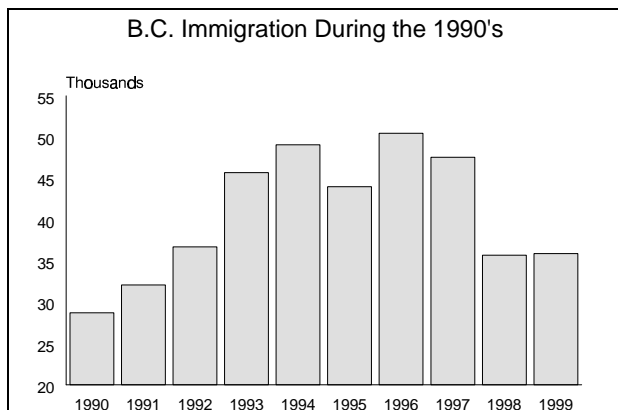


Special Feature: Recent Changes in British Columbia Immigration Level (An Update)

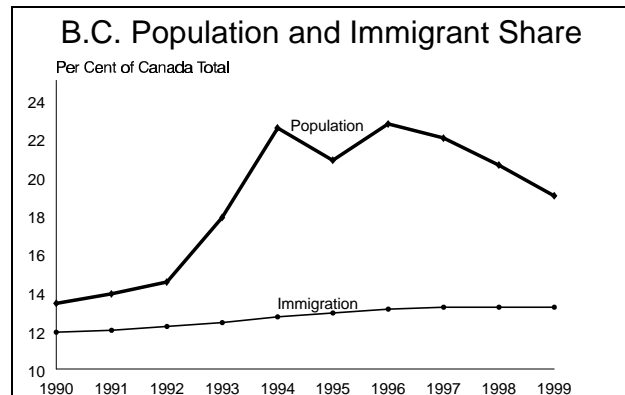
B.C.'s immigration level grew during the earlier part of the last decade and began to decline after it peaked in 1996 . . .

The number of immigrant landings in B.C. increased significantly over the period between 1990 and 1994. In fact, the number of immigrants to B.C. during 1996 was at a level (52,011 persons) that has not been seen in the recent history of the province. For a few decades prior to 1990, British Columbia immigration levels fluctuated between 15,000 and 25,000 persons per year. However, after 1996, immigration levels to B.C. started to decline.



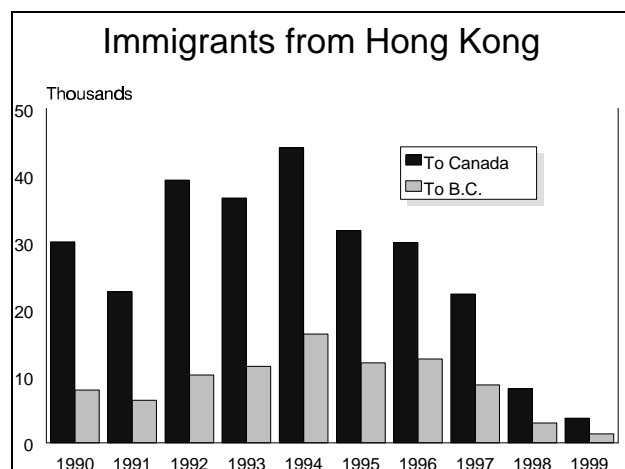
B.C.'s share of total Canadian immigration has also shrunk in recent years . . .

Over the last decade, B.C. share has grown from a low of 13.4 per cent in 1990 to a high of 23 per cent in 1996, dropping back to 18 per cent by 1999. The combined result of fewer immigrants coming to Canada and a lower proportion of immigrants choosing B.C. for their destination has contributed to the recent sharp decline of landings in the province. However, when compared to its population share which was about 13 per cent in 1999, B.C. still received a proportionally higher share of immigration to Canada relative to the rest of the country.



Fewer Hong Kong immigrants have been the major reason for the recent decline . . .

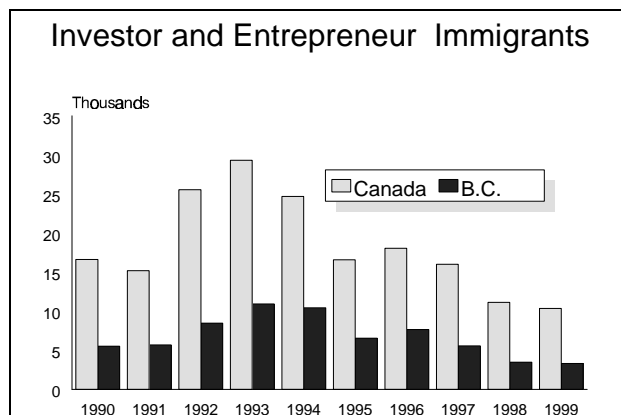
The rapid growth in B.C. immigration during the earlier part of the 1990's was primarily a result of the high influx of Hong Kong immigrants to the province. The significant decrease in the number of Hong Kong immigrants after 1996 was the main reason for the decline in immigration to B.C. and Canada. The hand-over of Hong Kong to the Chinese government in 1997 had an important impact on the level of immigration to Canada before and after the political event. During the last 10 years, Hong Kong immigration to Canada was at the highest during 1994 with 44,130 persons (19.7 per cent of all immigrants) and lowest in 1999 with 3,662 persons (1.9 per cent of the total).



Relatively, B.C. has attracted a disproportionately higher share of Hong Kong immigrants to Canada. During the period between 1990 and 1999, more than 35 per cent of all Hong Kong immigrants chose to settle in B.C. while the

province's general share of immigrants was less than 19 per cent. Consequently, the dramatic drop in Hong Kong immigrants to Canada played a significant role in the declining level of B.C. immigration during the last few years.

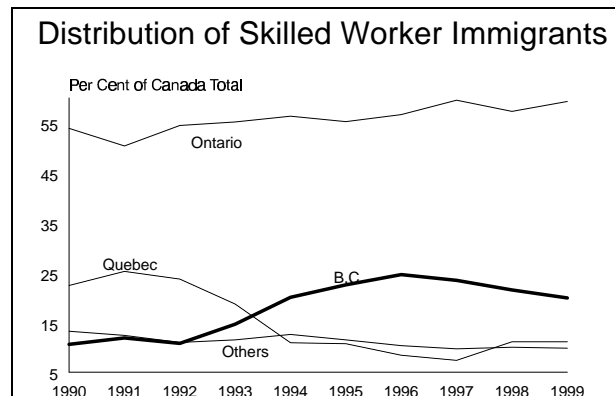
In addition, the economic downturn in many Asian countries prior to the end of the century also affected the number of immigrants to B.C. and Canada, in particular immigrants in the business classes. Over the past ten years, B.C. was able to attract a high proportion of investor and entrepreneur immigrants to Canada. Between 1990 and 1999, 29 per cent of all investor immigrants and 50 per cent of all entrepreneur immigrants chose to settle in B.C. However, the level of immigration under the business classes has been declining considerably in recent years mainly as a result of fewer immigrants arriving under these categories from Taiwan and Hong Kong.



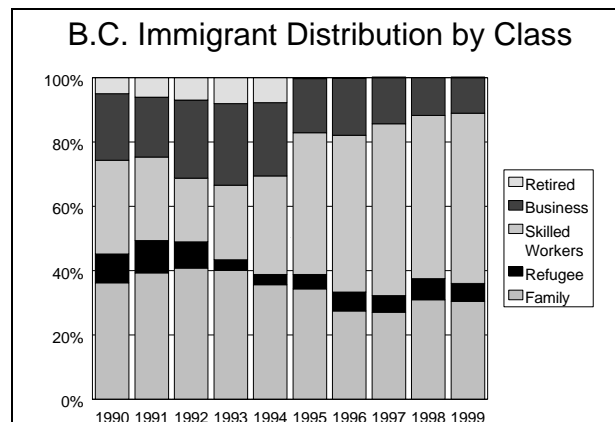
Parallel to the decrease in business immigrants, the deletion of the Retired Class from the immigration categories also had a higher impact on the immigration level for B.C. than for the other provinces. Over the past ten years, B.C. absorbed nearly half of the retired immigrants to Canada.

One of the reasons why proportionally more immigrants chose to settle in B.C. during the middle of the last decade could have been the favourable economic condition of B.C. relative to that of central Canada. However, the reverse in this condition was observed for B.C. during the latter part of the decade when B.C. was the only province that showed, on a per capita basis, continued negative economic growth over each year between 1995 and

1999. Also, unemployment rates have been considerably higher in B.C. than in Ontario and the other western provinces in recent years.



B.C. has received a slightly lower proportion of skilled worker immigrants (Other Independent Class and Assisted Relative Class) when its economic growth started to slow down towards the end of the decade. The decline in the share of immigrants in these classes also contributed directly to the drop in the overall landings in B.C.



While the level of immigration to B.C. could be affected by some of the factors discussed above, it is important to note that the immigration level is also largely a function of Canadian immigration policy. Any change in the future policy or administrative procedures will likely affect the overall Canadian immigration level and subsequently the number of immigrants arriving in the province.