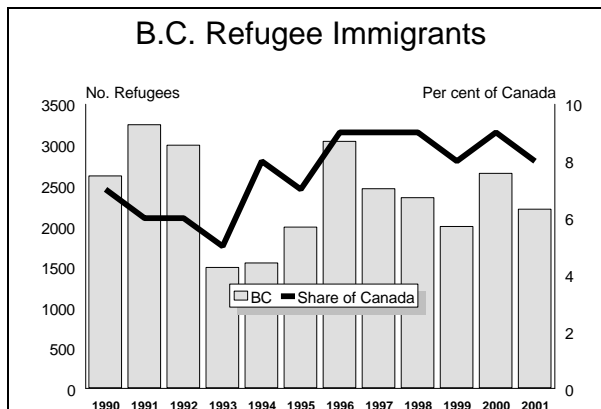


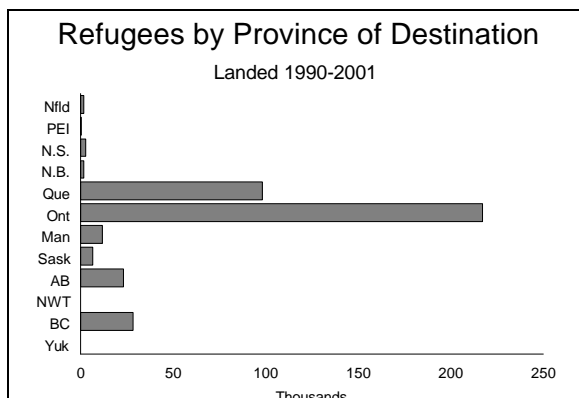
Special Feature: Refugee Immigrants to British Columbia

Accepting and settling refugees has always been an important theme in Canada's immigration policy. It is estimated that about 23,000 to 30,400 refugees will be admitted to Canada during 2002...

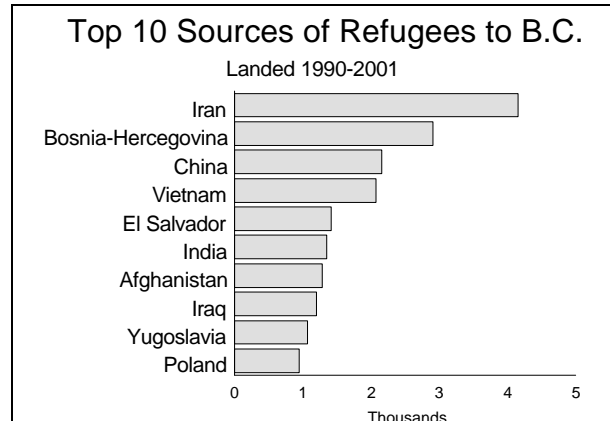
Historically, the number of refugee immigrants arriving in British Columbia has been small relative to other provinces such as Quebec and Ontario. Over the past decade, the annual number of refugee immigrants to B.C. has been less than three thousand people, representing between six to seven per cent of all landings in the province. This accounted for less than ten per cent of all refugees who arrived in Canada during the last ten years.



B.C.'s share of refugees has been steady and never exceeded its share of total Canadian immigrants. B.C.'s share of refugees remained at about 8 per cent even at the peak immigration period during the mid 1990's when the province attracted more than 20 per cent of immigrants to Canada.



Also, during the early 1990's when refugees represented more than 20 per cent of all new comers to Canada, B.C. share of total refugees was still at about 6 to 7 per cent.



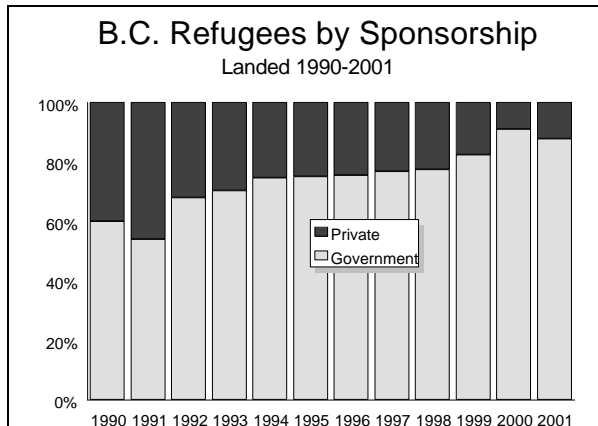
Over the last decade, most refugees destined for B.C. arrived from countries in the Middle-East and Asia with Iran being the top source. The top ten sources of refugees accounted for about 65 per cent of all refugees landed in the province during that time. Vietnam and Poland, the two dominating sources of refugees during the 1980's, have now moved down in the top ten list.

Generally speaking, refugees to Canada can be divided into two major categories – those who are sponsored privately and those who are sponsored by government. Over the last decade, most refugees to B.C. were admitted under the sponsorship of a government body. The trend also indicated that fewer refugees were privately sponsored in recent years.

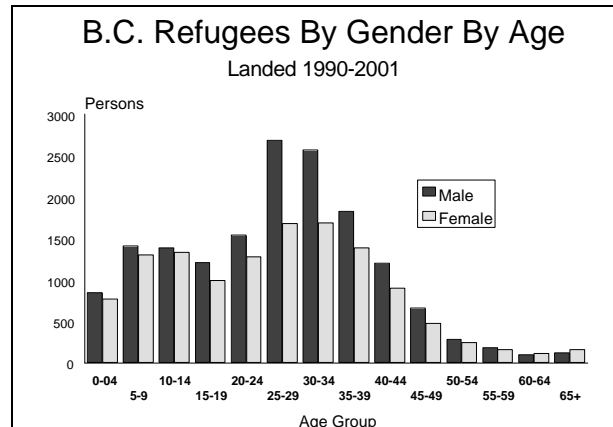
Until recently, refugee immigrants could also be sub-categorized into two classes, namely Convention Refugees and Designated Classes. Convention refugees are those who suit the definition of a refugee stipulated by the United Nations, whereas persons in the Designated Classes include those who face similar situations in being refugees but do not satisfy the strict definition of a convention refugee.

Compared with the overall immigration to B.C., refugees are relatively younger. For

those who landed between 1990 and 2001, a higher proportion of refugees was in the 25-34 age group. Also, contrary to the overall landings in the province, where a higher proportion of immigrants were female, male refugees out-numbered female refugees in most age groups. Males represented about 60 per cent of all refugees landed during the given period.



Education qualifications of refugees were relatively lower than those of other immigrants. Over the period 1990-2001, approximately 60 per cent of refugees aged 20 and over had only secondary or less education, comparatively higher than the 44 per cent observed for the non-refugee immigrants.



English language ability of refugees was only slightly lower than that of the non-refugee immigrants. At time of landing during 1990-2001, 54 per cent of refugees reported having no English language ability, which is only marginally higher than the 50 per cent reported by non-refugee immigrants. Spanish, Serbo-Croatian, Persian, Vietnamese and Farsi were the most often spoken languages by refugees who came during 1990-2001.