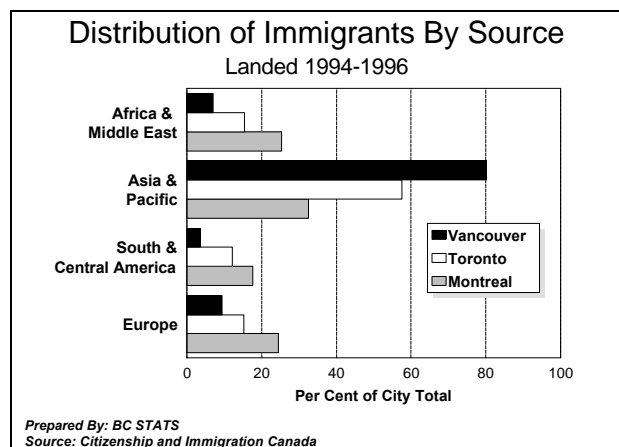
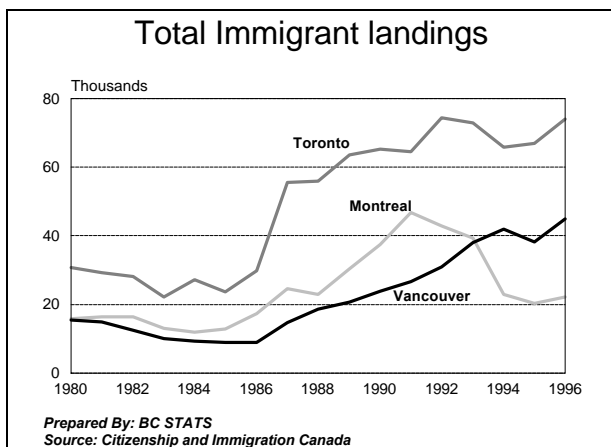


## Special Feature: A Tale of Three Immigrant Cities

Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal, three of the most populous cities in Canada, are also the preferred destinations for many recent immigrants. Almost two of every three immigrants who arrived in Canada during 1996 reported their intended destination to be either Vancouver, Toronto or Montreal. Due to the differences in geographic location, demographic and industrial characteristics between these cities, the characteristics of recent immigrants to these regions vary significantly.

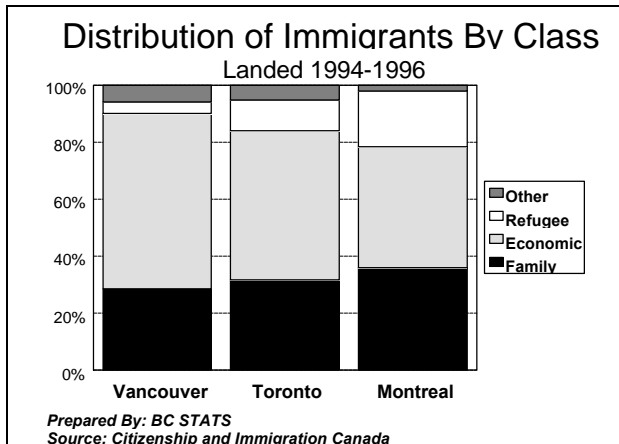
During the three year period 1994-1996, there was a total of 124,701 immigrants who settled in the Vancouver area, 204,946 in the Toronto Area, and 65,049 in the Montreal area, which represented 19 per cent, 32 per cent and 10 per cent of the total Canadian immigrants, respectively. Comparing immigrants by source indicates that Vancouver received a relatively higher proportion of immigrants from Asia. During the 1994-96 period, the proportion of immigrants who came from an Asian country was 80 per cent for Vancouver, 58 per cent for Toronto and 33 per cent for Montreal. On the other hand, Montreal led the other two cities in attracting a higher proportion of immigrants from Europe, Africa, Middle East as well as South and Central America. All three cities received approximately the same proportion of immigrants from the United States.



The ability to attract immigrants from different countries is related to the ethnic make-up of the cities. Compared to Toronto and Montreal, Vancouver has a lower population of European born immigrants while having a higher population of Asian born immigrants. According to the 1996 Census, the immigrant population in the Vancouver Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA) was 56 per cent Asian born and 30 per cent European born, in the Toronto CMA it was 37 per cent Asian born and 40 per cent European born, whereas in the Montreal CMA it was 27 Asian born and 42 per cent European born. The recent high level of arrivals of Asian immigrants to British Columbia is likely to continue to have a positive effect on the future inflow of Asian immigrants, in particular those in the family class who come to re-unite with family members.

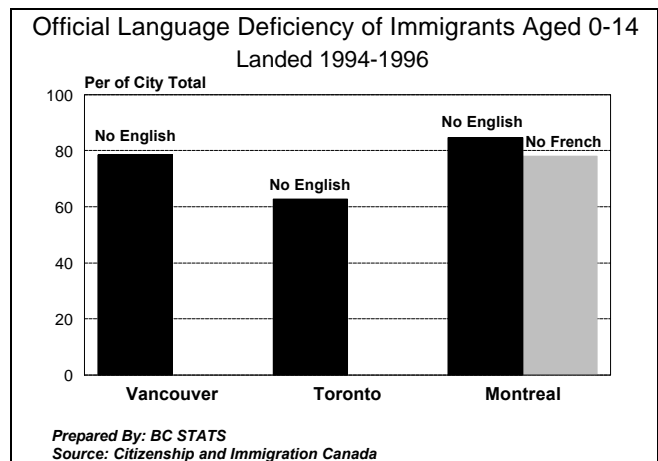
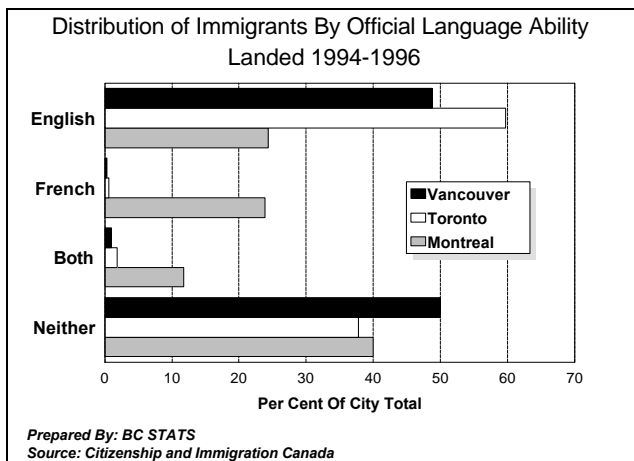
A comparison of immigrants by class indicates that Vancouver received fewer refugee immigrants while attracting proportionally more economic immigrants. During the 1994-96 period, the number of refugee immigrants who arrived in the three cities was 4,947 persons for Vancouver, 22,179 for Toronto, and 12,764 for Montreal. This represented only four per cent of the overall landings in Vancouver but 11 per and 20 per cent for Toronto and Montreal, respectively. Also, 61 per cent of immigrants who arrived in Vancouver were admitted under the economic classes which include skilled workers and business immigrants, compared to 52 per cent for Toronto and 42 per cent for Montreal. The percentage of family class immigrants is more uniform among the three cities.

The proportion of family class immigrants in the total city landings was 29 per cent for Vancouver, 32 per cent for Toronto, and 36 per cent for Montreal.



Official language ability of recent immigrants varied considerably between the three cities. Official language ability is usually self-assessed by immigrants during the application process and is loosely defined as having at least a basic ability to communicate in English and/or French. Recent immigrants to Toronto or Montreal tended to have better overall official language ability than those to Vancouver. Over the 1994-96 period, 62 per cent of immigrants who landed in Toronto possessed Canadian official language ability, compared to 60 per cent in Montreal and only 50 per cent in Vancouver. However, a different picture emerges when

official language ability is examined separately for French and English. A significantly higher number of immigrants in Montreal possess French language ability and a lower number possess English language ability. Of those Montreal immigrants who possess official language ability, 20 per cent were bilingual and the remainder were divided almost equally between English only and French only language ability. The proportion of immigrants who have no English language ability was 50 per cent for Vancouver and 38 for Toronto, while the proportion without French language ability was 64 for Montreal.



A comparison of English and French language ability of recent immigrants under the age of 15 shows another interesting difference among immigrants of elementary or junior secondary school age in the three cities. For immigrants aged 0 to 14 who landed between 1994 and 1996 in Vancouver, 79 per cent have no English language ability, compared to 63 per cent for those who landed in Toronto and 85 per cent in Montreal. At the same time, 78 per cent of those in Montreal did not possess French language ability. Hence, if English is taken as the primary language for younger school children in Toronto and Vancouver while French for those in Montreal, then Vancouver and Montreal would have the highest proportion of immigrants in the said category without official language ability.