

# Vancouver Centre of Excellence



## Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis

Commentary Series

**#97-04**

**Canada in the Asia Pacific Economy: The People Dimension**

**(Report on conference of same name held at SFU, 21-23 August)**

**Alec McGillivray**

**September 1997**

## RIIM

### Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis

The Vancouver Centre is funded by grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Citizenship & Immigration Canada, Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia and the University of Victoria. We also wish to acknowledge the financial support of the Metropolis partner agencies:

- Health Canada
- Human Resources Development Canada
- Department of Canadian Heritage
- Department of the Solicitor General of Canada
- Status of Women Canada
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- Correctional Service of Canada
- Immigration & Refugee Board

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**Vancouver Centre of Excellence: Research on Immigration and Integration in the  
Metropolis (RIIM)**

Commentary Series

**CANADA IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMY:  
THE PEOPLE DIMENSION**

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Report on conference of same name held at  
Simon Fraser University, Burnaby Campus  
21-23 August 1997

Conference Co-Sponsored by:  
Metropolis Project  
Canadian Heritage, Multiculturalism Program  
Citizenship & Immigration Canada, Selections Branch  
Citizenship & Immigration Canada, B.C., Prairies & Territories Region  
Foreign Affairs & International Trade Canada  
Human Resource Development Canada  
Industry Canada  
Government of British Columbia, Ministry Responsible for  
Multiculturalism, Human Rights & Immigration  
Macdonald Realtors

The author thanks Sydney Preston for her copyediting services  
in the preparation of this report

## **Economic Integration: The People Dimension**

People who immigrate to Canada are fulfilling two interrelated roles: integrating into Canadian society, and aiding Canada in its integration into the global economy. Recognizing that integration is a two-way process of accommodation between newcomers and Canadians, this conference explored these roles. The ‘people dimension’ of Canada’s position in the Asia-Pacific region relates to the movement and affairs of tourists and short-term and long-term migrants. Long-term, or permanent moves, which are the traditional view of immigration to and emigration from Canada, suggest the movement of family, resources and community ties to a new location, and to socioeconomic integration into the host society. Short-term moves (exchanges of youths, students, business people, professionals, scientists, academics, extended family and others) are a less traditional view. While shorter-term stays pose different integration challenges, they also offer economic opportunities. The goal of Canadian integration into the global economy provides a strong framework for viewing the benefits of tourism and the various shorter-term exchanges. (The Appendix on page 23 provides a list of short- and long-term movements of people.)

The first, more traditional view of integration looks at issues related to achieving maximum value, in a just fashion, from the human capital and potential that immigrants bring with them to Canada. In this regard, it is imperative that we produce the conditions necessary to integrate immigrants into a domestic social polity and economic environment. In discussing this view of integration, conference participants raised issues related to immigration policy, immigrant settlement services, recognition of non-Canadian education and experiences, access to job markets and business networks, language training, information dissemination and, to a lesser degree, demographics.

Globalization theory offers a basic structure for the second goal-oriented integration domain discussed at the conference. Very briefly, the theory presents the lessening of the ‘tyranny of distance and time’ due to such things as advances in telecommunications, travel infrastructure, container shipping, and computers. This has led to, and been driven by, ever-increasing flows of trade, people, knowledge, ideas, money, stocks, and cultural products. There is debate as to whether globalization is a positive force that will lead to economic and quality-of-life gains for many (ref. the growth of the middle class and in education levels and drop in birth rates in Asia), or a negative force driven by transnational corporations and capital, benefiting the

rich and leading to a new form of imperialism through the homogenization of culture (ref. the growing gap between rich and poor in Western industrialized nations and the movement of manufacturing to countries with low-paid labour and lax environmental laws). This debate was acknowledged at the conference, as was the pragmatic need for global competitiveness, regardless of position.

Discussions of the many mechanisms of integration and the role of immigrants in fostering globalization through expanded participation in Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), led to three thought-provoking days in August 1997. We distill below the issues raised at the conference for Canadians in this year that we chair APEC.

### **Format of Report**

Numerous issues found overlapping voices in the conference's opening sessions, talks, formal debate, question and answer sessions, and four workshops entitled, 'Immigration: Economic Windfall or Downfall?' 'Strategies for Economic Integration,' 'Business Exchanges and Tourism: Astronauts, Satellites and Room Service,' and 'Academic, Scientific and Youth Exchanges: Brain Drain or Brain Gain?' For this reason, notes from audio tapes of the conference have been coded, with information divided into the following key-issue categories:

1. Hallmark Events	Page 3
2. Other Tourism Issues	4
3. Public, NGO and Private Partnerships: Integration Issues	5
4. Scientific, Youth and Academic Exchanges	6
5. Accreditation	8
6. Entering Canadian Labour Market and Canadian Parochialism	10
7. The Media and Educating the Public	12
8. 'Use' of Ethnic Groups	13
9. The Points System	14
10. Targeted Immigration	15
11. Foreign-Assets Disclosure	17
12. Integration vs. Segregation	18

After being divided by issue, information was further divided into ‘discussion’ and ‘implications for action and research.’ Social justice and gender concerns were themes in policy development and research across all issue categories. Also across all issues are research concerns regarding acquiring better and more policy-relevant data on globalization (i.e., tourism/trade/investment/immigration interactions), local response (i.e., local ‘winners and losers,’ anti-growth coalitions), and the various forms of people exchanges (i.e., are we asking the ‘right’ questions on cards we fill out on re-entering Canada?). The final issue category—integration vs. segregation—acts as both an important area of discussion and a report conclusion.

### **1. Hallmark Events**

Discussion: Hallmark events are prominent activities that bring international attention to cities and regions. These occasions can be political (e.g., APEC meetings), economic (e.g., major trade association conferences), cultural/economic (e.g., expositions), one-time sporting events (e.g., Olympics) or yearly (e.g., a Formula One race), or arts related (e.g., international festivals). In the current lexicon of city competition, these are ‘hot items’ and bid on aggressively as part of growth strategies—primarily tourism-related. They are also part of place making and place marketing in a global production system that tends towards the homogenization of the local. The tourism workshop discussion of hallmark events centred on the benefits: short- and medium-term increases in tourism; long-term city recognition; community cohesion in staging a large undertaking, and the resulting pride; an increase in tourist infrastructure, and a number of other side benefits. Participants, however, voiced some concerns. Cities face social challenges. The one most noted at this conference is the integration of their immigrants. Hallmark events take effort on the part of volunteer, public, and private sectors; they change city priorities; cost money; cause displacement, such as the poor being forced out of low-income hotels, and can leave an emotional and economic ‘hangover’ once the event is over. Big events can put a city ‘on the map,’ but there is a risk of not capturing hoped-for benefits.

#### Implications for Action or Research

- ⇒ We should concentrate on a number of strengths, especially mid-sized festivals that take place in a number of cities: the deMaurier Jazz Festival, the world's best-attended film festivals; the Fringe (theatre) Festivals, choral festivals, Winterfests and others.
- ⇒ Broad 'grassroots' backing for large events has to be established (including outreach to ethnic communities), and governments should view with suspicion those proposals dominated by pro-growth coalitions of big business and tourism interests.
- ⇒ The bidding by Canadian cities for big events should be part of a larger and defined tourism and economic growth strategy, such as it is in Japan.
- ⇒ Vancouver should continue to strengthen ties to Asia with such events as APEC meetings, World Chinese Entrepreneurs Conference, and an Asian focus at film and cultural festivals.
- ⇒ Canadian cities' dynamic multicultural environments can help in winning bids.
- ⇒ In terms of research, study should continue to try to quantify the costs and benefits and long-term impacts of events by type.

## **2. Other Tourism Issues**

Discussion: Tourism to and from Canada interacts with other groupings in that it expands knowledge of the world, though sometimes at only a surface-impression level. It is an important facet of the APEC people exchange, and thus occupied a large portion of one workshop. This said, discussion of particular tourism issues intersected the broad topic area. Keith DeBellefeuille Percy of the Canadian Tourism Commission presented his organization as a good example of a private/public sector joint initiative, and spoke of their efforts at marketing Canada to countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Although largely well received, there were some concerns that the Commission's research and marketing efforts seem driven by the current market and medium-term future prospects to the detriment of long-term planning regarding the potentially huge Asian markets such as China and Indonesia.

At the more local level, the Vancouver Airport is fast establishing itself as a 'hub' airport in Pacific region travel. Visits to Vancouver are paired with a trip to the United States or to other destinations in Canada. As Percy pointed out, there is an ever-increasing number of package options on offer. SeaTac Airport, however, is only two hours south by shuttle bus, and affords access to prices below those in Vancouver. Many of the workshop participants from the

Vancouver area have exercised this option, and it is also familiar to some Asian tourists. A similar situation exists between Toronto and Buffalo. Pricing competitiveness, therefore, will have to be monitored. While profits from airports are largely local, there was concern that an inappropriate percentage of tourist-dollar capture is made by both foreign-owned tour packagers and tourism infrastructure facilities in Canada.

A final interesting point raised is that tourism and immigration are received very differently in the public mindset. The reporting of immigration often focuses on outlays, while weighty quantified studies on long-term tax contributions and other benefits are not as well covered. Economic gain from tourism is considered a given. Rarely mentioned are the costs: traffic congestion, large public investments in infrastructure (e.g., airports and conference centres), competition with the resident population for local campgrounds and hotels, environmental degradation, change to the landscape (oftentimes for the worse), and the like.

#### Implications for Action or Research

- ⇒ Inroads to China (once the formal extradition treaty is ratified), Indonesia and, though not APEC, India, should be made now through such efforts as the establishment of a marketing infrastructure that can be expanded as numbers rise, the reduction of tourist visa fees, and the expedient processing of visas.
- ⇒ Monitoring of airport and travel competitiveness is a must, as is research on the percentage capture of the tourist dollar. If, at a policy level, it is felt that too much of the capture is done by non-local capital, ways to remedy the situation should be explored.

### **3. Public, NGO and Private Partnerships: Integration Issues**

Discussion: This topic began the substantive part of the conference and remained important throughout. Meyer Burstein presented the multiple-partner nature of the initiatives under the umbrella of the Metropolis Project. Denise Chong introduced SUCCESS (a Vancouver settlement-services organization) by referencing the fields in which they were involved as revealed by their multiple-telephone listing. Most thought-provoking, Penny Handford set the challenge of finding creative solutions in the face of government cutbacks, continued immigration and intense competition for the charitable dollar. Two for-profit endowment

corporations that Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society established—an international English-as-a-second-language school and a consulting company providing diversity training—served as examples of creative solutions. The changing nature of funding immigrant services offers opportunities for nontraditional approaches, with a variety of public, NGO and private partnership options. The shift from a service-provision outlook to a ‘cost-recovery or better’ business outlook is, however, a new road which must be carefully traversed.

Workshop discussion also referenced the cost-effective nature of NGO sector immigrant-service provision. This is even more evident today as the culture of helping is paired with a more entrepreneurial spirit. It was noted, however, that cost effectiveness is due to the ‘cheap labour’ nature of the sector. Less in need of partnership, but perhaps open to better coordination by government, are the emerging private sector language, business, legal and consulting-settlement services. Existing partnerships and ones that might emerge in this field are part of the university and college sector. Partnerships and coordination will be increasingly important as effective approaches are explored.

The fields of tourism and education export provide two strong examples of private-sector/public-sector partnerships. The Canadian Tourism Commission, and the various provincial and local tourism promotion agencies, are partnership funded to coordinate marketing, product and sectoral research, and some training. ‘Shop-front’ centres to provide information on Canadian educational products, language testing and, to a limited degree, marketing, have been set up in nine major Asian cities. These are joint NGO (Asia Pacific Foundation), public- and private-sector ventures that are operated on a near cost-recovery basis.

#### Implications for Action and Research

- ⇒ Under the heading, ‘socially responsible investments,’ lenders must recognize the unique abilities, strengths, and potential weaknesses of NGOs attempting enterprises such as Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society’s endowment corporations.
- ⇒ The NGO/nonprofit sector can better budget the running of their operations when there is a known, or at least a medium-term commitment of funds. This is particularly important in the area of attracting, training and keeping good staff. Recommending funding commitments that are less prone to politically directed change reflect a more general feeling on the part of

conference participants that there could be better government–NGO communications and coordination.

- ⇒ ‘Matching funding’ as a form of partnership provides proof to the government that there is support for expenditures, thus lending legitimacy to a solicitation. A large number of donors or corporate sponsorship is particularly beneficial in this regard.
- ⇒ It was pointed out that work on federal–provincial coordination and/or partnerships has been progressing on a number of fronts—e.g., assessment of refugee status is down to a week—and that this should continue, with a particular concern that labour-market training does not get ‘the shuffle’ as it has in the past at the federal level between Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Human Resources Development Canada.
- ⇒ NGOs should be encouraged—and perhaps funded—to set up a data base on alumni to do follow-up on targets for fundraising and to become involved in other organizational initiatives.
- ⇒ There should be more information about use trends at public-sector and NGO immigrant-settlement and multicultural-service agencies (Who uses them? To what extent? Which services? At what point in the settlement process? How satisfactory are the services? What are recent changes in demands?)
- ⇒ In one workshop, a former employee of the International Labour Organization stated that, for the last fifteen years, it has been involved in brainstorming creative policy solutions and in training various levels of government, organizations and businesses in the area of immigrant integration. Its research and experiences in relation to various policy and training options should be used by the Metropolis Project and others.

#### **4. Scientific, Youth and Academic Exchanges**

Discussion: Many in the workshop that focused on this issue grouping felt that Canadians were insular. A professor teaching at the University of Toronto, Scarborough, spoke of having to escort reluctant students downtown. Later she found a colleague who had the reverse problem because of central-city bias by Ryerson Polytechnic University students. Due to the contemporary nature of our cities, some cross-cultural experience is gained by simple exposure. To encourage Canadian youths’ interest in international exchanges (as opposed to travel)

however, organizations such as Crossroads Canada have to market aggressively. Issues covered elsewhere also surfaced in this workshop; issues such as the reluctance of Canadian companies to recognize education received abroad and international work experience. Finally, credit was given to the many international NGO, aid and religious organizations who are actively involved in fostering a more global vision through the energies of youth.

In terms of numbers, the largest area of exchange is people (usually youth) coming to Canada to study. Though our infrastructure has developed quickly, it was recognized that Canada is a relative latecomer to the competitive field of marketing student opportunities in our schools and universities, and our system is not yet sufficiently organized. The participants felt that, while efforts should continue to be made to attract a greater number of international students (the term preferred over 'foreign students') to Canadian institutions of learning, acceptance of students should not be done at the expense of the integrity of educational standards. Fear was expressed that, in certain circumstances, there has already been an erosion of language and other requirements in order to gain access to what might be seen as a lucrative means to bolster diminishing university revenues. It is critical that a proper balance and relationship be established and maintained between marketing and product. Less is known about exchanges in the private sector due to fast growth, to the fact that people coming for education courses of less than three months are classified as tourists, and to the secretive nature of most joint research and development efforts.

#### Implications for Action or Research

- ⇒ Establish a registry of agencies, associations and institutions involved in exchanges of all types so that an adequate and effective data base of such activities is available in Canada. Share this knowledge more effectively; for example, professors should know more about 'year abroad' programs in order to promote them, and career counselors should direct adventurous graduating students to NGOs working internationally and to Human Resources Development Canada's extensive Website information on job opportunities overseas.
- ⇒ Encourage the establishment of a system of exchanges that are cost shared as follows: multicultural, inter-cultural exchanges within Canada for students between the ages of seven and twelve and for adolescent students; and inter-country exchanges for older youth at college and university levels.

- ⇒ Study and learn from the more advanced system of exchanges developed in Europe.
- ⇒ Examine the experiences of exchange participants in terms of learning strategies, gender and cultural relations and roles, and knowledge making. Look, too, at affected friends, family and involved teaching staff.
- ⇒ Enhance training in Canada of languages and cross-cultural communications skills.
- ⇒ Recognition should be given to scientific exchange-coordinating associations and agencies, such as the International Research and Development Council, and their successes should be more effectively ‘broadcast.’ On a related issue, when planning international conferences and projects, organizers must remember that academics, scientists and government people from poorer nations need help in funding travel and other costs.
- ⇒ Establish a system to capture the knowledge base of NGOs and formalize it through a reporting mechanism to government departments to be used in formulating foreign policy.

## **5. Accreditation**

Discussion: This issue arose in all four workshops and stirred emotional discussion. There was anecdotal information: a long-practicing physician from the Philippines who could not prescribe medicine for her child; a married professional couple, one with accreditation from British Columbia and the other from Newfoundland, who moved to Texas where they could both practice; doctors working as home care providers, and a teacher moving from a top Manila academy to a job at McDonald’s. The lack of recognition of professional skills carefully acquired through long hours of education and practice is disheartening to an immigrant. Moreover, Canada loses in a number of ways: the opportunity costs involved in the loss of human capital, loss of a network of international contacts as the immigrant changes fields or positions within a field, and underuse of an immigrant professional who shares a common language and sensibilities to growing ethnic communities in Canada (key to facilitating culturally sensitive local services such as health care). Finally, recruitment and acceptance of professionals without then recognizing their full benefit is problematic in an ethical sense, as they have emigrated from countries where their knowledge and skills are needed and their education has been subsidized by the state.

There were some additional comments that merit consideration. Accreditation is not a panacea. Integration factors other than accreditation act against immigrants realizing their potential. A 1997 British Columbia report by the Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Immigration showed that fully accredited immigrant professionals start out in Canada in a lower position from the one they held in their home country. While there may be a market-fit problem, some changes are related to personal goals and opportunities. In partial defence of professional organizations, they are responsible for quality and do have difficulty in judging the comparability of training and experience gained elsewhere. Standardization and provincial and international cross-border recognition has started to occur in a number of professions and is part of a growing number of international agreements. Yet agreement on, and negotiation of such arrangements is a long process. Finally, and not by way of an excuse, it was thought by some that immigrating professionals are usually aware that they will not face an easy job-market transition.

#### Implications for Action or Research

- ⇒ Professional organizations have to be pressured into addressing this issue and not to think exclusively in terms of self interest.
- ⇒ In part, pressure can be applied to international agreements such as NAFTA and the World Trade Organization, as well as in relation to specific issues on which associations and governments are presently working (e.g., lack of doctors in specific areas of Canada; self-regulation issues; countering the 'brain drain').
- ⇒ Knowledge of local social-professional networks, procedures and practices is a product of exposure, which is a function of time. What is needed are strategies to provide new immigrants this exposure. Mentorship and internship programs were mentioned options. An immigrant professional could be 'paired' with a practicing local professional and this could be part of the transition and accreditation process. Research should be done on the Israeli experience as a possible successful model.
- ⇒ Certain procedures related to accreditation can be started before a person immigrates to Canada. Immigrants should be told about these procedures and about what kind of helpful information to bring with them (e.g., transcripts, course calendars and syllabi, reference letters, videotape of a course taught, job descriptions from previous places of work, and the

like). Settlement-service agencies should know the process through which these documents can be translated.

- ⇒ Negotiated international acceptance of qualifications can be found in a number of professions—architecture and engineering were mentioned—and research can be done to find what the problem areas were and how they were overcome.
- ⇒ Coordination should be established among the federal, provincial, professional and other bodies that are making advances in evaluating international training and experience.

## **6. Entering the Canadian Labour Market, and Canadian Parochialism**

Discussion: Of primary importance to the economic success of any immigrant is getting or creating a job upon arrival. It is important in a number of different ways: to slow the expenditure of household savings needed in setting up a new life in Canada, to integrate into the community (ethnic and mainstream), to fulfill visa requirements, to signal success to friends and family in the home country as part of self-worth and self-definition, and finally, as a role model for their children. Yet immigrants face a very tight job market where employees avoid risks when hiring. Some of the problems facing the immigrant are the same as those faced by the Canadian who leaves school. Thus, the types of services offered by the career counsellor and school job-placement office have to be replicated in the immigrant-services sector. The problem of job insecurity is redoubled by lack of employment insurance eligibility, thus immigrants do not have access to a number of employment transition services. Moreover, benefit structures, labour laws and liability rules make it difficult for people to even offer to work in order to gain the demanded ‘Canadian experience.’ Yet the ‘experience’ factor also differentiates immigrants from the first-time job searcher, as they do have experience—they have been employed and some are among the most seasoned, savvy business managers and investors in the world. What is needed is the removal of barriers to gaining employment caused by such things as systemic racism, a parochial job market, and some legitimate local labour-market knowledge needs (which should be the focus of training). For those coming to start businesses, they, too, have to be integrated in a challenging and profitable way or they may just do the minimum required to obtain dual citizenship.

This mismatch in the Canadian urban labour market is thus a major problem for both Canadians and immigrants. Canada is slowly recognizing ‘the hidden advantage of Asian-Canadians’ and the importance of a more international view of trade. The benefits of different perspectives, life experiences, networks and skill-sets offered by the new immigrant are vaguely perceived. But change is slow. Even Canadian citizens returning with foreign experience face difficulties in finding good jobs, and we heard that many of the graduates of a Capilano College program with an Asian internship were hired by American or Asian companies. Examples abound. One participant talked of the slow process she experienced in establishing a network of social and business links in Vancouver.

Change takes a concerted effort, which we are now seeing in government and some banks and service corporations such as Rogers Television and BC Tel. Rogers, at least in Vancouver, has introduced on-screen English subtitles and, across Canada, reflects multiculturalism on its community-service channels. BC Tel has been hiring and accessing the knowledge of its bilingual staff from the various ethnic communities, a practice which is in conflict with labour union seniority rules. One of the key difficulties is to improve acceptance of workforce-composition differences at the small- or medium-sized business level, and to convince them that cross-cultural hiring will improve their bottom line and future growth prospects.

It was clear from some workshop discussion that efforts can move beyond influencing the host society directly. A new immigrant staying anywhere from a few years to a lifetime needs to fashion a new career strategy. There is a role for government or NGOs in aiding in this effort and in piercing barriers caused by parochialism. The role should extend to include: helping immigrants think about long-term goals; discussing ways they can capitalize on their skills in the local market; knowing what additional training they should acquire, and giving advice on establishing a network of contacts and ‘selling’ their skills, thus piercing the barriers caused by parochialism.

#### Implications for Action or Research

- ⇒ Given the critical importance of the first two years in the process of integration, researchers must study this period to find and address problem areas.
- ⇒ Continue and strengthen settlement services and provincial agencies’ use of seminars and counseling on such things as: the local business environment; how to use the Internet;

researching business opportunities; social-business networking; what people expect of them; tax issues; labour laws, and common business practices. These should target the entrepreneur/investor immigrant, but also be open to other immigrants. With careful program integration, some training can be shifted to Human Resources Development Canada, community colleges, or other more mainstream and, if necessary, cost-recovery venues.

- ⇒ There should be more development of mentorship programs with local chambers of commerce, other business groups, interested individuals and successful ethnic entrepreneurs.
- ⇒ Arguments were made to financially subsidize investor-class immigrants at the start-up level. A policy dilemma readily appeared: these are the immigrants the public believes are ‘rich’ and selected to contribute immediately to the economy. Thus, any subsidy would be viewed with suspicion given that so many Canadian citizens are un- or underemployed. The same backlash could arise under any incentive programs rewarding firms hiring recent immigrants. Yet, such policy options still need to be debated.
- ⇒ Small businesses, niche consumer services, craft industries, consulting firms, and various other forms of new business arrangements—ethnic or otherwise—are very much a part of a new job-growth strategy. We need facilities to teach and foster entrepreneurship. A good example is the Quebec government’s initiative, which helps bring together small importers to share bulk-shipment containers.

## **7. The Media and Educating the Public**

Discussion: Canada’s selection and screening process creates social and economic costs. There are also significant economic, social, societal, and experiential benefits due to immigration. Views, information and new research findings are shared and debated in the media and other venues that influence public perception. Unfortunately, success stories and benefits are not ‘hot buttons,’ a sampling of which includes: losing control of our ability to select and deport immigrants, the ‘importing’ of criminals (e.g., the Russian Mafia, Colombian drug lords, Vietnamese triads), and fast growth leading to aesthetic, cultural and economic change (e.g., respectively, ‘I don’t like those garish monster houses the Hong Kong Chinese build.’ ‘They aren’t neighbourly and can’t play bridge.’ ‘My children will never be able to afford a house because immigration has driven up prices.’). Envy exists over the perceived consumption of

public goods by poor, ‘shirtless’ immigrants, as well as over the perceived conspicuous consumption of the elite immigrants. Coverage of these hot button issues are rife with stereotypes, mis- and incomplete information, and influence popular imagination.

The mainstream media generally ignores issues in need of careful, researched treatment in favour of the hot buttons. It was felt that proponents of immigration and multiculturalism must become more media savvy; in other words, become adept at presenting information and countering the hot button stories. It was also felt that a more nuanced ‘teaching’ (by government, NGOs and academics) of immigration and the integration process is needed.

A final branch of this discussion, which took a more international view, noted that just as our impressions of ethnic groups and countries are shaped by ‘simplified and selective’ media coverage and tourist promotion literature, we should also be aware that this is part of the picture of Canada that is reaching the rest of the world. Consideration of media relations, therefore, also translates into the local and global aspects of integration presented in the report introduction.

#### Implications for Action or Research

- ⇒ Some of the best media relations are executed by the forces lined up against immigration. They study what people fear and exploit opportunities by having research findings and policy statements ready in advance. Their use of language is tactical; however, those with a more favourable view of immigration can also do this. An example given was a recent series of media stories on the potentially dramatic rise in immigration requests from European gypsies. Pro-immigration forces should have countered quickly with stories of how the Vietnamese boat people were welcomed to Canada and have since prospered.
- ⇒ Researchers in general, and the Metropolis Project specifically, often produce high-quality papers and reports that they hope will influence academic debate and policy discussion. More effort is necessary in making findings ‘media friendly,’ (e.g., including a human-interest angle) and more easily understood by the non-university-educated public.
- ⇒ A better conceptual understanding needs to be developed to disentangle racism and charges of racism from anti-growth sentiment and legitimate political debate on immigration and integration.
- ⇒ There exists a research need for solid content analysis of what is said, and how and where it is said, in terms of coverage of immigration and integration. There is, then, a role for

monitors in pointing out some of the ironies of media coverage; for example, that Asia–Canada migration was blamed for driving up housing prices and is now blamed for driving them down.

⇒ Internationally, commissioning and using research such as a recent Angus Reid study on the impression of Canada in overseas countries is important, as is monitoring the ‘tourist image’ we are projecting.

## 8. ‘Use’ of Ethnic Groups

Discussion: The conference stressed the view that integration that links immigration to stronger involvement in various global flows is essential. In a number of workshops, this came up as a focus of discussion. It was felt that public support for immigration and integration will develop in tandem with knowledge of the growth in the economies of Asia and the opportunities immigrants and ethnic communities offer in terms of access by Canada to global economic flows. In Vancouver, due recognition has been given. A number of conference participants from the business community noted that the increase in immigrant investors, entrepreneurs, the self-employed and others has ‘raised the bar’ in terms of entrepreneurial spirit and the setting of challenges. New businesses that would not have been in the city ten years ago are now here.

It was noted that immigrant/ethnic-led trade and production has focused on the import or niche-market sectors. Specialized consumer goods and foodstuffs are being shipped to Canada or produced here. The large resource and manufacturing companies that dominate Canadian trade concentrate predominantly on the American market and have yet to seriously ‘think Asia.’ This will undoubtedly change as the boom in the trade to the United States that followed NAFTA levels off. But a program or predilection to take advantage of ‘home grown’ resources has yet to develop. Export-oriented business ventures, which involve well-trained young Canadian immigrants, may also stem the return flow of these immigrants to the faster-growing Asian economies.

### Implications for Action or Research

⇒ The tourism workshop yielded a good example of a missed opportunity. The many ethnic social and business associations in Canada are excellent forums in which to collect

information about tourism trends and needs. They are also good at disseminating information about tourist options. It was felt that these opportunities were not being developed at present.

- ⇒ Languages, cross-cultural communication and social-economic geography all need to be priorities in Canadian education.
- ⇒ Researchers should take note of, and continue the work begun at the Asia Pacific Foundation, Canadian Ethnocultural Council, and elsewhere on Asian-Canadians as ‘Canada’s hidden advantage,’ including the attention to regional differences.
- ⇒ Canada’s role as a pragmatic middle-level power, which is able to reduce differences through discussion and is armed with a long-term national ‘experiment’ in multiculturalism, provides a market and influence asset through exporting the terms of international conflict resolution.

## **9. The Points System**

Discussion: A central issue is the efficiency of the independent immigrant-selection system. Does Canada’s points system need recalibration, change or abolishment? Candid evaluations were provided by a number of participants familiar with research on, and policy formation related to the system. Quebec, British Columbia and others provide evidence that the points system does not determine successful integration. Further, Canada has, over the years, altered the weighting of points in the system. The group conclusion is that recalibration did not significantly affect the composition of the independent class intake. What we do not know is, will big changes make a difference? It must be remembered, however, that politically, the point system is a way of saying no to certain groups, controlling the demographics of intake, monitoring movement and of selling (explaining) immigration to the Canadian public. It will likely remain a part of the immigration process for many years to come.

In one area—the allocation of points related to job categories—the points system was felt by most to be a particularly ‘blunt instrument.’ To use the system to select immigrants based on labour-market needs would require a sophisticated mechanism for coding and forecasting domestic job trends by occupation. This is not feasible. Even if it was, the immigrant still faces systemic barriers to integration (racism, parochialism, lack of ‘Canadian’ experience and accreditation difficulties). We also have to realize that immigrants tend to be adaptable. Research that has tracked immigrant status finds that immigrants rarely find themselves in the

same job category as they checked on their immigration form. This is not necessarily a negative. Canadian citizens coming out of our education system trained in one discipline have often moved to another over the years. (A less-accepting view of this is called for in relation to professionals and targeted immigrants due to specialized skills; see relevant sections of this report.) The problem with points given based on job categories is more one of perceptions and expectations. The Canadian population, it was felt, believes there is a relation between domestic labour-market needs and the points given out. More worrisome is if immigrants coming to Canada believe there are jobs awaiting those in the higher points categories—despite the fact that it is increasingly easy to access information on sectoral employment rates by region. The ‘immigration industry’ profits based on numbers of people migrating and can only be relied on to a limited degree to dispel myths of jobs awaiting immigrants.

#### Implications for Action or Research

- ⇒ Research should be conducted to determine if there are false expectations related to the labour market based on information given immigrants and on their ‘reading’ of our points system.
- ⇒ Thought should be given to the merits of substantially increasing the points awarded to simple indicators, such as education or language or both, at the expense of job-category points.
- ⇒ In re-thinking the points system, goal definition must first be addressed, (e.g., deciding to select immigrants who can contribute in a knowledge-driven economy) and any changes proposed must be considered in relation to decisions being made in the immigrant-settlement sector (e.g., if policy is shifting towards more funding of career placement and job training, and away from ESL/FSL programs, then language proficiency in one of Canada’s official languages should be more important in terms of points).

## **10. Targeted Immigration**

Discussion: Given a rise in APEC-related trade and associated immigration, and that Canada still offers an attractive destination despite inherent labour-market limitations, Canada must think strategically about targeted immigration options that respond quickly to labour-market needs. It

was felt that Canada's quick establishment of an immigrant-investor program indicates that we are able to move on strategic policy issues related to economic competitiveness. Advances, we are told, are being made in establishing targeted immigration as federal and provincial governments negotiate joint selection responsibilities. As with a number of other issues at the conference, the ethical pros and cons of aggressively planning for a 'brain gain' were debated, largely without resolution, but it was recognized that targeted human-capital-based immigration will less likely face the initial job-market barriers discussed above.

Targeted immigration implies that more options, (e.g., different visa types) be available in order that companies can attract and bring people to Canada for shorter or longer periods of time. A banker at one workshop described how they do this now, referring to two recent managers brought in from Asia. Such hiring, however, requires lawyers and consultants, making it more difficult for smaller companies to participate. Given the opportunity of less-complicated procedures, the bank in question would also like to bring over experienced Korean and Taiwanese tellers. Targeted immigration thus allows a relatively accurate reflection of domestic-labour needs in a way that the point system does not. Visas, vouchers and similar documents were seen mainly as adjuncts to existing immigrant streams preventing the difficulties that Europe is having with large-scale 'guest worker' programs. With a bond requirement, the private sector should be expected to 'do its homework' by pre-screening candidates prior to bringing workers and their families to Canada.

Target immigration can take a number of other forms. It can be more actively a joint private/public-sector effort driven by specific growth goals in a chosen industrial sector. An example is Manitoba government's cooperation with the textile industry in Winnipeg to recruit needle workers from Manila in order to rejuvenate a struggling textile industry. A final class of targeted immigrants, suggested in discussions, are graduate students. Ph.D. and Masters students have spent a number of years here, set up important career networks, have started families or have relocated with their families, and sometimes want to stay. If their study in Canada is not funded by the home or host government, there is an argument for making it easier for them to stay. Currently, such a student would have to return to his/her country of citizenship and go through the full immigration process.

Before presenting the suggestions made, a number of the concerns should be addressed (in addition to the aforementioned ethics of 'brain gain'). Targeted immigration may excuse

corporations from investing in and training Canadians; or worse, not recognizing the skills of immigrants already here. Revisiting the banking sector example used above, Taiwanese-Canadians or Korean-Canadians could be hired and trained. Based on experience, a workshop participant from Quebec warned against the possibility of job visas becoming co-opted by the ‘immigration industry’ and used fraudulently. Finally, the fast response times to labour-market needs hoped for with targeted immigration may be unrealistic due to health-testing requirements, recruiting time and further processing.

### Implications for Action or Research

- ⇒ Research should closely monitor all test cases and initial forays into new procedures (e.g., British Columbia’s relaxing of the Canadian job-hunt rule in a number of sectors), as well as examining how well the more established options, such as the Commonwealth one-year work-travel visa, are working.
- ⇒ This same research and monitoring should take place in relation to what is happening to newly established NAFTA exchanges. More speculatively, some historical comparative analysis can be done on the European Union experience.
- ⇒ In specific relation to target immigration and exchanges, the NAFTA negotiation experience should be analyzed, and flexible strategies devised for negotiations on the ‘people dimension’ in future international trade talks.
- ⇒ A more substantive action was also proposed: an experimental program with 1,000 visa vouchers requiring surety bonds that would be auctioned to companies in Vancouver. The marketing of the vouchers would target use by small, medium and large companies with Asia-Pacific market goals. Vouchers would be non-transferable to prevent the driving up of prices. This voucher system will pick ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ while the bond and the shorter-term exchange nature of the program helps in being able to send back losers.

## **11. Foreign Assets Disclosure**

Discussion: The decision to leave the country to which one has immigrated is the function of a number of issues (many discussed in this report). This said, the new federal government rules pertaining to foreign-assets disclosure are of concern to many, and were raised a number of times

throughout the conference. Anecdotal evidence was given that this rule had caused changes in migration patterns and is some emigration (e.g., a lawyer saw a drop from thirty to two in the early number of immigration applications processed; a banker mentioned his bank's opening of new branches in Seattle to keep capturing Asia-Pacific business). It was felt that the new rules targeted immigrant communities, as these are far more likely than the general population to have foreign assets—there was little consultation with the affected parties. In addition, they seem to target Greater Vancouver with a larger portion of its economy driven by immigration than any other Canadian metropolitan region. A number of cross-cultural and international-politics issues were not given due consideration. Asian capitalists are, as a rule, very sensitive to taxes and very leery of moves towards what might become a new asset tax. Asset-reporting requirements, such as listing all other investors and percentages owned, will, for partners in Asia, not be looked upon favourably due to secrecy understandings and the possibility of ethnic conflict in some countries.

A Canadian tax system with its high income tax (relative to Asia-Pacific economies), as well as equally high consumption and property taxes, is generally accepted by immigrants as a tradeoff for quality-of-life benefits. The closing of tax loopholes and halting the 'hiding' of assets abroad (e.g., in the Caribbean) are moves that are applauded by the majority of Asian-Canadians and others. Cross-cultural sensitivity does not entail 'acceptance of' the recent immigrant who fires the company's tax accountant because they had to pay taxes and tried to bribe Revenue Canada. Yet understanding of cross-cultural business issues and their local effect is important when establishing a new policy.

#### Implications for Action or Research

- Research is currently being done on this issue by a number of business-oriented think tanks in Vancouver. It would be interesting to know the role this issue is taking in people's decision to move, or in their deliberations on a possible move.
- ⇒ The federal government should take note of concerns, and consider revisions.
- ⇒ Lessons should be learned relating to policy development for a Canadian population that is, in a small but growing way, trading and doing business globally.

## 12. Integration vs. Segregation

Discussion: Immigrant integration is a two-way process of accommodation between newcomers and Canadians. To a large degree, integration occurs in the community. Larger issues such as the public taxation impacts of immigration, the diplomacy of international agreements, the ethics of family immigrant and refugee commitments, and the demographics of long-term planning for pension and health care viability, all tend to distract us from the neighbourhood effects of immigration. Municipal governments in immigration-receiving areas, however, are well focused. They are shifting and spreading resources, sometimes to the dismay of traditional constituencies and those who worry about property tax hikes. The economic workshop examined these local issues and argued for a version of impact funding. The latter, receiving very little debate, would transfer funds from higher levels of government on a pro rata basis of immigrant reception.

A more spirited discussion took place regarding indicators of socioeconomic integration, and its opposite, segregation. Economic integration is the movement of immigrants towards full economic participation, judged in relation to the earnings potential of a comparably equipped Canadian-born person, equal access to capital and opportunities, and involvement in a mix of careers. Participation should not be limited to the 'parallel economies' of large ethnic communities. Economic segregation, on the other hand, is the denial of these opportunities. A prime example of segregation is the concentration of educated, English-speaking Philippine women who remain all their working lives as domestic workers. Politically, integration is told by increased voting rates and participation in public consultation and party politics, sometimes despite home cultures that do not embrace such involvement. Socially, one participant put it well: 'Segregation is not a society where people can be happy talking to others 'like' themselves, but a society where they can only be happy in such places.' Socioeconomic links freely made within an ethnic, geographic or linguistic enclave are not, according to many participants, segregation.

Congregation was the term used to describe a version of multiculturalism that resides between the homogenizing 'melting pot' version of integration and segregation. Here there was debate on what an optimal societal placement along the continuum might be. It was argued that multiculturalism is often characterized as a smorgasbord, that we take what we want from it. But there are certain cultural attributes that the vast majority of Canadians do not want to incorporate.

Some spoke of the need to have a more clearly articulated set of Canadian values to unite various communities. English/French proficiency is also important to integration and to build bridges across ethnic groups. Large monocultural communities or economic nodes worried some at the conference. Urban forms built specifically to accommodate ethnic preference may not develop over the years into a more open, mixed form.

Other workshop participants did not let these concerns go unchallenged. There is no great degree of worry about other forms of congregation such as age-based or income-based areas. Judging ethnic community development, using still-emerging and contentious notions of the need for mix, however, is presumptuous. This is particularly the case when legal and market-driven responses to demand (e.g., ‘Asian malls,’ ‘monster homes’ and ‘tree cutting,’) are judged by status quo measures. Why is it a problem if immigrants can live in Canadian cities without making friends from other ethnic groups? Only a small percentage of the ethnic community take this option, particularly the elderly who contribute in areas such as the transmission of culture, family cohesion, and often child care. Moreover, ethnic enclaves for new immigrants are often a ‘buffer zone.’ That some forms of economic exploitation take place in enclaves is a legal, societal problem that should not be judged an enclave-driven issue. Finally, it was noted that most immigrants do integrate, but to different degrees in different spheres of their lives. They may shop at Asian malls but join a church with a mix of people. As one person said, ‘Don’t overanalyze Asian malls.’ The younger generation at school is even more exposed to a multicultural social reality. For all who live in areas of high immigrant intake or ethnic concentrations, their communities are complex and evolving.

Discussants noted a number of interesting overlays between this final issue, including a feeling that the ‘parallel economies’ may operate on a more global basis than the mainstream economy, and the concept that a global, movement-oriented perspective on immigration may change the desire of immigrants to commit to integration (as it has traditionally be conceived).

#### Implications for Action or Research

- ⇒ Continue and improve the monitoring of integration through recognition of global change.
- ⇒ Recognize the importance of the urban, local focus to research.
- ⇒ Continued debate on the various definitions of integration, segregation and congregation, and the various options in terms of strategies for economic integration.

⇒ Existing RIIM research does show a relative lack of ‘trickle down’ with respect to tax and landing fee money to municipalities with high immigrant intake. This should be remedied. As well, urban planning research must focus on bringing new social integration debates into focus with the goal of applied research towards strategies for social harmony and understanding during periods of change.

## **Recognition of Conference Partners and Organizers**

RIIM would like to first thank our co-sponsors whose financial assistance made possible this conference: Metropolis Project's Ottawa Office, Canadian Heritage's Multiculturalism Program, Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Selections Branch and British Columbia, Prairies and Territories Region, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, Industry Canada, the Government of British Columbia through the Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism, Human Rights and Immigration, and Macdonald Realtors.

In Ottawa, we thank the staff at the Metropolis Project Office for their assistance in mailing out conference invitations, and Robert Blackburn, Perry Kelly and Meyer Burstein for their continuous help in terms of ideas and organization. In Vancouver, we thank Don DeVoretz, Co-Director of RIIM, Alec McGillivray (RIIM and McGillivray Research Services 604.669-9159), Athena Roussinos at SFU Conference Services, Suzanne Nazareno at SFU Accommodations, Ken Mennell at SFU Media and Public Relations, Peter Scarrow and staff at Macdonald Realtors and, at RIIM, Thomas du Payrat, John Hayfron, Sam Laryea, Priyanut Piboolsravut, Francis Rowe, Linda Sheldon, and Chi-Wai Wong.

Finally, we would like to thank those who contributed as speakers, moderators, resource people and rapporteurs for the effort that went into their preparation and presentations. Those not thanked above are: Dougall Aucion, David Baxter, Andrew Cardozo, Denise Chong, Andrew Coyne, Stephen Easton, John Foster, Hedy Fry, David Gagan, Penny Handford, Marlene Jennings, Tom Jenson, Stephen Lam, Peter Li, Flora MacDonald, Dennis Maki, Peter Murphy, Krishna Pendakur, Ravi Pendakur, Keith DeBellefeuille Percy, Chantal Ramsay, John Ries, Daniel Stoffman, Lori Wilkinson and Chung Wong.

## **APPENDIX: Shorter & Longer Term Exchanges of People**

There is a significant variety of tourism and shorter and longer term exchanges of people between Canada and APEC countries. The conference highlighted this diversity. We present in this appendix a ‘brainstorming’ of types by the author of the conference report.

Tourism. Tourism is one of the fastest economic growth sectors in Canada and globally. Canada has a huge variety of tourism options for the business or pleasure tourist, and is a destination of interest to Asians for a number of reasons. An example, it is seen as a ‘safer’ destination than the United States. Reverse flow is small but growing. Types of tourism include:

- eco-tourism, camping, hiking,
- active recreational, such as skiing,
- budget travel,
- business tourism, conventions (see also some classes below), and
- various different packages.

Tourism Mixed With... This category recognizes that often travel is embarked on for a number of reasons; some planned, some that develop while traveling. There is a growing recognition of relations between tourism and, for example, trade. Other agendas that are part of some tourists’ stay in a host country are:

- travel to look for business opportunities,
- short or extended stays with family,
- setting up bank accounts and financial hedges in Canada,
- deciding on global immigration options,
- setting up trade arrangements and general networking, and
- tourist activities before or after exchanges listed below.

Academic & Scientific Exchanges. These received discussion in the body of the report. Canada can be seen as increasing academic exchanges (as a receiving and sending country, though the latter by far dominates the flow). Public sector and NGO support of scientific exchanges has suffered from funding cutbacks. It is hard to measure the flows in the private-sector, but there is cause to worry related to research and development spending cutbacks by Canadian industry. A division of these exchanges might look like this:

- conferences and/or networking visits,
- contract, consulting or joint research involvement,
- sabbaticals,
- short or extended teaching / teacher exchanges,

- government sponsored exchanges – sometimes humanitarian and foreign aid related,
- exchanges of scientists via transnational corporations and foundations, and
- new university linkage agreements.

Note, these links in particular are strengthened by the global information exchange infrastructure (the world wide web, inexpensive long distance rates, video teleconferencing, continual growth in international academic publishing, and so on).

Student and Youth Exchanges. Like language training, the best way to foster a more global outlook is to tap the energies and curiosity of youth, though students can be any age. Exchanges to and from Canada include:

- young people exchange and such things as Scout's Jamborees,
- living overseas with members of extended family,
- more formal high school exchange programs,
- language programs abroad,
- high school year as preparation for host country university education,
- ESL general,
- Business/Professional ESL,
- ESL matched or as pre-requisite to short course(s) and/or college or university,
- targeted mid-career business courses and targeted mid-career professional courses,
- University course(s), year abroad exchanges and options like archeological digs,
- full university or college degrees, and post-Doctoral positions,
- exchange based on work-travel visas and trips (some illegal),
- YMCA, Youth Hostel, etc. exchange of staff trips, and
- Nanny home stays and itinerant workers (usually but not always youth).

Church and NGO Exchanges. This category can get 'lost' as concentration is paid to tourism, education travel and immigration. Yet missionaries were among the first global migrants and NGOs are at the forefront of fostering a global outlook on such things as the environment and human rights. A list of exchanges would include:

- missionary work and relief effort work,
- religious leaders and worker exchanges,
- conference travel,
- investigative trips and travel related to demonstrations, etc.,
- sponsored student or other shorter term exchanges of people,
- church sponsorship of immigration, and
- religious tourism, pilgrimages.

Business & Government Exchanges: Though the majority of business and government consultation is done through short-duration trips, thus classed as travel, some entail longer stays.

Such exchanges include:

- exchange of executives and specialized services people for short or extended (sometimes indefinite) periods,
- short term business travel for conferences and meetings,
- exchange of people for project or project start-up involvement,
- targeted business / skills immigration,
- travel and business activities of athletes and entertainers,
- exchanges of bureaucrats, negotiators, lawyers and those with specialized knowledge,
- exchange of the “diplomatic set”, UN people, and families,
- military and peace keeping exchanges of troops, and
- exchanges worked out through professional organizations.

Immigration. A well known category and, in Canada, comprised of; refugees, family reunification class, independent class, and business and investor class immigrants. Immigration will have to come to grips with the increase in other exchanges and the varied relations of the above lists to traditional immigration. Even some of the standard immigration categories are becoming ‘muddied’ in relation to dual citizenship and people living and settling families in one area and continuing to do business in another.

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