies enacted thereafter entrenched the basic principles guiding admissions, such as family reunification, economic contributions, and humanitarian concerns. With these changes, the source countries of immigrants to Canada substantially altered. By 1996, close to half of the foreign-born in Canada were from countries other than the U.K., the U.S. and Europe.

As a result of these changes, Canada at the close of the 20th century contrasted sharply with Canada 100 years before. Immigrants had increased the population; they had diversified the ethnic and linguistic composition of the country; and they had laboured in both the agrarian economy of old, and in the new industrial and service-based economy of the future.

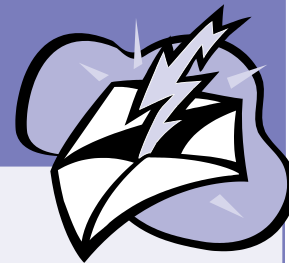


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