

## The Shifting History of Migration and Citizenship in the Making of Trans-Pacific Canada, 1940-2010

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In the last four decades, a wholesale shift of migration patterns from trans-Atlantic to trans-Pacific flows has created a new Canada. The changes were quiet at first, beginning with the creation of a new citizenship system in 1947 and the new “points system” for immigration in 1967, but by the 1980s Canada was increasingly becoming globally connected with a Pacific future rather than an Atlantic past. There has literally been a sea change since the initial moment of national Confederation in 1867, when the Dominion of Canada was created out of the British North American colonies that had not been incorporated into the expanding United States. For most of its history, the mythic national imagination of Canada has been one of trans-Atlantic, white European settlement spreading westward, displacing indigenous societies already existing in North America.

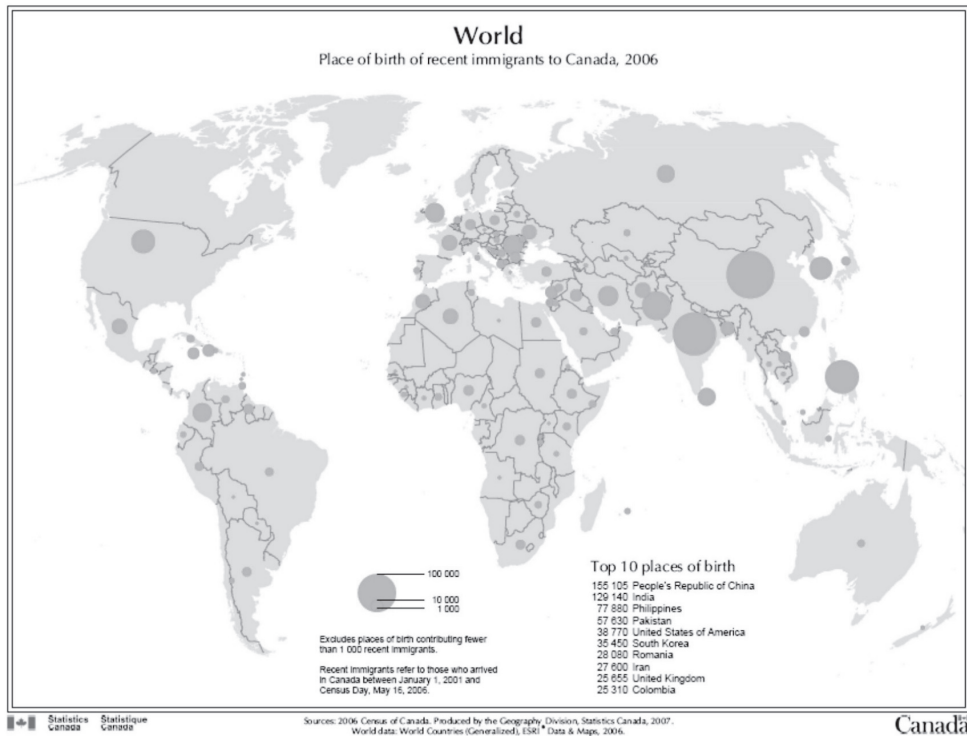
Settlement from Great Britain dominated most of the first century of Canadian immigration, supported by racial preferences in immigration policy as well as white supremacy in employment, housing, and voting. But in the last half-century, changes in immigration and citizenship policy have allowed a shift in migration patterns from trans-Atlantic to trans-Pacific. Within the last two decades, it has become increasingly clear that there is a new and ever-growing Pacific Canada.

What is the demographic reality of the “New Pacific Canada”? The top 10 places of birth for immigrants who arrived in Canada between 2001 and 2006 included only two European countries: Romania at #7 with 28,080 immigrants, and the United Kingdom—which was the dominant #1 sending nation for the first century of Canadian history—was even lower on the list at #9, sending just 25,000 new immigrants. In contrast, 6 of the top 10 countries were in Asia, and the top 4 on the list—the People’s Republic of China (PRC), India, the Philippines, and Pakistan, accounted for 2/3 of all new migrants to Canada in that period, with the PRC sending over 155,000, India over 129,000, the Philippines over 77,000, and Pakistan over 57,000.<sup>1)</sup>

In 2006, 83.9% of all new immigrants to Canada came from regions outside of Europe, and the official government term “visible minority,” used to designate “non-white” Canadians, no longer made sense to describe Canada’s urban populations. Over 96% of Canada’s “visible

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<sup>1)</sup> 2006 Census of Canada, “World: Place of Birth of New Immigrants to Canada, 2006,” produced by the Geography Division, Statistics Canada, 2007. Also, “Immigration to Canada from the Asia Pacific, 1961-1996,” Population & Immigration Statistical Reports, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (original source 1996 Census).



minorities” live in metropolitan regions. Two main groups— South Asians and self-identified ethnic Chinese—accounted for 1/2 of all visible minorities in Canada, with each accounting for roughly 1/4 of the total. Ethnic Chinese and South Asians account for 8% of Canada’s total population, but because they have settled overwhelmingly in either the metropolitan regions of Toronto or Vancouver, they have transformed those cities. Between 1980 and 2001, for instance, the largest proportion of new migrants to Canada were ethnic Chinese who came from various locations in Southeast Asia (including Hong Kong), along with migrants born in the People’s Republic of China. These various ethnic Chinese migrants went overwhelmingly (87%) to the five largest cities in Canada, with 41% going to Toronto and 31% to Vancouver alone.<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>2)</sup> Shibao Guo and Don Devoretz, “The Changing Faces of Chinese Immigrants,” Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis, Vancouver Centre, No. 05-08, February 2005. Chinese Canadian communities are not homogeneous, with a great variety of linguistic and ethnic variation reflecting varied origins from around the globe. The same can be said of South Asians, who like ethnic Chinese, often come to Canada as part of global diasporas that emanated from home villages decades and even centuries earlier, carrying to Canada a wide array of family journeys and complicated histories from around the world and over many generations. By 2006, South Asians had slightly surpassed ethnic Chinese as the largest group of “visible minorities” in Canada, but both are categories that envelop a complex spectrum of family and personal histories that cannot be reduced to simple ethno-cultural or racial categorizations.

What is clear is that trans-Pacific migration from Asia has transformed Canada in the last 40 years. Toronto and Vancouver have become the urban capitals of Pacific Canada, and Vancouver in particular has become a city in which the term “visible minority” to describe Asians makes no sense. In 2006, 4 out of 10 Vancouverites was an immigrant, and 5 out of 10 were of Asian ancestry. Richmond and Burnaby, suburbs of metropolitan Vancouver, were 65% and 55% non-white, and 50% of Richmond’s population is ethnic Chinese—in Vancouver, Canada’s third largest city, the “visible minority” is “white.”

If the “New Pacific Canada” can be understood by looking at the changed face of Vancouver in the present, so too can the future be seen in the young faces of the largely Asian, non-white Canada of visible minorities. Visible minorities in Canada are literally the face of tomorrow—their median age in 2006 was 33, versus an average age of 39 for the population as a whole. Continuing a demographic trend created by post-1967 migration patterns, the future of Canada will continue to shift towards a world derived from and oriented towards the Pacific world.

### **The New Pacific Canada and the Old Pacific Canada**

What kinds of implications on citizenship, self-identity, and an imagined sense of national belonging has such a shift to trans-Pacific migration created? And what are the continuing legacies of an earlier European settler society created by British colonialism, white supremacist politics, and the ethnic cleansing of indigenous peoples?

Ironically, the “new” Pacific Canada is also a return to an “old” Pacific Canada, a world in which migration networks and trade flows connected the new nation of Canada to Asia and the Pacific region. In 1788, when the first attempts to create trading forts on the northwest coast of North America began, the region had been home for tens of thousands of years to complex societies that were among the wealthiest in the world in natural resources. The trading forts themselves reflected the mixed nature of British imperial expansion, with a mix of Chinese, Native Hawaiian, French Canadian, Scottish, and English working and living together, trading goods from around the global British empire for furs and other local resources. Within these forts and then within expanding colonies in British Columbia and Vancouver Island developed a complex, mixed society that engaged trans-Pacific and trans-Atlantic migrants with local indigenous peoples.<sup>3)</sup>

The crucial shift occurred in the late 19th and early 20th century as increasing numbers of British and other European migrants to the colonies in Australia, New Zealand, and British

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<sup>3)</sup> Similar processes were occurring in the Australian colonies as well as British colonies in New Zealand, Malaya, and the Caribbean, with a pattern of broadly defined protections as British subjects for all those residing in areas of imperial control. In practical terms, all of the British colonies were marked by loose political control aimed primarily at the protection of entrepreneurial development, with the widespread use of Chinese labor in developing colonial industries, as well as the remarkable success of ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs in engaging with local indigenous populations and developing local economies.

Columbia used a shared model for creating white settler societies by building new national states around white supremacy. Economic and political privileges became restricted to European settlers, and the earlier broad and loose protection in imperial realms of all subjects of the British empire was replaced by a definition of citizenship in the new nations of Australia, New Zealand and Canada that was restricted to those categorized as “whites.” National policies were designed 1) to clear indigenous peoples from the best land into reserves, 2) to systematically destroy their language and culture through residential schooling and family separation, 3) to deprive non-whites of any privileges enjoyed by Europeans, and 4) to enact immigration policies designed to stop or slow down migrants from Asia. Although these policies were relatively successful in attaining their goals in all of the white settler colonies as they turned into white supremacist nations, the pervasive presence of both Chinese and indigenous peoples continued, despite the multiple forms of legal, political, and economic discrimination and exclusion.<sup>4)</sup>

In other words, each of these new nations was created using the powerful political tool of white supremacy to define citizenship using racially exclusive terms. Between 1871 and 1947, British Columbia was the regional epitome of a segregated Canadian nation that disenfranchised non-whites, similar to the American South and to South Africa under apartheid. Like other white settler colonies in Australia and New Zealand, Canada also created immigration policies designed to curtail or exclude immigration from Asia.

The question to be answered about the period 1940-2010 is how such a white supremacist society transformed so quickly and peacefully.<sup>5)</sup> Unlike the American South and South Africa in the late 20th century, Canada dismantled white supremacist policies and racially discriminatory legislation through internal legal transformation with relatively little violence. Racial preferences for white European immigrants were removed in 1967 with virtually no political opposition. The remarkably quiet transition has helped feed a mythology of Canada as a peaceful, morally superior nation that values justice and a universal and abstract notion of rights.

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<sup>4)</sup> In Canada, Chinese were targeted with a discriminatory Head Tax in 1885 that charged each new migrant \$50 (equivalent to a year's earnings for a laborer), raising a large amount of revenue that was split between the British Columbia and national government (a total of \$23 million between 1885 and 1923—about \$1.3 billion in today's currency). A high profile anti-Asian riot in Vancouver in 1907 led to a broad set of exclusionary immigration policies that targeted Japanese and South Asians starting in 1908 (the “Continuous Passage” Act), with the complete exclusion of Chinese coming in 1923. Japanese Canadians were forcibly interned during World War II, despite many Japanese having fought for Canada during World War I and earning the right to vote through their military service, and their property liquidated in order to pay for their internment.

<sup>5)</sup> Patricia Roy, *The Triumph of Citizenship: The Japanese and Chinese in Canada, 1941-1967* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), and Jose Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution: National Identities in English Canada, 1945-1971* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), both attempt in different ways to give answers to this question of how Canada transformed so quickly.

What were the main factors in this transformation? What many scholars emphasize is the triumph of an abstract notion of universal rights in the wake of the atrocities of World War II. They point to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948, and the crucial role of Canadian John Peter Humphries in drafting it.<sup>6)</sup> Humphries is placed within a long political tradition of abstract human rights dating back to the 18th century European Enlightenment and the creation of the U.S. Constitution and its Amendments (the U.S. Bill of Rights). The horrors of World War II, in particular in Nazi Germany, acted as a catalyst for the adoption of universal human rights and a transformation away from racial segregation and white supremacy, which had been such hallmarks of Nazi Germany.<sup>7)</sup>

The 1947 Canada Citizenship Act offered two crucial definitions of citizenship that undermined the prevailing white supremacist foundations for national belonging: 1) birthright citizenship for those born on Canadian soil (*jus soli*) open to all regardless of race (except those with aboriginal status), and 2) the possibility of naturalization regardless of race. The principle of automatic birthright citizenship for anyone born in Canada followed the United States in moving away from the inheritance of citizenship rights based upon that of the parents (*jus sanguinis*), a system that had been crucial for protecting the superiority of those of British lineage or descent within the British Empire.

This new legal definition of citizenship in 1947 removing racial considerations had great consequences for individual Chinese, Japanese, and South Asians. Acquiring naturalized Canadian citizenship helped override B.C. provincial laws that excluded Chinese from the vote in 1875, the Japanese in 1895, and South Asians in 1907. However, the effects of decades of immigration exclusion had meant that the total number of trans-Pacific migrants to Canada had been effectively limited, and they and their descendents made up less than 1% of the total population.

In other words, extending rights to this small number of Asian Canadians did little to change Canadian society overall, and the defensive reaction to such transformations was relatively limited. Unlike in the United States—where the widespread economic privileges created by white supremacy were threatened by civil rights legislation that would

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<sup>6)</sup> See for instance Michael Ignatieff, *The Rights Revolution* (Toronto: Anansi, 2000), on the importance of the UN Declaration as the watershed moment of the human rights revolution.

<sup>7)</sup> The challenge for such explanations is that the contradiction between white supremacist policies and abstract universal human rights had been in existence for over two centuries within expanding European empires, and had been little more than a philosophical paradox even as white settler nations passed wholesale discriminatory legislation. In practice, the contradictory idealization of abstract human rights alongside the systematic deprivation of rights from non-citizens (in particular from non-whites and from women) was commonplace throughout the 19th and early 20th century. The adoption of new laws that ended racial discrimination cannot be attributed alone to the need to overcome such contradictions, even if accusations of hypocrisy became more acute during the Cold War as the United States and Canada were taken to task for the treatment of non-whites.

desegregate jobs and housing—white Canadians believed correctly that little would change. This is not to say that white supremacy was less pervasive in Canada or less effective at creating economic privileges for those considered white. Indeed, the irony is that white supremacy as a set of economic and political privileges was *so effective* in Canada that creating legislation granting legal equality to non-whites made almost no difference in undermining the *de facto* privileges enjoyed by those who were white. Neighborhoods that were all white remained effectively so, even if a handful of non-whites could now move in, and informal *de facto* job discrimination against non-whites remained in practice for decades.

In particular, ending *de jure* discrimination did not alter the enduring quality of white supremacy in the self-identity of Canada. Immigration policy had created a demographic reality of an overwhelmingly European settler society, and a lasting self-representation of Canada as a “white nation” built around the privileges of being white remained.<sup>8)</sup>

After decades of lowered global migration flows during the Great Depression, World War II, and the Cold War, trans-Atlantic migration rose again in the mid-20th century. In the decades after World War II, a large wave of migrants from Europe were allowed into Canada under the newly created category of “refugees” or “displaced persons.” Although speaking a variety of European languages and bearing striking ethnic differences from the migrants from Great Britain that had been the preferred and targeted settlers during the late 19th and early 20th century, the privileges of a continuing white supremacy in economic and political practice was available to them if they were willing to adopt English language use and an unquestioned Anglo-conformity.

It was not this large wave of European migrants who undermined white supremacy—indeed they could benefit from its privileges if they assimilated and conformed by adapting their speech and cultural practices.<sup>9)</sup> The main factor in the creation of a New Canada that

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<sup>8)</sup> Indigenous peoples continued to have their lands taken and families destroyed by separation and residential schooling until the 1980s, and their legal status as non-citizens meant that whatever was done to them by government agents, they had virtually no legal recourse. Until the 1960s, an indigenous person with “aboriginal status” could not vote or become a professional lawyer or doctor, and it was technically illegal for them to question government agents in their decisions about what was best for them or to make any claims for land that had been taken from them.

<sup>9)</sup> How to explain this pervasive belief, generally accepted even by those who are categorized as “immigrants” who often believed that they belonged less than British settlers? The distinction between “Canadians” and late arriving “immigrants” was a direct by-product of the politics of nation building that centered upon the “two founding races” of Canada—the British and the French. Professional historians and national political parties adopted this founding myth, writing out of narratives of Canadian belonging indigenous peoples and turning by mythical alchemy all other peoples into “immigrants” who had arrived late. When large numbers of recently arrived migrants from Britain and the United States came to British Columbia in the late 19th and early 20th century, they united under slogans such as “White Canada Forever,” explicitly asserting that those non-whites in the past who were there before white migrants arrived did not belong, and that anyone non-white should be excluded in the future. Both indigenous inhabitants and the Chinese and other trans-Pacific migrants who were already in Canada were erased from

truly undermined the long legacies of white supremacy was the transformative effects of trans-Pacific mass migration since the 1970s.

### **From Immigration Studies to Migration Studies**

One of the signature observations of the new scholarship that has grown in the last two decades to study and understand global migrations has been to note that the term “migration” —denoting the movements of people in multiple directions and with multiple journeys throughout a person’s life—is a much more useful framework than the term “immigration” for analyzing the way that people move. Immigration was a term that captured the interest of migrant settler states such as Canada, Australia, and the United States for building coherent national imaginaries. By naming a one-way process by which migrants arrived and then were incorporated into the body of the nation, “immigration” focused on only some migrants and evaluated them through an ideological lens. The defining question to be asked was whether these migrants were successfully “assimilated” into the host nation.

In moving away from an “immigration” paradigm for understanding citizenship and belonging in white settler societies, migration studies focus on the historical legacies of racial ideologies in shaping definitions of national belonging of all migrants and their descendents —both those who were excluded and included in defining citizenship. Indeed, taking the viewpoint of migration studies, the creation of racial hierarchies for determining national belonging was an essential element of creating an unquestioned ownership and belonging for trans-Atlantic European migrants as they cleared indigenous peoples and limited the migration of non-Europeans.

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national belonging both in the past and future. As an example, Chinese had crossed the Pacific and inhabited British Columbia long before they helped build the Canadian Pacific Railroad, ironically building the very means of trans-continental transportation that allowed the mass migration of trans-Atlantic migrants to the western regions of North America. But as soon as large numbers of migrants stepped off the newly built railroads, the politics of white supremacist nation building created a political order that linked the ethnic cleansing policies of “Indian reservations” with anti-Asian exclusion. One of the most perverse tenets of the “White Canada” movement was their assertion that the Chinese were late arrivers who had come to Canada to take away jobs from “white workers,” whereas in actual practice it was almost invariably the opposite. In industry after industry, Chinese workers were driven out of their jobs and replaced by recently arrived laborers from the Atlantic region. The ideological importance of this magical alchemy cannot be underemphasized—a mythic belief in the priority of white migrants could literally change the narrative of time, so that whenever an “immigrant” arrived, ideologically it granted less belonging than the natural belonging for all time of a “white” Canadian, no matter when they themselves arrived as individuals. What this set of non-British, European migrants did help reinforce was a powerful ideological distinction that defined British-origin migrants and their descendents as ideal Canadians and all others as late-coming “immigrants.” It was certainly astonishing that the Anglo-Scots who themselves came to Canada as migrants could believe with such ferocity that Canada naturally belonged to them. Even as they cleared indigenous inhabitants out of sight into reserves, their own arrival as migrants to Canada did not prevent the widespread belief that all others who arrived were “immigrants” who did not belong.



Taking a migration studies perspective rather than a limited nationalist perspective on the creation of a “New Pacific Canada” in the last half century allows us to see how the changes wrought were not merely the result of changes in governmental policy nor of historical trends within a national framework, but embedded in the shifting patterns of a larger Pacific migration system within which national immigration policies played a shaping but sometimes reactive role.

The most important shift was the rise again in the 1950s and 1960s of trans-Pacific migrations. Curtailed by the Depression, world war, and the legal barriers of white settler nations, trans-Pacific migrations picked up again as ethnic Chinese migrants fleeing newly created post-colonial nations in Southeast Asia and the Communist revolution in China began moving into Canada and the United States. In the beginning, the numbers were relatively small, numbering in the hundreds for Canada and the tens of thousands for the U.S., but in taking advantage of openings for entry created by the new category of “refugees,” a migration pattern of educated and mobile socioeconomic elites was established. When the United States in 1965 and Canada in 1967 removed immigration preferences for European origin, both created new preferences for educated and professional migrants. It was this next large wave of trans-Pacific migrants coming to both the U.S. and Canada in the wake of immigration reform who have transformed Canada.

By the late 1980s, immigration policy in Canada had defined three well-articulated paths for migrants—1) Entry based upon a points-based system that selected for family reunification and for highly educated professionals, 2) Wealthy business and entrepreneurial migrants who were given priority and fast-track naturalization and citizenship, and 3) Claimants for political refugee status who needed to be reviewed and evaluated by political asylum standards developed internationally in the postwar period. The first and second category in particular has been dominated by trans-Pacific migration since the 1980s.

Looking back on the transformations that new trans-Pacific migration patterns have wrought in Canada over the last four decades, several trends stand out. The first was the increasing prevalence of global migration flows that are circular, with frequent travel back and forth between two or more locations on both sides of the Pacific, rather than the “one way immigration” flows from sending country to receiving country that had been the hallmark assumption of most immigration policy during the 20th century. The second trend was the creation of a distinct set of highly mobile migrants who were the most visible in exhibiting these forms of circular migration. These migrants tended to be well educated and strategic in their migrations, encouraged to move to Canada by the new immigration laws designed to attract highly educated and financially secure migrants, and seeing in Canada a safe and relatively accessible place for their children’s education. Split families became a significant phenomenon, with children going to school in Canada, often with wives or grandparents accompanying them, while fathers or parents continued to work in Asia.

Strategic circular migration is in fact not entirely new, having antecedents in the trans-Pacific labor migrations of a century before. What is distinctly new, however, is the volume



and impact of this trend. The term “astronaut” arose to describe fathers who jetted back and forth across the expanse of the Pacific Ocean to visit family in Canada while continuing to work in Asia. “Parachute children” came to be used as a description for those kids who came to, or were left, in Canada to go to high school or university while parents continued to work in other parts of the world. Although always a minority of the total migrants who came to Canada in the last three decades, the significance of circular trans-Pacific migrations has been particularly marked.

Studies showed that not only were migrants often highly strategic in thinking about when they should live in Canada and when it was more advantageous to live or work somewhere else in the world, but native-born Canadians also saw Canada as only one site among many to live and work. Locations in Canada were understood within a life process of aspirations, often as a good place to go to school or to live out retirement in comfort and leisure, but a much less ideal place to work during the prime wage earning years at mid-life.<sup>10)</sup>

The presence of Canadian citizens outside of Canada, living and working for decades, became an increasingly noted phenomenon in scholarly studies and the popular media. In the first decade of the 21st century, it became widely known that there were 250,000 Canadian citizens living and working in Hong Kong. To put this in perspective, more Canadians lived in the city of Hong Kong than in either Saskatoon or Regina, and if the Canadians in Hong Kong were counted as a city in Canada, it would have been in the top 20 of Canadian cities in size.

One of the most remarkable trends in the last quarter century has been the increased targeting of a particular set of immigrants who carry with them substantial financial resources. The Business Migration Program was revamped in the 1980s to specifically target investors and entrepreneurs who could commit to a certain level of investment in Canada (beginning with \$250,000 at the beginning of the program and rising eventually to a minimum of \$400,000 as the program became successful and recently in 2010 rising again to \$800,000) or to the creation of a set number of jobs.

The preference for wealthy migrants was not new for Canadian immigration policy—even anti-Chinese legislation such as the 1885 Chinese Head Tax and the exclusionary 1923 Chinese Immigration Act both contained exemptions for wealthy “merchants.” The novelty of this new program lay in the explicit description of the exact amount of financial commitment that migrants needed to make in order to be given fast track immigration

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<sup>10)</sup> David Ley and Audrey Kobayashi, “Back to Hong Kong: Return Migration or Transnational Sojourn”; Kenny Zhang of the Asia Pacific Foundation estimated that there were over 2.7 million Canadians living outside Canada, and findings from surveys revealed that those in the age range of 30-44 were most likely to be somewhere else, with the most popular reason by far being job/career opportunities. Kenny Zhang, “Global Canadians: Scale, Profile, and Impact,” Asia Pacific Foundation, Third Annual Symposium of the PWFC, Dec. 13-14, 2008.

status, and how aggressive provincial and federal governments in Canada were in setting up recruitment stations in Asia, in particular in Hong Kong before the 1997 reversion of political control from Britain to the People's Republic of China.

The strategic targeting of wealthy migrants was enormously successful, with ethnic Chinese from all around Southeast Asia making up the majority of those who initially responded to the call. In some ways, acquiring Canadian citizenship and a Canadian passport became a form of security guaranteeing high mobility, a *de facto* "exit visa" out of any location (such as Hong Kong before and after its reversion to PRC control in 1997). The investments made in Canada could be considered a transaction cost for the acquisition of this form of secure mobility, but access to Canada itself became a commodity because other nations such as Australia and the United States also began to pass immigration legislation targeting the same set of financially successful migrants. As the most sought after migrants began to consider an array of choices for migration, comparisons between cities such as Toronto, Vancouver, San Francisco, and Sydney, Australia, were made strategically by migrants.

The desirability of Canadian citizenship from the point of view of these highly mobile migrants increasingly centered upon factors such as quality of life (air and water quality, availability of good food, health care, accessibility by air to Asia for commuting), and most commonly the accessibility and cost of higher education for children. Vancouver-based architect Bing Thom made an off-hand observation in 2003 that Vancouver, B.C., had become the "Switzerland of the Pacific"—offering a safe haven for wealth for the elite of the Pacific world, just as Swiss banks had become famous for in Europe, and providing a handy location for the same families to send their children for schooling, just as Swiss boarding schools provided in Europe.

A safe and secure location to deposit both capital and school age children, Canada began to acquire a role in the Pacific world akin to Switzerland in the European Atlantic. Because the sale of primary residences in Canada is not subject to capital gains taxes, the high rate of return for investments in the urban housing markets of Toronto and Vancouver were in practice a tax free investment instrument. Located in the secure and stable financial environment of Canada, such investments seemed as safe as a Swiss bank account.

Educational mobility—the strategic migration of young students around the Pacific region—became a noticeable trend that had particular impact on the major universities in the Vancouver and Toronto metropolitan regions, as well as in the rapid growth of small private schools and colleges in those cities designed to prepare students from Asia (in particular South Korea, the PRC, and Taiwan) for entrance into North American universities. By 2008, for instance, the University of British Columbia had roughly 15% of its undergraduate population as foreign students paying non-resident tuition rates that were four times the amount of tuition for Canadian residents; however, it is likely that 1/3 of the students were born outside of Canada and had become Canadian citizens sometime before their entrance into UBC—44% of UBC's incoming class in 2005, for instance, listed English as a second

language, an approximation for the migrant origins of either themselves or their parents.<sup>11)</sup>

This half-century shift from a trans-Atlantic settler society built upon legal and informal practices of white supremacy, to a trans-Pacific haven for the wealthy and mobile elite of the Asia Pacific world, has unsurprisingly produced reactions. In the 1990s Vancouver was nicknamed “Hongcouver” as wealthy Hong Kong Chinese responded to recruitment offices in Hong Kong set up by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Older generations of middle class white Vancouverites who had lived for over a half century in segregated neighborhoods suddenly found themselves unable to afford living in their mansions. Newspapers around the globe carried the story of Vancouver’s painful transition. The surprise, however, was not that these retired accountants and aging widows of the colonial clerks of fading empire suddenly felt the economic privileges of white supremacy threatened; they had been living for decades beyond their means and were only able to afford their large homes and Chinese servants because of the benefits of being on top of a racial hierarchy. Their shock when wealthy Hong Kong Chinese suddenly bought their large homes for the same price as small apartments in Hong Kong was a long-delayed consequence of the erosion of white supremacy and the rise of dynamic economies in Asia. What was surprising was not their reaction, but the relatively short period it lasted. Most of the younger generation below the age of 30 found the new trans-Pacific Vancouver unremarkable or embraced the changes. In the two decades since, Vancouver and Toronto have been transformed to the extent that a new imagination of national belonging lags far behind.

That there is a gap between a national imaginary that still centers on an image of “white” Canada and the diverse citizenry that has resulted from mass trans-Pacific migration was made most apparent in November of 2010. In the popular annual university rankings issue of *Macleans*, the self-proclaimed “national magazine” of Canada, the provocative and inflammatory title asked if Canada’s top universities had become “Too Asian?” The article quoted “Canadian” students complaining that “Asian” students worked too hard and concentrated too much on their studies. The article openly wondered if something had gone wrong with Canadian universities and whether changes needed to be made. No attempt was made to define the “Asian” students as Canadian—the article assumed that to be “Canadian” was equivalent to being white and by opposition “Asian” students were foreign or did not

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<sup>11)</sup> As one of Canada’s most “Asian Pacific” universities in both composition and orientation, the University of British Columbia (and Vancouver’s other major institution Simon Fraser University) are perhaps the clearest examples of how the composition of Canada’s future educated elite are global in origin, with a particular weighting towards Asia. In terms of ethno-racial make-up alone, with no differentiation in terms of native-born versus immigrant origins, UBC also reflects perhaps the most significant example of how the demographic trend in Canada towards an “Asian Pacific” future are more marked among the educated and the young than for Canada’s population as a whole. In 2005, 53% of the incoming class at UBC self-identified as “Asian,” compared to 33.5% self identifying as “white.” Students identifying themselves as “Chinese” were roughly 37% of the incoming class. Figures for UBC’s incoming class in 2005 are care of Walter Sudmant, derived from a survey conducted of undergraduate.

have the same claims to belonging. There was clearly a distinction being drawn between the legal status of Asians—who could now be citizens—and a still pervasive image of them as essentially foreign and fundamentally different than the idealized image of Canada as “white.”

The public outcry to the *Macleans* story was immediate but limited. Even many recently arrived immigrants from Asia did not see a problem with the article and its claims that Asians were harder working than whites and that this might cause tensions. Indeed, some recent migrants from China wrote in the Chinese language press that they believed harder working Chinese would soon displace lazier whites both in the best schools and jobs. Buoyed by the economic rise of China and its jingoistic nationalism over the last two decades, a new generation of recently arrived migrants from China seem unfazed by the enduring legacies of white supremacy in Canada. The future, in their minds, is theirs. But it remains to be seen how the transformative demographic changes to Canada—which have been mainly confined to the two major urban regions of Vancouver and Toronto—will impact an enduring national imaginary of Canada as a white nation. The New Pacific Canada may be an irreversible reality, with its newest trans-Pacific citizens protected by the same rights of citizenship as every one else, but national belonging is not synonymous with legal citizenship, and although that gap is not yet divisive, it reflects a division between urban Canada and the rest of the nation that is stark.