



Brain Drain, Brain Gain

Session Proceedings

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Introduction

There is an intense media focus on the brain drain from Canada to the United States. At the same time, Canada is experiencing a largely unrecognized brain gain of skilled and qualified immigrants. This movement of human capital has significant implications for Canada's values, cultures and institutions. Yet much of the public debate about the issue is based on misperceptions and incomplete information.

In the interest of separating fact from fiction and encouraging informed discussion, The Maytree Foundation sponsored a public forum on *Brain Drain, Brain Gain* at the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts in Toronto on May 25, 2000. Four expert panelists were asked to address the following key questions:

- Is the brain drain to the US a significant problem?

- How are other countries coping with their brain drain?
- How can we make the best use of the talent that comes to our country?

The moderated panel presentations were followed by a question and answer session between the audience and panelists.

The objective of this forum was to bring new and fresh thinking to immigration and employment policy and practice questions in Canada. The forum was one in a series of public events intended to contribute to the development of progressive public policies by enhancing public discourse. (For information about other events, visit www.maytree.com)

Sherri Torjman
Vice-President
Caledon Institute of Social Policy

I would like to thank The Maytree Foundation and the St. Lawrence Centre Forum for sponsoring this session and for providing the opportunity to continue the debate on the brain drain and brain gain.

There certainly is a need for informed public discussion around a concern that has more than grabbed the headlines in recent years. But the ‘debate,’ such as it is, has been cast narrowly to refer primarily to the migration of highly skilled engineers and health care professionals to the US.

While the brain drain is portrayed as a relatively recent phenomenon, it is actually not a new problem. There was a major migration of Canadians to the US between 1950 and 1963 and between 1982 and 1996. Further back at the beginning of the 20th century when there were fewer than six million Canadians, more than one million were living in the US.

But while the notion of brain drain may not be new, some would say that its current expression is more urgent in a knowledge-based economy. The problem has been portrayed as a movement of brains that is large and accelerating. Others, such as economist John Helliwell, argue that the brain drain is actually small and shrinking.

So the first issue that we need to clarify is the extent and scope of the problem. An estimated 10,000 highly skilled workers leave Canada every year for the US and an equal number go elsewhere in the world. But what about the numbers coming in? How many people and who are we gaining?

Some would argue that the problem is more than simply a numbers game. While the figures may be relatively small, we are losing qualified individuals who make enormous economic and social contributions.

Moreover, there are costs associated with out-migration and the reception of people into the country. These are referred to as ‘churning costs’ and can amount to millions or even billions depending on what is counted – investment in postsecondary education, loss of tax revenue and the costs of settlement, language training and skills upgrading.

The second issue that has not been debated at all focusses upon the global dimensions of the problem. It is far more than a movement from north to south. We have not explored the brain drain from the perspective of the burden on countries that lose talent to the industrialized world. Developing countries are at special risk because they lose highly skilled individuals, as does Canada, but these nations do not have the capacity to repatriate migrants or attract replacements.

How does the migration of highly skilled workers affect the developing world – is it yet another gap in the growing wedge between have and have-not nations? Is there a contradiction between our immigration policies in which we actively seek skilled people from the developing world and our foreign aid practices through which we send money and other assistance, such as educators, to deal with the problems we effectively have helped create?

A third issue has to do with the policy options to address the brain drain. Because of the narrow way in which the problem has been construed – the migration of high-quality workers southward – most policy solutions encourage Canada to align our employment, tax and wage compensation systems more closely with

the US – to basically Americanize our economy in order to meet the competition.

But some would argue that the Americanization of our economy is not the only or even the best solution. We could end up losing our civic, social and cultural qualities that actually confer a competitive edge. These include, for example, safe communities, civility, access to public education and health care, and air and water quality.

What is the best policy mix, not only in terms of wages and taxes, but also with respect to education, training, international scholarships, prior learning assessment, mentoring and networks, research and development, job opportunities in positions such as management and research, access to venture capital, support for an entrepreneurial culture and the quality of life – in such areas as health care, postsecondary education and child care?

Aspects of immigration policy also might be improved – such as more strategic pre-immigration preparation. Perhaps Canada should make it easier for immigrants to bring their extended families. There has been extensive work – but more must be done – on recognizing foreign credentials and experience. We need to eliminate barriers to employment in regulated professions and trades.

The real challenges lie in the following questions. What are the magnets that will attract people to Canada? What is the glue that will keep them here? How can we do better by the skills and education that newcomers to Canada bring with them? How do we make this country a true land of opportunity, bearing in mind our ethical and moral responsibilities within the community of nations?

We have four panelists who are well qualified to address these complex issues.

Scott Murray
Director General
Social and Institutional Statistics Division
Statistics Canada

The issue of the brain drain crawled back onto the federal policy agenda a couple of years ago, after being quiescent since the early 1960s. The fact that it did so, we think, is tied to changes that are happening in the global economy. Giant economic forces are converting our economies in the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries and in many developing countries into economies that are much more integrated, much more reliant on information technology, and where competition is, in fact, global. These forces have placed great strain on Canadian companies competing in those sectors where the changes are the greatest.

Part of my job at StatsCan has been to mine existing sources of data to try to see what we can do to characterize the magnitude and nature of the brain drain and any compensating brain gain. We are developing new data sources with our federal colleagues from Citizenship and Immigration, HRDC (Human Resources Development Canada) and Industry Canada to try to help nuance this discussion.

What I am going to try to do is tell you what we know and what we do not know. Overall, the message is complex. Yes, Mabel, there is a brain drain. It is something we have been saying, despite some of our critics, for three years now, ever since the Association of Universities and Colleges asked us to look at the issue. We suffer a loss of workers in a range of occupations thought to be important to future economic success. However, the numbers are small by almost any standard. [Appendix A]

First, they are small in absolute terms. We are losing roughly 25,000 individuals to the US annually, and 8,000 to 10,000 of those are university-educated. So it is a small number of people, something like 0.1 percent of the Canadian population. In historical terms, the flows are the smallest they have been since 1851. So if we have a problem, we have had a problem for a very long time.

The numbers are also small in relative terms, whether expressed in terms of the total number of workers who are available in the labour force in those occupations, or in terms of the flow of graduates coming out of our postsecondary educational institutions. Even in the most affected occupations – doctors and nurses – the proportions being lost are quite small.

At the same time, we are gaining a huge influx of very highly qualified immigrants who seem to be enjoying economic success. In the highly qualified sector, we are gaining four university-qualified people from around the world for every one lost to the US. In fact, the total number of Masters and Doctoral graduates we attract annually exceeds the total number of university-educated lost to the US.

In the 1990s, though, we have seen some deterioration in how successfully immigrants have integrated into the Canadian economy. Not that immigrants today are without some success: Fully 85 percent of them find work in the occupation that was intended at the time of immigration, and they have lifetime earnings that are actually higher than equally qualified Canadians. But in the interim, immigrants face some problems of adjustment and integration. These problems are related mainly to factors regarding recognition of credentials, lack of labour market

information, lack of information about what it takes to get into the Canadian labour market and lack of Canadian experience. These factors are quite amenable to policy, and I will leave it to others to describe whether Canadian policy has been capable of dealing with them fully.

One particular area in which I have been involved is assessing literacy. If one looks at the literacy benefits that immigrants bring to Canada, one finds that immigrants actually raise the average literacy level within the Canadian labour market. However, people without access to official languages pay a considerable wage penalty. Even after ten years of adjustment, they are still the equivalent of about two years of education behind. That lag translates into quite a wage penalty in the Canadian labour market because our labour market rewards skill much more directly than many other labour markets.

With respect to the actual brain drain, we are losing a small number of very highly qualified people. Roughly one percent of all taxpayers earning more than \$150,000 per year before their departure is being lost every year. Over a few years, that would accumulate to quite a loss. They represent just 1,500 people so it is not very many, but you have to worry a little bit about the loss of their contribution to the Canadian economy and society.

We are also losing 1.5 percent of the graduating cohort of postsecondary students, looking at the class of 1995, and up to 12 percent of all graduating doctoral students from the class of 1995 found their way to the US. These losses are concentrated in high-tech, high-knowledge industries, particularly in the health-care sector where 33 percent of the observed flow was doctors and nurses. Most are leaving for opportunity that isn't available in Canada. It is not taxes: It has mostly to do with gaining experience that just is not available here.

The situation is very different from sector to sector. In academia, we are losing some very highly qualified senior academics who would be difficult to replace. In health care, there are serious losses and it is difficult for the health-care sector to react because it has constraints on how they can adjust to offer higher salaries or a better working environment, more labs or more operating time.

Private industry, which is probably the most affected, has the easiest job of adjusting but has been making the most noise. We have tied that fact to, I suppose, a schizophrenia that they have. They find themselves in a situation where they are facing the greatest opportunity they have ever seen: The world is their oyster. But at the same time, they are finally having to compete for workers, very highly skilled workers who have high expectations in terms of pay and working conditions. So it is no wonder that they are grumbling.

These facts argue for quite nuanced, surgical interventions by government. Broad-brush solutions would end up wasting a lot of money and represent huge opportunity costs. But because we are not in the prescription business, we can only tell you what is, we will leave the interventions to you.

A couple of asides in conclusion: The first one is that there also has been a huge flow of temporary workers to the US. This has received a lot of press with wildly overestimated estimates of up to 98,000 people a year going. We know that the actual flows are quite a bit lower, but the available data is just not reliable.

No one is sure whether these people leaving represents an economic positive or negative. It could be that they are going to tap into markets and to gain experience that would not be available in Canada. And all of the evidence

suggests that fully half of them return to Canada after gaining such experience. If that is the situation, one would wonder whether we shouldn't actually be encouraging a brain drain, knowing that we have a nice enough place to which to attract people back.

Finally, it is clear that there are problems facing immigrants in terms of their short-term integration. I would hate to see us not have the money available in tax revenue to fix those problems, having given a large amount of money away in a tax cut to people who have no intention of ever moving anyway.

***His Excellency Victor L. Johnson
High Commissioner for Barbados***

Much of the discussion about brain drain, if not most of it, has been driven by a signal lack of any significant empirical data that would account for what appears to be the hysterical approach that has been brought to bear upon this very delicate subject.

I am grateful to Scott Murray because I think he has illuminated the picture. If we were to go away from here having heard only him, I think we would have a fairly balanced idea of what, in fact, is taking place in this migration phenomenon. And it really is a phenomenon.

For example, my father was born in Panama, but I was born in Barbados, a very small country, 166 square miles, 265,000 people. During the construction phase of the Panama Canal, a very large percentage of Barbadians left Barbados and went to the Panama Canal for opportunity.

This quest for opportunity is part and parcel of the human experience. It is part of culture, it is part of sociology. It is a reality enshrined in the spirit of man that he is a mobile, migratory creature. He moves, when there is no grass on the prairie, to a greener pasture.

The folk from Barbados who accounted for my father having been born in Panama went in search of opportunity. It was not a brain drain but it was a *capacity* drain. It was a technical drain of resources that contributed something to Panama, and subsequently, to much of Central America, because if you were to go to Cuba and to Costa Rica, you will find the offspring of all of those Barbadians and Jamaicans who went to Panama in quest of opportunity.

My father came back to Barbados and I was born in Barbados. But it did not stop there. I myself migrated, as did so many of the people from my country, during the 1950s. Barbadians migrated to Britain, not as any significant loss in the intellectual capital of Barbados, but as relatively untrained persons seeking opportunity in the London Transport.

They went and worked in the London Transport system and, note, generally in jobs that were not seen as jobs that the Londoners themselves would have wanted to do. They were filling a gap, moving into a vacuum. This is part of the migratory succession theory that has always been part of sociology. They moved into a vacant spot and contributed to the London Transport system.

But it didn't stop there, either. Those folk went on to the London School of Economics, to Oxford University, to Cambridge University. They studied law and economics and returned to Barbados and to the Caribbean. And across almost all the Caribbean bar, you can identify persons who went to Britain to work in the London Transport system.

There was a drain, an exodus from Barbados. But if there was anything involving brains, it was a brain *gain*, because when they returned to Barbados, they took up responsible positions in the judiciary and at the universities, *et cetera*.

So I do not view the business of social migration with the same trepidation that seems to be fuelling the present position in Canada.

If you look at Canada, you will see diversity. And you do not have to look hard to see it.

You see Chinese, for example, who came to Canada to work in the construction of the

railroads out west, but who have remained to add significantly to the Canadian experience – no longer as railroad workers but as doctors and lawyers, and as the same scientists that Canada complains it is now losing through a brain drain to the United States.

Now, having regard to my thought about the succession theory, I suggest that, in a little country like Barbados and the little countries of the Caribbean where so many people have left to come to the US and Canada, there was a significant outflow. But invariably, those persons have gone back. They did not, in every single case, leave to be trained. They left simply looking for greener pastures, and their green pastures resulted in the acquisition of higher learning, which they then took back to Barbados.

I heard Scott say that the number of persons who leave Canada to go across the border is small. I submit that the debate that is currently going on about brain drain is an intellectual discussion, not bolstered by numbers, by empirical data, but driven by emotion. And I think that this emotion results from a phenomenon that was described by Robert Ardrey in the book *The Territorial Imperative* [New York: Atheneum, 1966], in which he sought to demonstrate that animals become protective of a certain turf, protective to the extent that it will be aggressive if an intruder comes into their space. It does not have to be that that intruder is going to do them any harm, but it just represents an intrusion and people tend not to like intrusions.

I think that what is happening, particularly given these numbers, is Canada feels it has to do something about immigration in order not to open up too many opportunities for persons to come in, and I think that that is a problem. Migration is a natural phenomenon. It is like a river flow-

ing, and it is only when we begin to tinker with the riverbed, the course of the river, that we begin to get problems.

Scott also said that, over the years, Canada has experienced a net gain as opposed to a net loss of intellectual capital. From that point of view, you will see that what I am saying has some merit: Left alone, the equilibrium happens all by itself; meddled with, it creates problems. The very small percentage of Canada's intellectuals who leave will be replaced, in this succession thesis that I am putting forward, by another wave coming in from elsewhere: Asia, Africa, wherever. They come in to replace those who have left. Opportunities for social mobility thus become available to those that are one step behind.

I have heard a lot of discussion, for example, about a top researcher who went over the border just a few weeks ago. It made headlines in the *Globe and Mail*. But as soon as he moved out, I am sure there was a number two behind him who is glad that he is gone because it gives that person an opportunity to move into his space and demonstrate that they can do as much or as good research as their predecessor.

I believe it is essential that we do not become too perturbed by the fact that people move on from point A to point B, because there is always a person coming from point B to point A, and that dynamic keeps the equilibrium in human capital.

I would suggest, therefore, that there is no real need for anything to be tinkered with. Immigration policy ought to be what it has always been: open enough to allow the replacement of human capital to happen and that dynamic process to continue.

Uzma Shakir
Executive Director
Council of Agencies Serving South Asians

I do most of my original thinking in very unconventional places like elevators, doctors' offices. On one such occasion, I was sitting and reading a magazine and came across a review of a book entitled *Development as Freedom* [New York: Knopf, 1999], written by a Cambridge University Don, Amartya Sen. I was struck by a very simple question he asked: Why do countries seek economic growth in the first place? And I thought, yeah, that sounds like a good place to start.

I am a community activist. I am not a statistician or a policy-maker. Questions are all I have, perhaps even critical questions. They come from the fact that I have the privilege of sharing the knowledge of community experience through my work. And let me tell you, lately, immigrants have been asking some very testing questions.

The questions that came to my mind when thinking about tonight's forum were: Why do we want immigrants? I am told, presumably, to replenish an aging and diminishing population. Why do we want to replenish the population? Presumably, to sustain economic growth. This leads us to the question, why do we want economic growth? Perhaps to retain a competitive edge in the global economy. Why do we want to retain this edge? I guess because we want to maintain a high standard of living for our population. And who is this population that should have a high standard of living? Must be the population that is aging and not growing. Do they have a high standard of living? Some of them do. Which ones do not? Those who are replenishing them.

Am I making this up? No, all the research that I have read is saying that that is the truth. The research shows that immigrants' earnings are declining, even as their education and experience are rising. Today, they are better qualified, have higher education, have greater linguistic facility and are coming from countries with a higher standard of living, than before.

Furthermore, our immigration policy is not allowing hordes of people to land on our shores indiscriminately. No, it is a very carefully screened process. We give points for people's superior skills and ability to integrate into the society and then we invite them to come and live in this country on the basis of what they can provide and do for our economy.

So what is the problem? Research shows that either they are moving on to greener pastures in order to make a living commensurate with their skills, as His Excellency mentioned, or they are joining the ever-increasing pool of surplus labour, either as unemployed or underemployed participants, or pursuing a vocation for which they were not originally qualified.

Now one could argue that given the Canadian economy, sophisticated and restructured as it is, it is not always possible or even necessary for immigrants to find a job in their field. There is some logic to this argument. If this trained and skilled pool of labour – which, by the way, got its training at no cost to Canada – is being utilized to its potential, we are still on the right track.

But when the perception, both in the individual's own mind and in that of the public, is that the potential is either being lost to other competitors or is being wasted, then the questions again arise: Why do we want immigration? And

what type of economic growth are we looking for?

This leads me to another question, and this is about the very language of public discourse on immigration and economic growth. To my mind, there seems to be a distinct separation within the discourse. We talk of ‘immigrants,’ not citizens, and this is important because ‘immigrant’ implies an outsider status that places the onus on the immigrant to earn the privilege of being a citizen. On the other hand, a citizen has rights and a sense of entitlement that an immigrant does not have. The fact that yesterday’s immigrant is tomorrow’s citizen seems to have gotten lost in this discourse.

I have read research papers that compare immigrant profiles, skills, incomes and the ability to integrate into society over a decade, without once mentioning the notion of the state’s or civil society’s obligation to develop public policy aimed at maintaining or improving the quality of life or the standard of living of all citizens.

But wasn’t that the reason for immigration in the first place: To raise the standard of living? We talk of making immigrant skills marketable, not of making the market receptive or adaptive to immigrants’ skills. We talk of how the immigrant can retrain, unlearn, take up a different profession, do different things, get more degrees; but we never talk about how the market can assess the training, the professional experience or degrees the immigrant already has. When questioned about lack of coherence between federal immigration policy and provincial regulatory requirements, we talk of jurisdiction and not accountability.

We let more and more immigrants into this country on the basis of their economic value, but develop no logical connection between the gaug-

ing of this value and the utilizing of this value. We talk of jurisdiction as if it were an immutable fact of life with which immigrants must live, rather than creating a system of accountability where citizens – you and I – can define and redefine the parameters of jurisdictions. We compartmentalize our discourse, distinguishing governmental roles from those of self-governing regulatory bodies, without making either accountable to the expectations or entitlements of the citizens of this country.

So what is the quest for economic growth in the first place? We talk about immigrant skills as having little value in our knowledge-based economy, but no one has defined what type of knowledge *does* have value in our economy. We talk about competencies without defining what constitutes incompetence or lack of competency. We talk about job search as some kind of mystical communion with Canadian markets and employers that no outsider can possibly fathom until they go through the Job Search Workshop. But, what about job creation, or equity and hiring practices? We talk about how immigrants are willing to settle for less in the hope of having their children do better, but what about the immigrants who are settling for a loss of status and are fearful that this may have a negative impact on their children’s future?

We talk about globalization and international competition as some inexorable force over which we have no control, but which we must try to tackle. How do we do that? By controlling the injection of labour and money into our economy. This, to my mind, implies some form of control so it couldn’t be all that inexorable. When asked why we are not developing sustained policies for making sure that this labour and these resources are utilized by the economy, we use globalization and jurisdiction arguments to answer the question. However, the issue is

surely not one of lack of control, but rather of framing the answer in a manner that is responsible and beneficial to all.

To talk about Canada losing its brains to other competitors is okay, but we fail to examine critically what it is we can do to balance professional, social and fiscal responsibility with citizens' rights. I'm assuming standard of living is equivalent to quality of life, and quality of life is equivalent to equitable society.

Lately, an increased number of independent immigrants are coming to this country. According to a report by StatsCan, their ability to integrate into Canada's labour market depends on several factors, including level of education and knowledge of official languages – but other possible factors are their country of origin or visible minority status.

So on the one hand, we see global movements of goods, finance and people as a natural phenomenon but, on the other hand, we allow country of origin or visible minority status (a euphemism for race) to influence labour market acceptability. What happens to the competitive edge here?

At CASSA [Council of Agencies Serving South Asians], we have conducted two research projects that seem pertinent at this time. One is a research project examining the settlement needs of South Asian newcomers, and the second is research data collected by the Association of International Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario [AIPSO], an advocacy group of CASSA with a membership of 500 international physicians from more than 60 different countries.

Both of these projects have some interesting things to teach us. For example, South Asians are just about the second largest ethnic population in Canada. About 29 percent are Canadian-

born. They have an unemployment rate of about 15 percent, as opposed to nine percent in the general population. There are 22.5 percent with university degrees of some sort, as opposed to 20 percent of the total population.

What were the challenges they identified when we did the research? Employment, language, Canadian experience requirements, issues of accreditation and inability to access appropriate trades and professions. And for those who had a relatively high standard of living in their countries of origin, the prospects of a loss of status. Settlement appears unachievable in their lifetime, but they hope their children can do it.

What were their suggestions for solving these problems? Provide pre-immigration preparation, including accreditation, licensing requirement information and training which they can bear better back home where they actually have jobs. Create some consonance between job search and job creation and consistency between labour market needs and immigration targets. Institute equitable hiring practices and better planning and coordination between services and bureaucracies which deal with immigrants. Link immigration to employment equity, social justice and other related issues that foster self-sustainability of communities.

According to the AIPSO survey: The majority of those who actively filled out the survey, were between the ages of 30 and 50 and have been in this country between one and five years. Forty-five percent have completed graduate degrees. Seventy-six percent are either unemployed or in survival jobs and only 24 percent are employed in related fields but with lower status. When asked, "Knowing what you know now, would you still make the same decision to come to Canada?," 46 percent said no and 46 percent said yes.

These results should be understood in context. Today's *Toronto Star* quotes figures that show Canada losing 18 doctors to the US for every one gained from the US. (By the way, it does not refer to foreign-trained doctors because they are not even called doctors here.) It is publicly known that Ontario has severe shortages in the health care system. At the same time, at least 300 doctors – and these are Citizenship and Immigration Canada figures – are coming to Canada every year, perhaps not from the US, but from everywhere else in the world.

If they come from the US, they are doctors. If they come from somewhere else, they are numbers. So where is the crisis then? In losing people, or in keeping them? And for what purpose are we losing them? Taxes? Money? Or because they at least have a chance to be doctors in the US? For example, of the total AIPSO membership, 19 percent already have begun the licensing process in the US and an additional 20 percent indicated that they planned to do so in the future. This means that approximately 40 percent of the brains gained will be drained – not because of US pull factors, but because of our push factors.

This takes me back to my earlier question: If immigration occurs because people have compelling reasons to leave and Canada has compelling economic reasons to get them, then who exactly is the architect and beneficiary of this economic growth?

If immigrants are to contribute to the economic growth that is to lead to a higher standard of living, then how can it be done by first stripping them of their preexisting knowledge? Surely there is a cost attached to it. I thought the whole point of getting skilled labour was to reduce the cost to our economy and have a ready-made labour force.

Furthermore, Amartya Sen asks, why do we want economic growth in the first place unless it enhances our capability to lead the kind of lives we have reason to value? This, to me, is what should be examined: how governmental, institutional, professional and other public policies and regulations enhance the values of a citizen's life. This can be done only by creating a separate discourse – not separating the discourses of immigrants and citizens, because, like I said before, yesterday's immigrant is tomorrow's citizen.

I would like to end with a quote from a participant in our settlement research project. I think what he said sums up my meandering piece rather well:

When we applied, we were asked to give every single document that we have about employment, even things about the kind of proficiencies in our trade. Based on that, they accepted us. Based on that, the government thought that this person is suitable and allowed to come into this country. People say you don't have Canadian experience. Can anyone tell me what this means? No one has been able to. What is so great about Canadian experience? They say you have to have worked in Canada. Does this mean that whatever I have been doing for the last 20 years is inconsequential in Canada? Or is this economy here so advanced that whatever we have done elsewhere is completely useless? Okay, if it is, very great. Why was not I informed that this is what I have to go through when I land here? Why should the government say, 'I did not invite you. You came on your own.' Government is inviting. They advertise overseas for professionals. You get them from abroad and they bring money. So my money is welcome but my talents are not?

Michael Adams
President, Environics Ltd., and author of
Sex in the Snow: Canadian Values at the
End of the Millennium

I have been invited here to try to put this discussion in the context of values, because that is what I do at Environics. That is what my book, *Sex in the Snow: Canadian Values at the End of the Millennium* [Toronto: Penguin, 1997], is about. It is about the evolution of Canadian social values.

It is a remarkable story, the evolution of Canada. It really is probably happening in the context of the evolutions that we are seeing around the globe: six billion people evolving from traditional societies into modernizing societies, with some of the societies getting to a certain level of economic growth and then moving to what we call postmodernity.

In postmodernity, value is placed on well-being, harmony. There is a certain presumption that once we get to a certain level of economic growth, we then focus on quality of life. It is interesting that every year, the United Nations Development Programme does this study on quality of life indicators, and of course, we end up winning the international sweepstakes on quality of life. Six billion people on the planet shrug and say it is obvious, and 30 million Canadians say; “What? Canada? You have got to be kidding.”

Nevertheless, this country of 30 million people comes out as number one on quality of life indicators, while the country to the south, which has a higher standard of living, comes out around tenth.

You say: “Well, how can that be?” Last week, I was at home watching one of my favourite news shows, the News Hour with Jim Lehrer. They did a program – quite a chilling one – about the 44 million Americans who do not have any health insurance at all. They have been very successful in getting people off welfare in many states. But when you are on welfare, you have Medicaid. When you move off welfare, you are no longer eligible for Medicaid. You become part of the working poor, earning \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year, reducing the unemployment rate (which the Americans can brag about) and then put yourself in a position of not being able to afford \$9,000 a year which is what it would cost to have health insurance for yourself and your one or two children. Forty-four million Americans! You sit there and, of course, you say: “Thank God I am a Canadian.”

I sound like I am running for leadership of the Liberal Party of Canada, perhaps, but I study the values between the two countries, and I look at Canada and a lot of the other countries, and I see that we have this balance between modernizing – the desire to improve our standard of living – and postmodern values of equality, well-being and harmony.

What is interesting about Canada as a postmodern country is that it stands out as being a multicultural society that is postmodern. This is a remarkable achievement when you compare this to Sweden or Denmark and other postmodern societies that have much more homogeneous populations.

I am not denying that there are problems in this country, but I think that we need to put them into context. When I look at the numbers that Scott Murray came up with about the number

of immigrants who are coming into the country, the number of Canadians leaving the country, frankly, seem to me rather trivial. People are trying to seek training or a job that they could not otherwise get in this country, and half of them come back. This is something that has happened throughout Canadian history. New England is filled with former Canadians. My own ancestors have gone back and forth over the border.

What I know is that 30 million Canadians are generally rather happy that they have this country. There is a growing awareness that the things which differentiate us from the great republic to the south are quality of life indicators. Many people who actually go south in search of the economic lottery come to realize that not only are you making your money there, but your family is there, you are sending your kids to school there.

That, I think, is why many people do come back. They realize that to make money there, they have to live there, and that there are things about Canada which are different in terms of our civilization.

We have this quality of life difference even at a time when we are starting to feel a bit intimidated by the Americans. Our dollar is worth 66 cents, our purchasing power has declined in the last decade. We are also worried about the erosion of the social safety net, paying more user fees and so on. And yet, there really has not been a mass exodus. The reason is that we are at a reasonable level of economic development, one in which we realize that there are other things that provide happiness beyond just personal aggrandizement and individuals getting richer and richer and richer.

When you compare the Canadians and the Americans on philanthropy, it is interesting that

the Americans, of course, do not tax themselves to the level that we do but then they do not have the health insurance system. In Canada, what we have is compulsory philanthropy. It is called taxes. The Americans have capricious philanthropy. It is called making Bill Gates the richest guy on the planet and then – there is a tax dodge, I guess – he creates a philanthropic foundation. And who might get the bounty? Well, it will be what he and Mrs. Gates decide.

We have decided that we want to live in a society in which the government will make this decision, in which taxpayers will make this decision, in which a large number of people will be involved in the questions of equality and quality of life and so on. This is a different society. It is one that blends Toryism, Liberalism and Socialism pragmatically together, and not one that allows market capitalism to rule everything in a Darwinistic society.

So to those few who are leaving, the best and brightest of our elite families, I wish them luck. If they want to return, fine. But if they are achieving self-actualization in Silicon Valley or Redmond, Washington or Wall Street, good luck to them.

Certainly, my ancestors were quite happy to come to this country when it had a pretty liberal immigration policy, and I am sure everybody who has been here since Samuel de Champlain landed on the shores is happy to have come from elsewhere. And I guess the Aborigines were as well. We will be replaced, I believe, by second and third generation immigrants. As Victor Johnson said, there is going to be somebody else. And this is the vitality of Canada: high rates of social mobility and a tolerance for ethnic and racial and cultural difference. That is the hallmark of this great Canadian civilization.

So maybe I sound Polyanna-ish about this, but I think we should continue to have a liberal policy, both in inviting people to this country and in promoting equality while people are here. I think there is a surge of energy from the ethno-cultural range of people that are in this country that is quite remarkable. The rest of the world recognizes this, even if we in our own understated way refuse to do so.

This is a country that people around the world want to see succeed, this experiment that we have, that we can live peacefully together and allow everyone to self-actualize.

I think we can maintain our status as the best country in the world. As long as we do not admit it, I guess.

Questions From the Audience

Questions from the audience focussed on three major themes: multiculturalism and equity – the gap between the ideal and the reality; globalization and the movement of intellectual capital and skills; and the differences between the Canadian and American approaches to access to professions for the foreign-trained. The discussion is summarized below.

Theme 1: Multiculturalism and Equity

There was an intense dialogue among audience members and panelists about the difference between the ideal of multiculturalism and equity in Canada, and the reality. Drawing on their own experiences and those of others, several audience members pointed to the very real gap between their lived experiences and Canada's stated policies. While many stressed that Canada's multicultural approach has been largely successful and is held up as a model around the world, several audience members described their experiences of economic, social and political exclusion. Several audience members and panelists raised the issue of the relative absence of immigrants and people of colour in the power structures of the country.

One panelist contended that there is no fundamental backlash against equality in Canada, and that the trend is in fact towards better representation of equity-seeking groups across Canadian society. He pointed to statistics showing that second and third generation immigrants are doing better economically than some families who have been in Canada longer and, in some cases, better even than the founding communities. Another panelist commented that when we look at the pattern of poorer eco-

nomic performance of immigrants in the 1990s, we must see it in the larger context of the general economic climate of that period. During the 1990s, companies seeking to improve productivity closed the door to most new entrants to the labour market, and not only to immigrants.

The comments of an audience member from the Association of Women of India and Canada illustrate the tone and complexity of the discussion: "I'm getting a little tired of hearing that Canada is the best country in the world according to UN standards while we have such severe anguish going on at the same time." The speaker praised the multicultural 'experiment' in Canada as the key to the future of the human race, but urged that the anguish of exclusion not be trivialized. "The only way you're going to have anyone working together towards making Canada achieve this dream," she said, "is by a sense of community. And you will not have that sense of community if a lot of people are not being included."

Theme 2: Globalization and the movement of intellectual capital and skills

An audience member posed a question regarding the degree to which intellectual capital that is outside of the mainstream of the dominant culture is valued in Canadian society. He cited the transfer of knowledge and skills in the non-western medical fields of traditional Chinese medicine and Ayurvedic medicine as examples of intellectual capital that are not legitimized or valued in Canada.

One panelist argued that in the age of globalization and new information technologies that facilitate the rapid transfer of ideas and money, a global concept of intellectual capital is emerg-

ing, especially among ‘Generation X.’ An international community is developing that connects people based on shared interests and values, with less concern for where ideas are generated. In this era of competitiveness, the panelist argued, companies are after the best and the brightest ideas and people regardless of where they come from.

This discussion intersected with the issues raised above, as several audience members questioned the panelist’s optimistic viewpoint. One participant noted the low percentage of visible minority tenured teaching staff at the University of Toronto, where people of colour make up nearly half of the student body. The audience expressed a general skepticism about the pace at which the labour market and society are moving away from traditional models and becoming more open to ideas, practices, and skills from abroad.

Theme 3: Access to professions: Differences between Canada and the United States

Several audience members raised questions about the differences between Canadian and American approaches and attitudes towards the skills and experience of newcomers. One participant noted that while Canada is seeking to recruit more immigrants, it is not meeting its targets and many potential immigrants are choosing to go elsewhere where they feel that their prospects are better. He spoke from personal experience about the difference in opportunities available in the United States and in Canada. In Canada, he said, a newcomer must start from the bottom, whereas when a Canadian moves to the United States, she or he is often moving up the economic ladder.

Another audience member raised the question of why professionally qualified immigrants seem to fare better in the United States, even though the regulatory structures are quite similar to those in Canada. She suggested that the difference might be one of values rather than structures. “Is it a question of us protecting our territorial imperative versus their pursuit of health, wealth and happiness that makes them, so to say, exploit the talents that immigrants bring at a much faster rate than we do?”

One of the panelists responded that he still felt that the Canadian model works better overall. He gave the example of the recent appointment of Adrienne Clarkson as Governor General of Canada and argued that in the United States immigrants and people of colour still are not reaching those levels. He expressed concern, though, that Canada appears to be “tinkering” with a system that has been working well, and in doing so risks damming the flow of intellectual capital that has served Canada so well.

Another audience member noted that in terms of access to professions for the foreign-trained, Canada has been moving at a glacial pace. She argued that much more work needs to be done to involve the business community directly in the discussion, and to link businesses more effectively with the community agencies that work with newcomers. One panelist agreed that there is a broad awareness of the opportunity costs of not taking full advantage of the skills immigrants bring with them. While there are many programs in place to remove impediments, he agreed that progress has been very slow and suggested that this is because change in this area requires dealing with large economic and social systems.

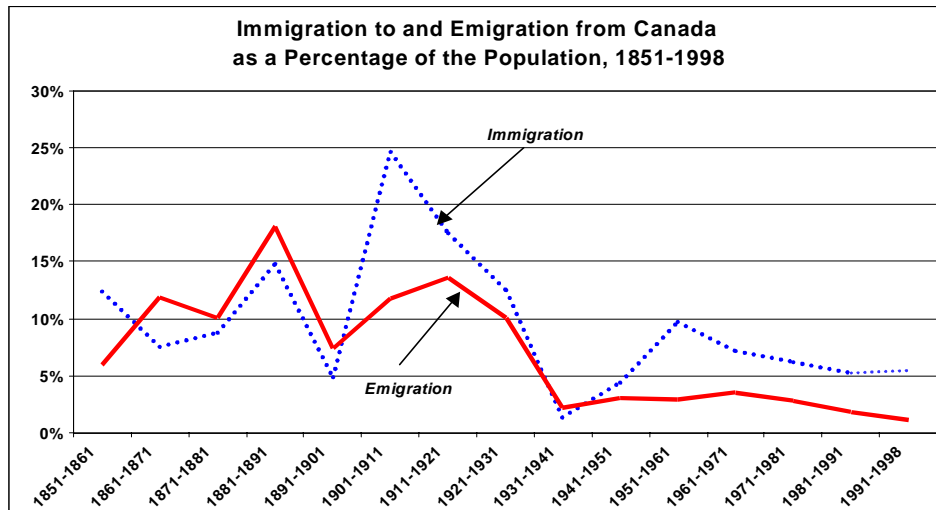


"Brain Drain" - Myth or Reality?

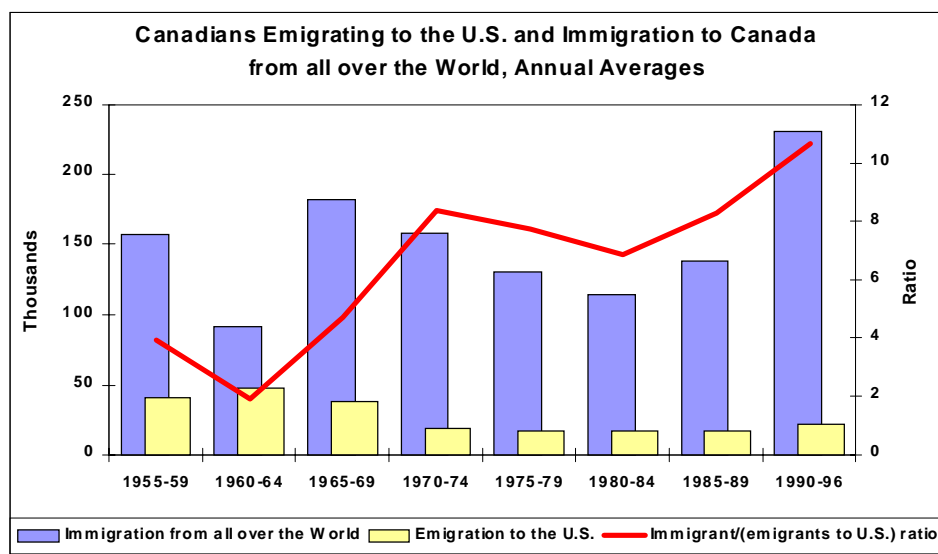
Presentation by T. Scott Murray, Statistics Canada,
St. Lawrence Centre Forum with the Maytree Foundation
Brain Drain - Brain Gain - Myth or Reality - May 25, 2000
e-mail: scotmur@statcan.ca -
<http://www.statcan.ca/english/indepth/indepth.htm>



Immigration and emigration are much less a factor nowadays than in the past

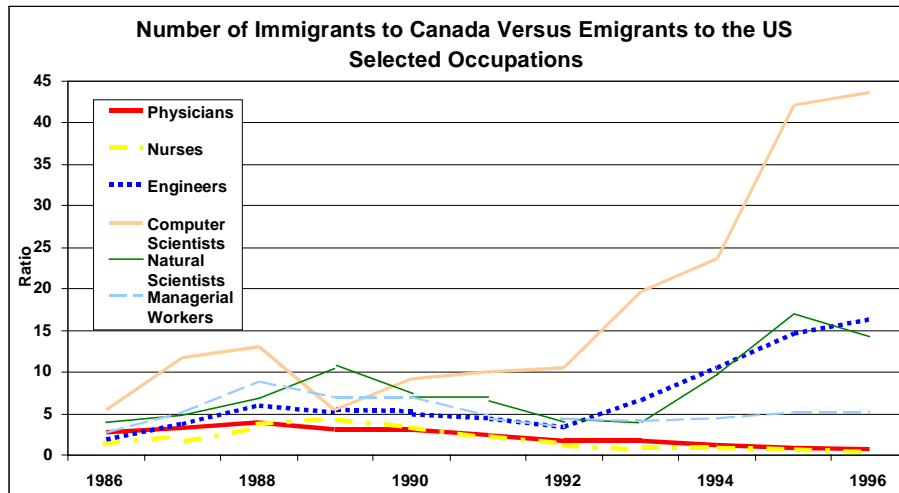


Canadian emigration to the U.S. relative to immigration to Canada lowest in the 1990's

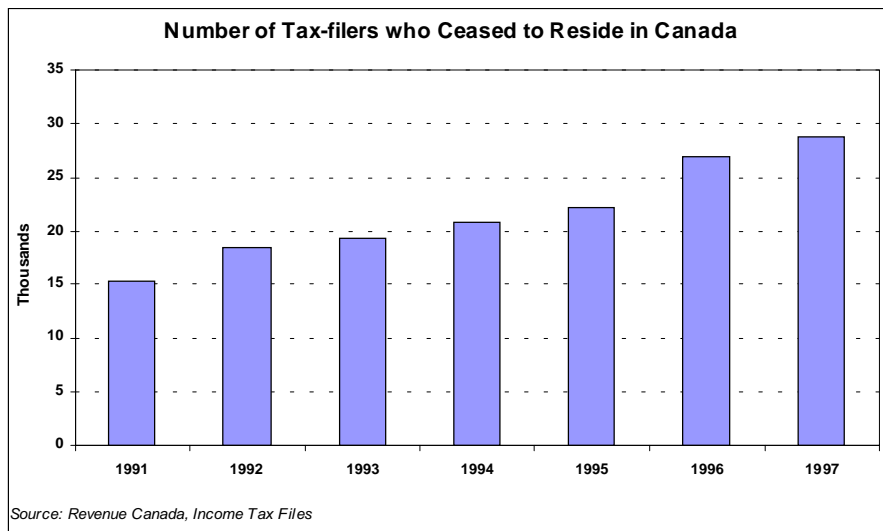




Knowledge workers coming to Canada outnumber those leaving for the U.S., with the exception of health professionals

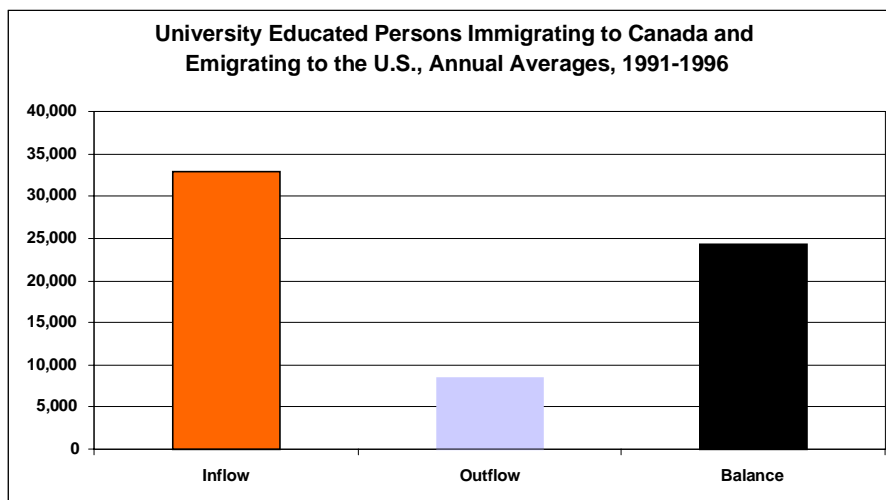


Tax returns indicate the number of 'movers' to the U.S. is between 20-25 thousand annually

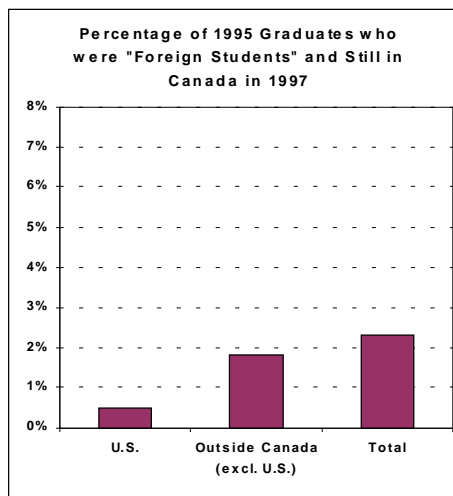
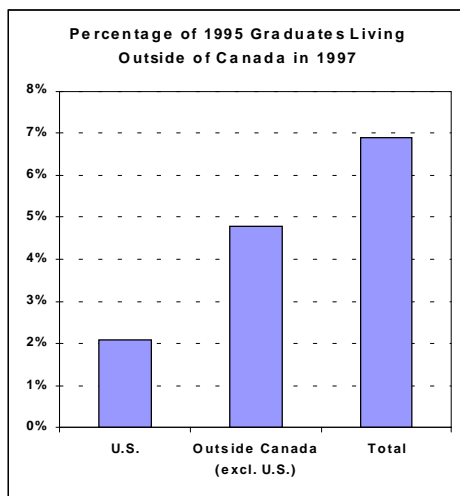




University educated migrants coming to Canada outnumber those leaving for the U.S. by four to one

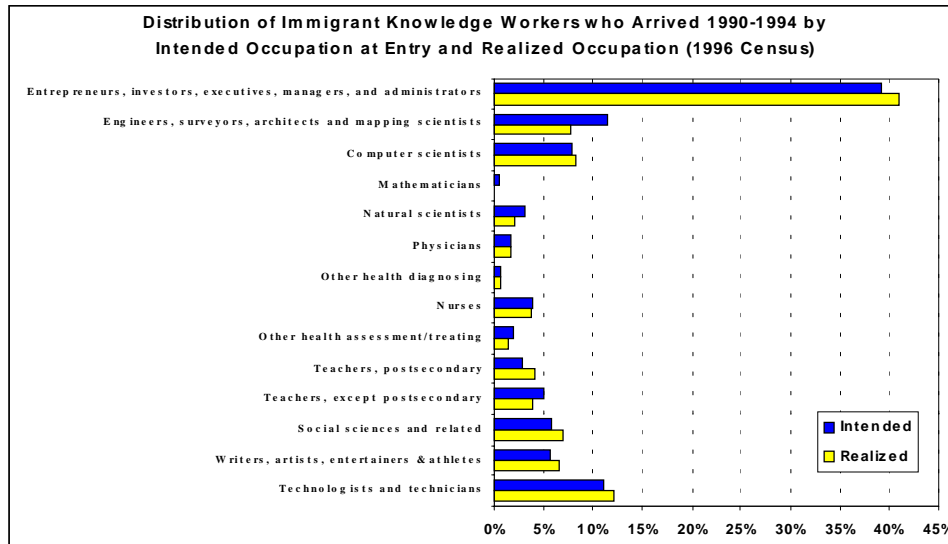


The loss of 2% of 1995 university graduates to the U.S. by 1997 was matched by “foreign students” staying in Canada after graduation

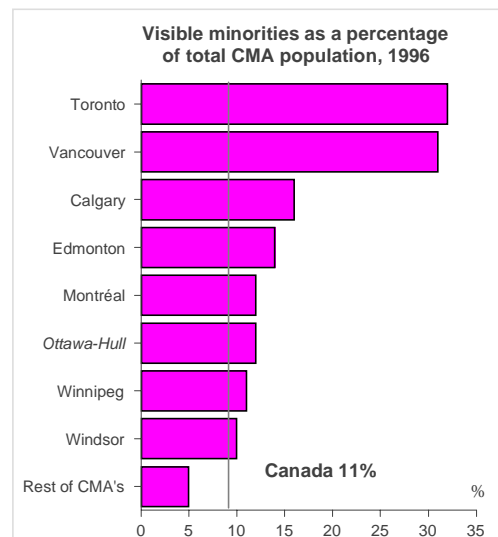
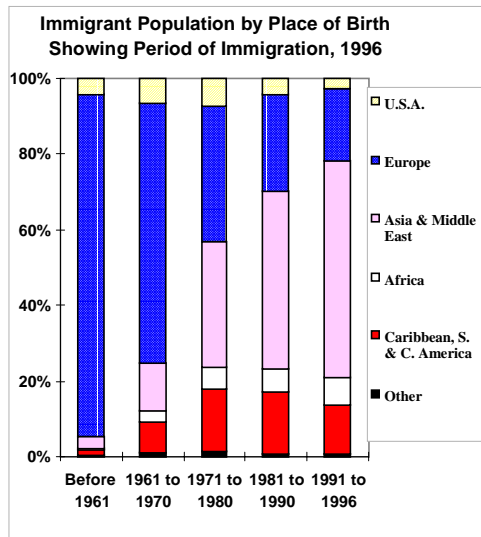




Close aggregate fit between immigrants' intended and realized occupation, at least among 'knowledge workers'

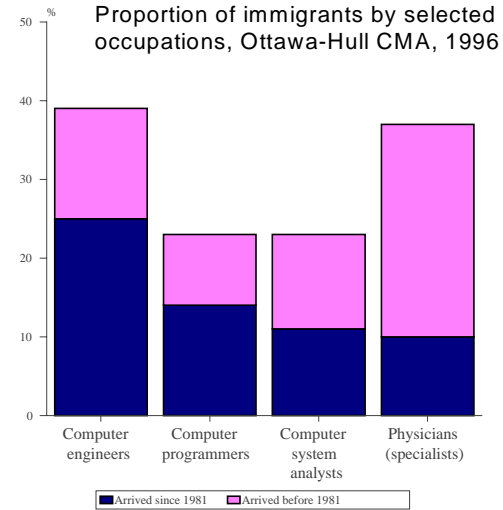
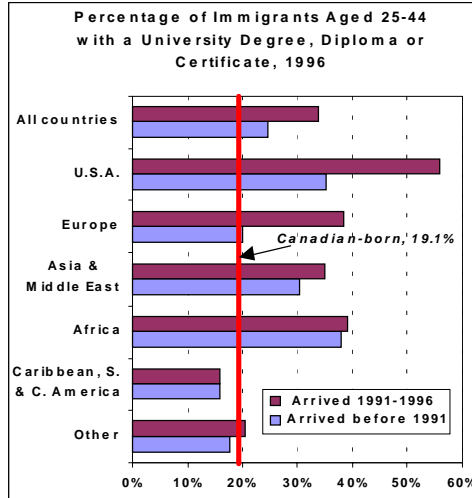


Immigrants increasingly from Asia and Middle East

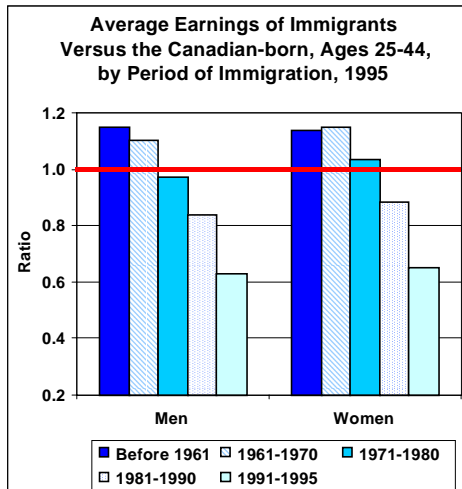
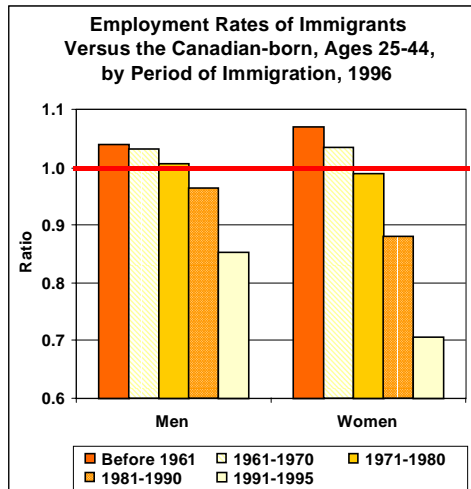




Recent immigrants are more educated than past immigrants and the Canadian-born: Immigrants are an important source of workers in certain occupations

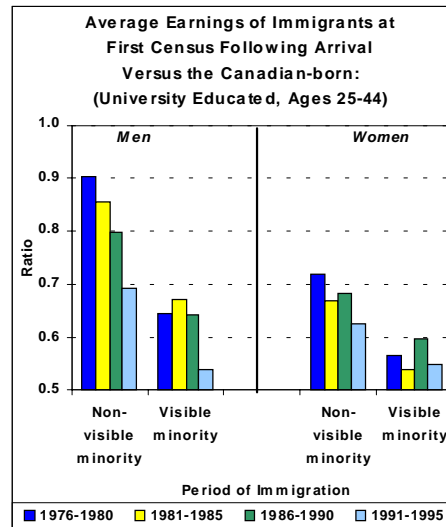
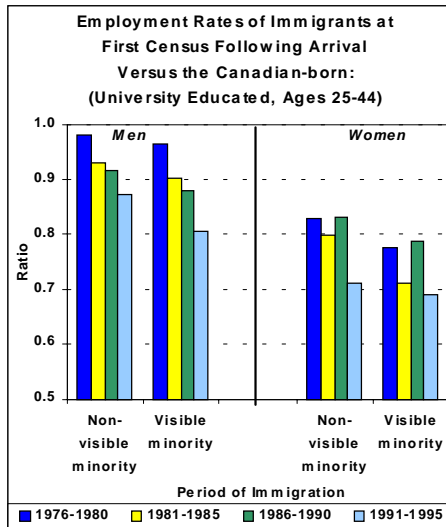


Struggle to succeed: traditionally, immigrants start out at a disadvantage but eventually 'catch up' and surpass the Canadian-born





However, newcomers to Canada are having an increasingly difficult time in the labour market



Conclusion of Ontario Survey of Regulated Professions
The Major Barriers Revealed in the Report are:

- Pre-immigration:
 - Lack of helpful information
 - Foreign-trained professionals who obtain helpful information are more likely to be working in their exact occupations
 - The data reveals that the use of the internet is becoming more common
- Licensure barriers:
 - Lack of time
 - Lack of Canadian experience
 - Cost
 - Lack of information
 - Lack of language skills



3. Barriers To Employment identified in Ontario Survey of Regulated Professions

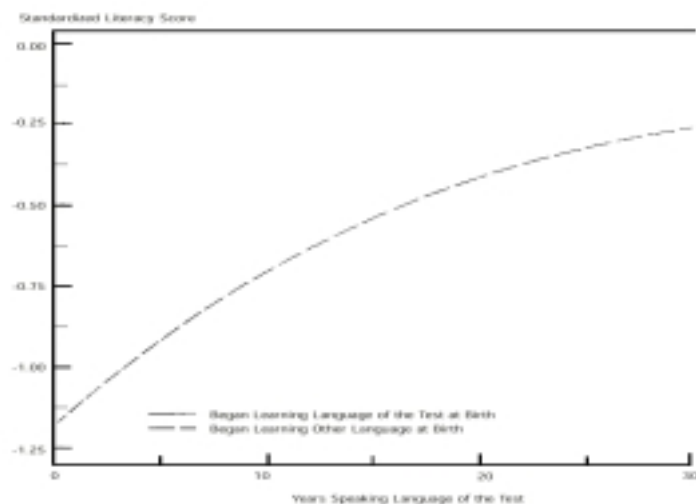
Problems Getting First Job

Lack of Canadian Experience	26.0%
Lack of Language Skills	15.3%
No Contacts	6.3%
Edu./Work Experience not Recognized	5.1%
No Jobs Avail./Job is not in Demand	5.0%
Lack of Licensing	4.8%
Lack of Job Search Skills	3.5%

Note: individuals could indicate more than one response

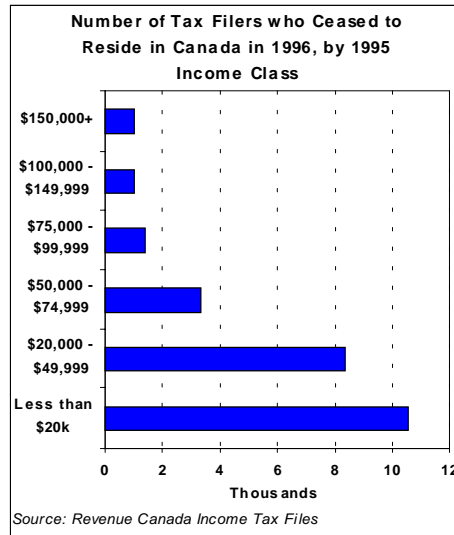
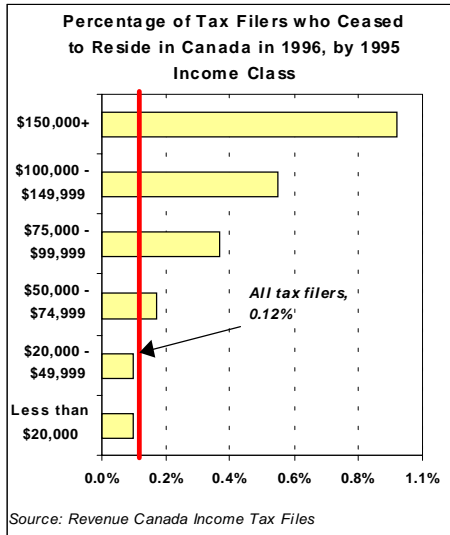


Figure 2 Average Literacy Score by First Language Learned, 1994 International Adult Literacy Survey, Canada

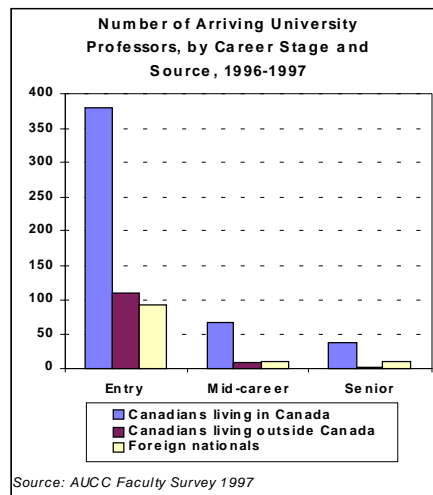
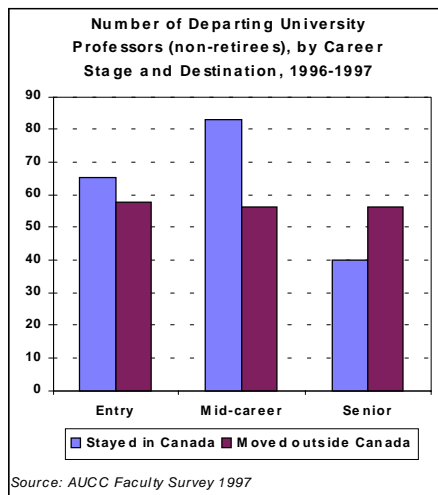




Top income earners are leaving in higher proportions, but relatively small numbers



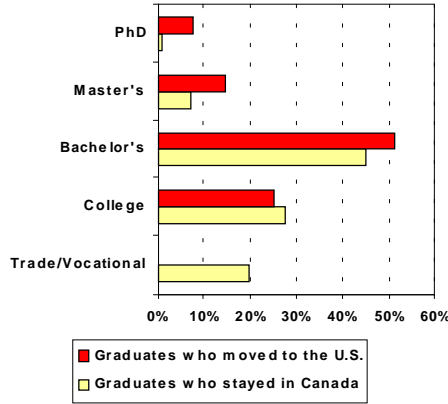
More departing senior faculty members leaving Canada than staying or arriving from abroad



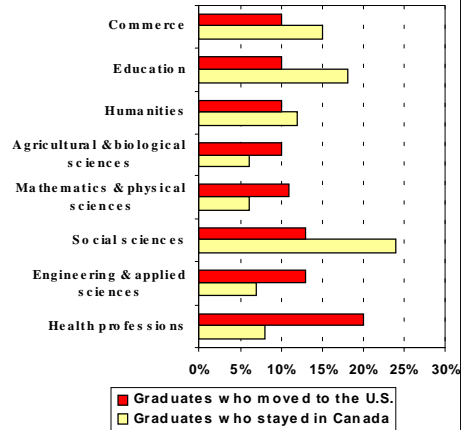


Graduates who moved to the U.S. more likely to have Master's or PhD's and more likely in the health, engineering or mathematics fields

1995 Graduates who Stayed in Canada or Moved to the United States
Distribution by Level of Study

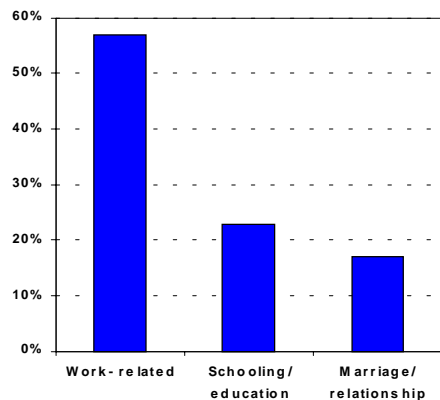


1995 Graduates who Stayed in Canada or Moved to the United States
Distribution by Field of Study

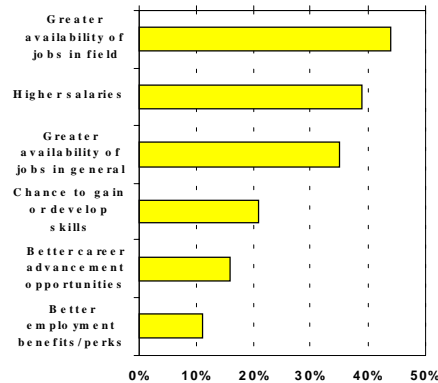


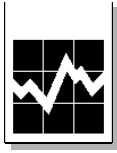
More than half of those who left for the U.S. did so for work-related reasons, lured by greater availability of jobs and higher pay

Main Reason for Moving to the U.S.

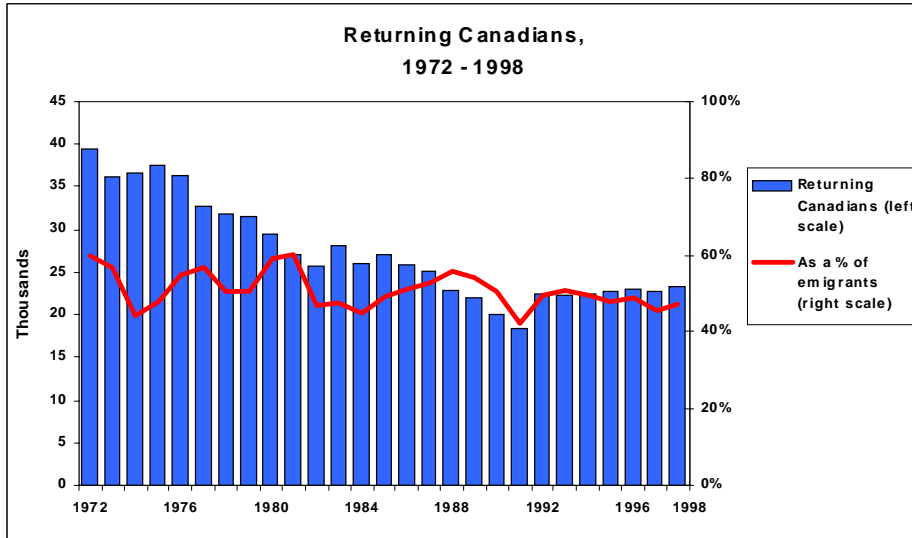


Work-related Reasons that Attracted Graduates to the U.S.





One Canadian returns for every two leaving



About the Speakers

Michael Adams is President of Environics Ltd. and is one of Canada's leading market researchers. Since co-founding Environics in 1970, he has guided the firm's growth from a two-person consultancy to one of Canada's largest and most sophisticated research houses, with offices and affiliates in Canada, the United States and Europe. Environics monitors and interprets social, political and consumer trends on behalf of a large international clientele of organizations in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors.

Mr. Adams' special expertise is the impact of social trends on public policy and corporate strategy. He has also published numerous articles and is a frequent commentator on social and political trends in the print and broadcast media and speaks regularly at conferences, annual meetings and seminars.

Mr. Adams holds an Honours BA in Political Science from Queen's University (1969) and an MA in Sociology from the University of Toronto (1970) and is the author of the bestseller *Sex in the Snow: Canadian Social Values at the End of the Millennium* [Penguin, 1997]. He is currently writing a book on the meaning of money, entitled *Better Happy Than Rich? Canadians, Money and the Meaning of Life*, which is scheduled for publication late in the year 2000. Outside the field of research consulting, Mr. Adams has a variety of other interests including partnership in the Robert Craig Winery in Napa Valley, California.

His Excellency **Victor L. Johnson** was appointed as High Commissioner for Barbados to Canada on October 31 1999. He is married and is the father of two children. He holds a BA *cum laude* from Long Island University, New York, and an MA in Sociology from New York University.

His Excellency was a Member of Parliament in the Barbados government from 1976 to 1986 and served as Minister of Labour, Social Security and Sport; Minister of Transport and Works; and Chairman of the Barbados Marketing Corporation. The High Commissioner was also chairman of the Barbados Labour Party from 1981 to 1983. Prior to his appointment as High Commissioner, His Excellency was involved in GTS Johnson & Co. Ltd., a family enterprise in Barbados, as Managing Director since 1987. His interests are in farming, reading poetry and photography.

Scott Murray was recently appointed to the post of Director General, Social and Institutional Statistics after spending roughly 23 years in the Special Surveys Division at Statistics Canada. Mr. Murray specialized in the design and conduct of large-scale *ad hoc* surveys to meet emerging public policy issues. His own work has included studies of volunteer international comparative work, child care usage, longitudinal labour market activity and the assessment of adult skill. Mr. Murray holds an Honours BA in Business Administration from the University of Western Ontario and is overly fond of claret.

Uzma Shakir is Executive Director of the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians. A community-based researcher, advocate and activist, she has been in Canada for about 12 years and has been working in the social service sector for approximately eight years. Ms. Shakir has BA degrees in English Literature from Karachi University, Pakistan and in International Relations from Sussex University, England. She also has an MA in International Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Boston and was a PhD. candidate at Fletcher when she got married and had a child.

In Canada, Ms. Shakir's research and community advocacy has focussed on issues of immigrant communities, especially the South Asian community, with a specific focus on women's issues. She has worked extensively to challenge existing notions of epistemology and to develop an anti-racist conceptual framework both for social service delivery and research methodology. She has also been an advocate for greater representation of all immigrant communities in policy, institutions, service delivery and societal participation through the principles of access and equity.

Sherri Torjman is Vice-President of the Caledon Institute of Social Policy. She has written in the areas of social spending, the interaction of the welfare and the tax systems, social program reform, social services, health care, fiscal arrangements and disability income. She is the author of many Caledon reports including *Strategies for a Caring Society*; *Civil Society: Reclaiming our Humanity*; *The Key to Kyoto: Social Dimensions of Climate Change*; *Partnerships: The Good, The Bad and The Uncertain* and *Reintegrating the Unemployed Through Customized Training*. Ms. Torjman has co-authored many Caledon reports including

How Finance Re-Formed Social Policy, Opening the Books on Social Spending and Lest We Forget: Why Canada Needs Strong Social Programs. Ms. Torjman wrote the vision paper *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues* for the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services.

Sherri Torjman wrote the welfare series of reports for the National Council of Welfare, including *Welfare in Canada: The Tangled Safety Net*; *Welfare Reform*; and *Welfare Incomes 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993 and 1994*. She also has authored four books on disability-related policy: *Income Insecurity: The Disability Income System in Canada*; *Poor Places: Disability-Related Housing and Support Services*; *Nothing Personal: The Need for Personal Supports* and *Direct Dollars: A Study of Individualized Funding*. She taught a course in social policy at the McGill University School of Social Work.

Ms. Torjman has worked for the House of Commons Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped, the House of Commons Special Committee on Child Care and the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies. She is a former Director of The Trillium Foundation.

The Maytree Foundation

The Maytree Foundation is a Canadian charitable foundation established in 1982. Maytree believes that there are three fundamental sets of issues that threaten political and social stability: wealth disparities between and within nations; mass migration of people because of war, oppression and environmental disasters; and the degradation of the environment.

We view our society's toleration of poverty as a fundamental threat to stability both in the world at large and in Canada in particular. Systemic poverty is an unjustifiable burden to millions of people, and bears paralyzing costs to society. It perpetuates a vicious cycle by limiting opportunity and repressing the human spirit. The correlation between poverty and most serious social problems is a stunning indictment of society's continuing tolerance of poverty.

Maytree grants aim to combat poverty by creating opportunities for people to break the poverty cycle. We view migration as an opportunity if we recognize the strengths of the immigrants. We believe that newcomers offer tremendous benefits to the Canadian society and economy.

Therefore, programs that facilitate their settlement enrich Canada. Further, we believe that urbanization is a powerful force. Programs

that support the strengthening of communities are supported by The Maytree Foundation.

The Maytree Foundation's Refugee and Immigrant program focusses its energies on those social problems facing immigrants and refugees where our resources might make the most meaningful impact. We focus on two critical priorities that can either facilitate or hinder the effective settlement of immigrants and refugees. These are:

- the permanent protection in Canada, through landing, for Convention refugees
- opportunities for work, preferably in the field of previous experience and education, for immigrants.

In support of these goals, The Maytree Foundation funds direct service, public education and community capacity building initiatives. The Maytree Foundation supports local, practical solutions to old and new challenges of settlement – with the objective of gaining valuable insights on improvement and innovation that will inform the entire sector. We support broader awareness of the impact of national, provincial and institutional policies on immigrants and refugees while seeking to enhance the capacity of immigrant and refugee communities to take control of their own future.