

The world in a city

Author(s)	Lanphier, C. Michael ; Anisef, Paul
Imprint	Toronto, Ont. : University of Toronto Press, c2003
Extent	viii, 543 p.
Topic	JV
Subject(s)	Multiculturalism -- Ontario -- Toronto; Immigrants -- Social conditions. -- Ontario -- Toronto
Language	English
ISBN	9780802035608, 0802084362, 0802035604
Permalink	http://books.scholarsportal.info/viewdoc.html?id=39036
Pages	28 to 71

1 Becoming an Immigrant City: A History of Immigration into Toronto since the Second World War

Harold Troper

In 1999, a Canadian immigration museum was inaugurated at Pier 21 in Halifax. It stands as a testament to the historic contribution of immigrants to Canadian society. The site is well-chosen: in just over forty years – from 1928 to 1971 – tens of thousands of European immigrants arriving by ship first set foot on Canadian soil at Pier 21. Unsure of exactly what awaited them in their land of second chance, the new arrivals were processed by immigration authorities and left Pier 21 to begin new lives in Canada.

If this museum honours Canada's immigration past, it also shows how much immigration has changed since the processing facilities at Pier 21 were finally closed in 1971. Halifax's Pier 21 looks eastward, out over the Atlantic towards Europe. In 1971, the number of immigrants entering Canada from Europe dipped below 50 per cent; since then, that percentage has continued to fall. What is more, Pier 21 was designed to process immigrants arriving by ship. Today, the vast majority of immigrants arrive by air and relatively few land in Halifax. The single most important port of immigrant entry into Canada is Toronto's Pearson International Airport. And not only do immigrants land in Toronto: unlike the vast majority of those who once arrived in Halifax, many stay there. Toronto is not only an immigration port of entry, it is also an immigration destination. It has become home to more than one-third of all immigrants arriving in Canada.

For Toronto, now Canada's largest city, so large an infusion of immigrants raises understandably important issues about settlement services, urban planning, the place of immigration in shaping the city's

culture, economy, and institutions, and about how best to accommodate and integrate immigrants from many different origins while avoiding the scourge of racism. Even as the city and its surrounding suburban ring continue to wrestle with these issues, there can be no doubt that immigration is reshaping the city's self-perception. Indeed, the city's boosters like to point out that the United Nations has proclaimed Toronto the most multicultural city in the world (J. Berridge 1995). No small accolade, this point of municipal pride is said to set Toronto apart from its North American sister cities. But despite all the backslapping hullabaloo, there is no United Nations proclamation. It is an urban myth. Nonetheless, Torontonians, working by the dictum that some events are so real it doesn't matter that they never happened, have willed the myth into a functioning reality.

By any measure, Toronto is indisputably a multicultural city. If we could take an aerial photo of the Greater Toronto Area at the millennium, we would be looking at a sprawling urban complex of approximately four million people. According to the 1996 Canadian census, just over 17 per cent of all Canadians were born outside Canada, but more than 40 per cent of those in Toronto were born outside Canada. Indeed, almost three-quarters of all heads of households in Toronto were either born outside Canada or had at least one parent who was. That inflow of immigration has come from every corner of the globe. Once a parochial Protestant town – the Ulster of the North – where the Sunday blue laws, Draconian liquor legislation, and the Orange Order held sway, Toronto now trades on its cultural diversity as a draw for tourists. More than one hundred different languages are commonly spoken in this city, and many children born in Toronto enter public schools each year not able to speak English well enough to avoid remedial English classes. Included in the Greater Toronto Area multiethnic mix are an estimated 450,000 Chinese, 400,000 Italians, and 250,000 African Canadians, the largest component of which are of Caribbean background, although a separate and distinct infusion of Somalis, Ethiopians, and other Africans is currently taking place. There are almost 200,000 Jews, and large and growing populations from the Indian subcontinent, Greece, Portugal, Poland, Vietnam, Hispanic America, and Central and Eastern Europe, to name but a few.

The Protestant majority is long gone. As a result of immigration, Toronto now has a Catholic plurality and there are more Muslims in the city than Presbyterians. Nor is the city the almost exclusively white enclave it was only a generation ago. As the city ushered in the millen-

nium, a major proportion – and likely soon to be the majority – of those living in this urban complex are people of colour. The simple fact is that Toronto remains a magnet for immigration. With the federal government promising to keep annual immigration into Canada at or near 1 per cent of the total population, more than triple the per capita American immigration level, both the number and diversity of this immigration show no sign of lessening. Compared with tomorrow, the Toronto of today may be recalled as a city of relative cultural homogeneity (Siemiatycki and Isin 1997).

Although Toronto is Canada's leading immigrant-receiving centre, city officials have neither a hands-on role in immigrant selection nor an official voice in deciding immigration policy. In Canada, immigration policy and administration is a constitutional responsibility of the federal government, worked out in consultation with the provinces. Cities, as creatures of the provinces, are officially kept at arm's-length from immigration policy discussions. Yet, if Toronto does not have an official role in determining immigration policy, immigration policy determines much about Toronto. As the city continues to be the destination of choice for so many immigrants, immigration has become a singular force shaping and reshaping its streetscape, residential housing construction patterns, economy, neighbourhood continuity, and delivery of municipal services, including education and health care.

In order to fully appreciate the impact of immigration on Toronto, it is important to understand the history of federal immigration policy and how that policy has affected the city. It is also important to understand that immigration was often a controversial area of public policy. Advocates and opponents repeatedly tussled over immigration policy, and immigrants and would-be immigrants have not sat passively like pawns on some policy chessboard waiting to be moved here and there. They have been actors on their own behalf, working to further agendas shaped by their own needs and expectations. How the often separate interests of the state, immigration activists, and immigrants play off one another is also part of the Toronto immigration story, a story deeply rooted in the past.

THE PRE-SECOND WORLD WAR IMMIGRANT PAST

Toronto was not always one of the world's major immigrant-receiving centres. During the late nineteenth century and through to almost the mid-twentieth century, Toronto was a major and bustling business and

commercial centre, but it was also a city deeply respectful of British Protestant ascendancy, values, and traditions. While there was a considerable Roman Catholic minority, municipal political, economic, and social levers were firmly in the hands of an Anglo-Protestant élite. Their vision afforded little or no room for urban-bound immigrants, particularly those who did not speak English.

That is not to say that Toronto and other major Canadian cities of the day – Montreal, Winnipeg, and Vancouver – did not each have significant enclaves of ‘foreigners,’ as they were commonly labelled. On the contrary. In the years before the Second World War each city had its foreign neighbourhoods. Best known are The Main in Montreal, Vancouver’s Chinatown, Winnipeg’s now-legendary North End, and the Kensington Market area of Toronto. Each of these immigrant settlement areas had its own particular tone and texture, even its own neighbourhood identity, institutions, and sense of how it fit into the larger urban social and economic complex. But each of these different immigrant neighbourhoods was also regarded by many in the mainstream as an area apart from the city, in the city but not really an organic part of its urban core. Many mainstream Torontonians hoped their city would be no more than a stopover for foreigners who would quickly move on to rural Canada or the United States. But if these foreigners insisted on staying in Toronto, it was assumed that they would know their place. In effect, this meant they would remain in the social and economic shadows, relegated to a corner of the larger urban landscape reserved for the immigrant underbelly of the urban labour force, doing jobs that ‘real’ Canadians preferred not to do.

Thus, while there were immigrants in pre-Second World War Toronto, Toronto was not a city of immigrants in the way that urban geographers and historians might talk about American cities like New York, Chicago, Pittsburgh, St Louis, New Orleans, Galveston, or Los Angeles. Going back to well before the turn of the century, as the American agricultural frontier was being aggressively depleted of new agricultural land and the burgeoning urban-based industrial sector demonstrated an almost insatiable appetite for cheap labour, Americans came to regard cities, especially in the industrial northeast, as contact points between immigrant workers and domestic capital. Cities were places where unskilled and semi-skilled immigrants stoked the furnaces of American growth in the decades following the Civil War.

From Confederation through to the turn of the century and beyond,

no Canadian city, except perhaps Montreal, could claim the same urban status as New York or Chicago. For the most part, Canadian cities – with notable exceptions like Hamilton, Ontario, and Sydney, Nova Scotia – were less industrial hubs than they were regional administrative and commercial centres feeding off an agricultural or extractive industrial hinterland. In Toronto, few could envision any good coming out of immigrants piling up in their city, especially those of a non-Anglo-Saxon lineage. It is true that immigration officials at the national level actively sought out immigrants, but Canadian immigration policy of the day deliberately and systematically sought to stream non-British and non-American immigrants away from cities into non-urban and labour-intensive industries like railway construction, mining, lumbering, and, most particularly, farming. Indeed, until well after the First World War, farming and the wealth it generated were regarded as not just the bedrock of Canadian economic and social development, but the very *raison d'être* for encouraging large-scale immigration – the immigration of agriculturalists (Gates 1934).

Farming was hardly an easy life. The unforgiving Canadian climate, unstable markets for farm produce, and marginal lands unyielding to the plough too often drained immigrant muscle, resources, and hopes. As a result, in spite of hard work, it was not unusual for farm incomes to fall far short of that necessary to sustain a family on the land. Conditions were often so difficult that in the years before the turn of the century, tens of thousands of immigrant farmers and Canadian-born agriculturalists alike, unable to find alternative employment, turned their backs on Canada and took refuge in factory jobs or sought out more congenial lands in the United States. So pronounced was the outflow of population to the United States that one wag claimed Canada's story was foretold in the books of the Bible: 'It begins in *Lamentations* and ends in *Exodus*' (Hamilton 1952, 69; Hansen and Brebner 1940).

This changed with the turn of the century. The completion of the first Canadian transcontinental railway, built with borrowed capital and cheap imported labour, opened the vast Canadian prairie to expansive agricultural settlement. The time was right. A seemingly unquenchable European market for Canadian raw materials and agricultural products, especially grains, coincided with a major population upheaval in Central, Southern, and Eastern Europe that cut millions of people loose to seek homes in the New World. The result was unprecedented Canadian economic expansion propped up by a huge wave of immigration

that the government streamed into labour-intensive extractive industries like mining and lumbering and, most of all, into settling the vast expanse of agricultural lands in Western Canada. Wheat was king and, from the government's point of view, immigration afforded an opportunity not to be missed – an opportunity to further economic and population growth by settling farmers without land in a land without farmers.

The name most associated with this peak period of Canadian immigration is Clifford Sifton, Canada's forceful minister of the interior. Working in collusion with industry and railway interests, Sifton revitalized Canada's immigration recruitment program. The priority continued to be fixed on aggressively promoting the immigration of farmers and farm families. But, initially, this was not the only criterion for preferred admission. Unabashedly colonial, the government defined those from outside the British Isles as foreign and, unabashedly North American, it excluded white, English-speaking American immigrants from this foreign category. In their source-country preference, Sifton and the Canadian government were no more racist in their thinking than the culture of their times. Nonetheless, Canadian immigration policy remained as racially selective as it was economically self-serving.

With an insatiable demand for agricultural labour as well as for workers for expanding industrial sectors, and confounded by a shortfall in the number of settlers of the 'preferred types,' Sifton and his immigration authorities were forced to set aside their racial concerns, at least as far as Euro-ethnics were concerned. In their active search for more and more agricultural and bush workers, Sifton reluctantly agreed to admit other European agricultural settlers in a descending order of ethnic or racial preference. At the top remained British and white American agriculturalists, followed closely by Northern and Western Europeans. Then came Eastern Europeans – the fabled peasants in sheepskin coats. Closer to the bottom of the list came those who, in the minds of both the public and the government, were less assimilable and less desirable; these were made up largely of Southern Europeans. Slotted in at the very bottom were Asians, Blacks, and Eastern European Jews who showed little inclination for farming. At first, the government was unsure how to deflect urban-oriented Eastern European Jews from Canadian shores while beating the bushes for other Eastern Europeans. That would take time to work out. But it was clear what to do about Asians and Blacks. Laws were passed and immigration regulations

strictly enforced that tightly controlled Asian immigration and effectively barred Blacks from Canada (Munro 1971; Troper 1972, 1987).

Government programs encouraging agricultural immigration worked. Between the turn of the century and the First World War, Western Canada soaked up immigrants. While immigration into Canada never reached the absolute numbers into the United States, the ratio of foreign-born to Canadian-born population was far higher. These non-English- or non-French-speaking settlers, most arriving in family units, gradually filled the geo-economic niches reserved for them in prairie agriculture or wage labour on the rugged mining and lumbering frontier. They fuelled Canadian economic expansion; they also raised social anxiety. For many English-speaking Canadians, the continuing influx of strange peoples speaking strange languages – people until recently loyal to foreign kings, czars, and kaisers, who prayed to alien gods and seemed so distant and indifferent to Canadian values – generated fears that these foreigners might never be assimilated into Canadian society. They would always be the strangers in our midst.

French-Canadian leaders had a different and almost diametrically opposite fear. They feared that these foreigners would indeed assimilate and assimilate into English-speaking society. In so doing, they would tip the national political and demographic balance even further in favour of *les anglais*. But many English- and French-Canadian leaders at least agreed on one thing: Immigration was a boon to the economy and, in balancing economic benefits against social costs, they agreed that so long as these foreigners were content to remain in the rural hinterland, so long as they continued to play the subservient economic and social role reserved for them, then immigration should continue.

Not all immigrants were content to play this game. To the unease of many mainstream Canadians, the number of foreigners leeching out of rural areas into waiting jobs in Canadian cities, including Toronto, increased. As immigrant numbers in Toronto increased so did anti-immigrant sentiment. But why were there immigrants working in Toronto at all? Wasn't there an unspoken agreement between immigration boosters and the urban polity that the foreigners would stay put in rural Canada? Yes. But, the prosperity that opened Canada's western agricultural, mining, and lumbering frontier and attracted so many immigrants to Canada in the first place also spurred industrial development and an enlarged job market in cities like Toronto. Immigration policy might still trumpet agricultural settlement as a national priority, but it was not long before new immigrants were joined by older immi-

grants or their Canadian-born children in abandoning the isolation of the bush or escaping the vagaries and insecurities of life on the land in favour of wage labour in cities. Immigrants rebounded into Toronto, where the men found jobs in the expanding urban economy – paving streets, laying trolley tracks, labouring in the expanding textile factories, and tunnelling the sewer systems – while women worked as household domestics, took in boarders, or performed various kinds of piecework.¹

Regardless of how willingly immigrants – men and women – filled waiting jobs in Toronto and other Canadian cities, by the early 1920s there was a growing urban mind-set that regarded the ‘foreigners’ in the city as an intrusive threat. Many Toronto gatekeepers charged that immigration was hastening the onset of municipal blight, political corruption, and miscegenationist race suicide that they associated with cities south of the border. The signs seemed to be there. Weren’t these foreigners starting to cram into Toronto slums in seeming defiance of Canadian immigration policy? And didn’t these foreigners, largely Catholics and Jews, cleave to their Old-World ways and to one another, showing precious little inclination to assimilate? It might be one thing if foreigners were content to spend their lives in sweat labour; it was another to find some of them starting to successfully compete with skilled native-born artisans and small businessmen. And what about the children of immigrants? With legislation requiring universal and compulsory school attendance, they were present in classrooms and the brightest among them were demanding access to universities, to professions, and to the political arena. No. If these foreigners did not know their place – and their place certainly wasn’t Toronto – they should be denied admission to Canada.

As xenophobia in Toronto and other cities inched upward, the federal government could not ignore demands for cuts to immigration. By the mid-1920s, Canadian immigration laws and regulations were revised so as to restrict immigrant entry into Canada along racial and ethnic lines. Rules against Asian admission were already tight; now the admission of Eastern Europeans was made much more difficult and the immigration door was pushed shut on Southern Europeans and all Jews, irrespective of country of origin, except those few who might come to Canada from the United Kingdom or the United States (Troper 1982).

Following the economic collapse of 1929, with mass unemployment in urban Canada and a withering away of farm income, any residual

appreciation for immigrants evaporated. The door was sealed. Immigration officials who had once competed with other countries for immigrants now stood vigil against any breach in the Canadian wall of restriction (Abella and Troper 1982).

POST-WAR IMMIGRATION POLICY

The Second World War and its aftermath are a critical watershed in the history of Canadian immigration and of immigration into Toronto. While many policy planners initially feared that the end of the war would throw Canada back into the job-hungry Depression of the 1930s, the exact opposite took place. A surprisingly smooth transition from wartime to peacetime production found a new urban industrial base – the product of massive wartime industrial investment – retooling to satisfy pent up consumer demand for goods and services that had been denied to Canadians as far back as the beginning of the Depression. In addition, a huge export market quickly opened up as Western Europe began its massive post-war reconstruction. Rather than a shortage of jobs, within a year or so after the war's end, Canada faced a surging demand for labour. Labour-intensive industry, much of it in and around cities like Toronto, demanded that Canada's doors to immigration be reopened.

In truth, however, when immigration was first reopened, the government sought to hold the line against the wholesale entry of non-British or non-Western Europeans. Prime Minister Mackenzie King was only reflecting the national mood when he observed that 'the people of Canada do not wish to make a fundamental alteration in the character of their population through mass immigration.' Discrimination and ethnic selectivity in immigration would remain. 'Canada is perfectly within her rights in selecting the persons whom we regard as desirable future citizens. It is not a "fundamental human right" of any alien to enter Canada. It is a privilege. It is a matter of domestic policy' (House of Commons, Debates, 1 May 1947: 2644–7). Nor was Ottawa congenial to the notion of renewed immigration by people who were regarded to be least likely to fit in. Immigration officials – who still understood their duty to be to guard the Canadian gate against all comers – were particularly unsympathetic to any liberalization of guidelines when it came to allowing in the groups against whom immigration barriers had been carefully erected in the first place: Asians, and Southern and Eastern Europeans. The officials, who could not see beyond their own

hierarchy of ethnic preferences, asked what would be gained by filling a short-term labour gap if it meant a permanent infusion of Jews and Slavs – those who stood first in Europe's exit line (Abella and Troper 1982; Luciuk 1984).

The public seemed to agree. Just over a year after the guns fell quiet in Europe, a public opinion poll found that Canadians would rather see recently defeated Germans allowed into Canada than Eastern and Southern Europeans, and, in particular, Jews. Only the Japanese fared worse. Thus, even a grudging willingness to reopen immigration in late 1947 was very much predicated on holding to the ethnically and racially based immigration priorities of the 1920s (Canadian Institute of Public Opinion, 1946).

British, American, and Northern European, particularly Dutch, immigrants, were actively courted. Legislated bars against Asians remained in place and administrative tinkering assured that Southern and Eastern Europeans, especially Jews, would find it difficult to get into Canada. The government of Ontario was so concerned that it receive only the 'right' type of immigrant that it flexed its jurisdictional muscle in immigration matters and inaugurated a highly publicized airlift of British families into the province. When British currency regulations threatened to choke off the flow of applicants, special transportation tariffs were negotiated to stimulate the inflow (Richmond 1967). When currency regulations similarly hobbled the immigration of other desirable Western European groups, especially the Dutch, the federal government intervened. In 1948, a three-year bilateral agreement was signed with the Netherlands to ensure the smooth transplanting of approximately 15,000 Dutch farmers and farm workers – family units – to Canada, many of them taking up farming immediately to the north of Toronto (Peterson 1955).

If labour-intensive and increasingly urban-based industry was generally pleased by the government's building commitment to immigration, it was less pleased with restrictions against importing cheap labour from outside the government's narrow ethnic circle of acceptability. Pleading that it must have access to a continuing supply of imported labour willing to assume low-wage and low-status positions rejected by both the preferred immigrants and native-born Canadians, business warned that the economic boom was in jeopardy. They pressed Ottawa to skim off the cream of the almost one-million-strong labour pool languishing in the displaced person (DP) camps in Germany, Austria, and Italy before other labour-short nations – including the United

States and Australia – beat Canada to the punch. Largely as a result of this pressure, the federal government gradually began to sift through DP camps for acceptable settlers, while carefully monitoring the public mood at home for any negative reaction to their arrival (Abella and Troper 1982; Momryk 1992).

Most of the displaced persons were former citizens of Eastern European states who refused repatriation to countries of origin now dominated by the Soviet Union. Others were Jews, a tattered remnant of Europe's pre-war Jewish community who had somehow survived the Holocaust. Hoping to rebuild lives shattered by the war, many men and some women accepted Canada's calculated kindness and accepted work in assigned industrial, service sector, or domestic jobs as the price of admission to Canada. And one should not confuse Canada's intake of displaced Europeans with the United Way; this was not a humanitarian effort. It was a labour-importation scheme, plain and simple. There can be little doubt that, if there were no Canadian labour shortages, few DPs would have been admitted to Canada and, certainly, few Jews or other Eastern Europeans. As they sorted through the existing and available European labour pool, immigration officials gave preference whenever possible to refugees from the Baltic republics, highly prized as hard working 'Nordic types.' Only as jobs remained unfilled did the Canadian government cautiously agree to lift barriers against Jewish and Slavic settlers (Abella and Troper 1982).

Along with racial and ethnic reservations about reopening immigration, the government had another domestic reason for its go-slow approach. Through the 1950s, government immigration and policy planners expected the economic bubble to burst and the demand for labour to subside. Again they were wrong. What is more, while demand for labour remained high, especially in and around booming centres like Toronto, Canada was not the only immigration game in town. Labour shortages in the United States, Australia, and elsewhere forced Canadian officials to continually scramble for their share of a shrinking labour pool. It was not long before candidates who might previously have been rejected as undesirable became valued prospects. In the face of the continuing demands of a robust economy, remaining barriers to Jews and Slavic immigrants slipped away, especially for the families of those already in Canada and for immigrants with skills demanded by labour-starved Canadian industries (Abella and Troper 1982; Luciuk 1984; Aun 1985; Danys 1986).

By the time the DP admission program ended, tens of thousands of

new immigrants had resettled in Canada – many in Toronto, home to more displaced persons per capita than any other Canadian city – and aggressive immigration recruitment in Europe remained the order of the day. The old backwater of Ottawa bureaucracy, the Immigration Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources, was revitalized and, reflecting its new profile, was upgraded in 1950 as the new Department of Citizenship and Immigration. Old-school restrictionist immigration officers were also replaced with a new breed of pro-immigration personnel. Canada was finally back in the immigration importation business, and Toronto became a major immigration destination.

AN URBAN-FRIENDLY IMMIGRATION POLICY

As part of its revamped activist mandate, the new immigration bureaucracy set about preparing a new immigration law. The existing legislation had been enacted before the First World War and, with its emphasis on agricultural settlement, it was a stretch to make the new industrial and urban labour recruitment priorities fit within its parameters. Recognizing this, in 1952, the government passed a new immigration act designed to attract a continuing stream of industrial and urban-bound immigrants without casting an ethnic or racial immigration net beyond Europe's borders. The subtext of the 1952 legislation might have been drawn from Mackenzie King's previous caution against immigration undermining the social structure of Canadian society. Affirming what had long been Canadian immigration policy, the 1952 act allowed the minister of immigration and his officials sweeping powers to set such regulations as they felt necessary to enforce the act. At the discretion of the minister, individuals or groups could be rejected because of nationality, geographic origin, peculiarity of custom, unsuitability to the climate, or because of an omnibus provision that allowed for the rejection of any individual or group who demonstrated an inability 'to become assimilated.' In effect, this meant a continuation of some sort of hierarchy of preference among European-origin applicants and an almost total ban on non-white applicants, especially Asians (Hawkins 1972).

Furthermore, in keeping with the deepening Cold War climate of the day, security checks were required of would-be immigrants. Security personnel, working under the umbrella of the RCMP, functioned as something of a separate estate; a cone of secrecy was drawn over their activities and procedures. Canada's Cold War gatekeepers focused on

the Communist threat. But many non-Communists and even anti-Communists on the left – trade unionists, socialists, social democrats – were also denied entry. Individuals barred from Canada on security grounds had few avenues of appeal and often were not even told the true cause of their rejection. Unfortunately, while standing guard against Communists, Canada allowed or abetted the entry of others whose Second World War records should have set off alarms in Ottawa. Most were not even questioned about Nazi skeletons in their closets. But even if there had been reason to suspect individuals of having a Nazi past or pro-Nazi sympathies, in the eyes of Canadian security authorities, they had the virtue of being proven anti-Communists (Whitaker 1987; also Commission of Inquiry on War Criminals 1986; Matas and Charendoff 1987; Troper and Weinfeld 1989).

At least there was positive change in one area. Through the 1950s, concern for ethnically biased selectivity gradually receded, at least as far as Euro-ethnics were concerned. One might see this racial leavening as the 'whiting' of Euro-ethnics, spurred on by a repudiation of eugenically based notions of racial boundaries and by public revulsion at the excesses of Nazi racism. Perhaps. More likely it was triggered by a combination of the continuing heavy demand for labour and the surprising level of comfort Canadians, particularly in cities, seemed to have with the new immigration. As long as the economy remained buoyant and immigrants were regarded as essential to keep the economy moving forward, immigration was tolerated, if not welcomed.

The wall of restriction against people of colour started to show a first tiny crack. Former British colonial holdings were achieving independence in a reconfigured British Commonwealth and, in 1951, hoping to gain an economic toe-hold in the developing world, Canada set aside a small but symbolically important immigrant quota for its non-white Commonwealth partners, India, Pakistan, and Ceylon. If the actual numbers admitted to Canada were small, the symbolism of the government-sanctioned admission of even a small group of non-white immigrants should not be minimized (Hawkins 1972).

The question now for government was whether the economy would be able to sustain still more immigration. To the surprise of many economists and immigration officials who had warned that the Canadian economy would cool and unemployment increase through the 1950s and into the early 1960s, the Canadian economy generally remained strong, as did the labour market. Jobs in Toronto's labour-intensive industries were going begging and there was a particular

pressing need for immigrant workers to service a massive boom in residential housing construction and in the expanding urban infrastructure. Where would the necessary immigrant labour force come from? There weren't that many options. As prosperity gradually returned to Northern and Western Europe in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the pool of applicants from those areas gradually dried up. The DP camps had been emptied of all but the hard-core cases – displaced persons who were physically or mentally disabled or infirm. The lowering of the Iron Curtain locked Europeans in the Eastern bloc in place and no one in government could conceive of recruiting immigrants from the non-white world.

With business interests cautioning that continued prosperity was at stake and pressing for more and more labour, immigration officials had little choice but to expand their focus to include Europe's southern rim. Labour-intensive industries such as the construction trades were particularly interested in Italy and other Mediterranean countries, where population increase and land dislocation sapped the absorptive capacity of war-ravaged local economies. The result was an unskilled, rural labour pool that could easily be redirected to waiting employment in Canada. After some hesitation, the government agreed. Restrictions against the admission of Italians, recently barred as former enemy aliens, were lifted and, with security personnel on guard against Communist infiltration, immigration offices were opened in Italy.

Ottawa may have hoped at first to attract the more 'Germanic' northern Italians, but, almost immediately, southern Italians dominated the immigrant flow. By the mid-1960s Italian immigration climbed into the hundreds of thousands (Iacovetta 1992). In the industrial heartland of Southern Ontario and in urban Canada more generally, Italian labourers, many of them former agricultural workers from the rural farm villages that dotted central and southern Italy, soon became a mainstay of the thriving construction industry, much as Slavic immigrants had been in breaking the prairie sod and Jews had been in the needle trades.

So extensive was the influx of Italian immigrants that, in the decade of the 1950s, Canada's Italian-origin population grew threefold – from approximately 150,000 to 450,000. Toronto received the lion's share of these new arrivals. Indeed, almost half of all Canadians of Italian origin soon lived in Toronto and, unlike the pre-war Italian migration, there were comparatively fewer sojourners among them. The post-war Italian immigration was largely made up of permanent settlers arriving in

family units or, if the male head of household was the first to migrate, of men who made reunification with family a first priority (Iacovetta 1992).

Unschoolled in large city ways, most Italian immigrants to Toronto located in residential working-class pockets along major public transportation arteries and took up lower-status manual – but often unionized – labouring jobs in construction and related industrial sectors. For many immigrants from Italy, residential property acquisition and organizing chain migration to ensure reunification with kin were their twin priorities. Home ownership and a widening circle of kin also served to prop up the integrative process. Family often took in family and together the extended family formed a social and economic unit, pooling capital and resources, networking together for jobs, caring for one another's children, sharing information, and serving as a secure base for personal interaction and emotional strength. As the numbers of Italians in Toronto increased, so did their institutional presence. Italian grocery stores, cafés, food wholesalers, and newspaper publishers, along with Italian parishes and social clubs, gave Italian neighbourhoods a distinctive flavour and streetscape, and even a distinctively ethnic subeconomy.

Other immigrant groups followed suit. As Italian immigration continued, Greeks, Portuguese, and the peoples of the Balkan peninsula began arriving in Toronto in large numbers. Each group was unique in its historical self-definition, cultural traditions, institutional organization, and economic priorities; at the same time, each adopted many of the same family-based economic and social integrative strategies so characteristic of post-war Italian immigrants (Iacovetta 1992; Harney 1998).

THE NEW PLURALISM

Immigrant resourcefulness and integrative patterns were hardly noticed by federal government officials. Their priorities were elsewhere. With bureaucratic tunnel vision, many persisted in regarding immigration as little more than the importation of labour to capital, workers to jobs. The impact of this immigration on the Toronto urban landscape and mind-set, however, was far more than economic; post-war immigrants gradually reshaped urban life and attitudes. Whether they were Southern or Eastern Europeans, these immigrants altered the city's

religious balance, gradually undermining the long-standing Protestant hegemony while invigorating existing Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Jewish communities in Toronto. They also brought with them a richness of cultural forms and a diversity of social expression that Toronto had never seen before.

At first, Toronto wore this new cosmopolitanism like a new and somewhat uncomfortable pair of shoes. Mainstream Torontonians understood that immigration played into the city's growth, but they still felt a little pinched and thrown a little off balance by the changes that immigration was bringing to the world around them. They felt the city they had known beginning to slip away and some were cautious about stepping into an ethnically pluralist future. Old ways died hard. Difficult as it is to believe in retrospect, in the late 1950s, Toronto police descended on picnicking Italian immigrants for having a glass of wine in a public park, let alone for allowing their children take a sip. Municipal health authorities were suspicious of new European-style cafés that violated city ordinances by serving food at sidewalk tables. And what could they make of the smells and tastes of foods so alien to the fare that most Torontonians were used to? Even espresso coffee, new to Toronto, smacked a little too much of the exotic – maybe even of the subversive.

And when would these foreigners learn to be like us? It was not uncommon for immigrants speaking their mother tongue in the street or on public transit to be made to feel out of place and told to 'Speak white!' School teachers and administrators, thinking they were liberating immigrant children from narrow Old-World parochialism or protecting them from the schoolyard bully, took liberties with many an immigrant child's most personal possession – his or her name. Gabriella became Gail, Luigi became Louis, Olga became Alice, and Hershel became Harold. All the while, some members of the press and some local politicians warned against the evils of immigrant overcrowding, ghettoization, and crime. But not all. Slowly at first, Torontonians became more and more comfortable with the new foods, the polyphony of languages, and the new neighbourhoods that immigrants brought in their wake. And for some, comfort gradually turned to pride in Toronto's new-found sophistication and cosmopolitan image.

And what became of the bedrock of vitriolic and politically acidic xenophobia that so dominated Canadian and Toronto thinking only a few years earlier? What of that mainstream certitude that, almost as a sacred trust, Toronto must stand guard over British values in North

America? How was it that in less than one generation Toronto's public face shifted from the defence of Anglo-conformity to a celebration of the mosaic? Put simply, by the late 1960s, the past was cut loose, made dysfunctional both by the onslaught of city-bound immigration and the mediating force of governments awakened to the fact that political power was increasingly in the hands of a new and pluralist urban electorate that was made up more and more of immigrants and their children. If it would take time for its importance to soak in, the election of Nathan Phillips – a Jew and a child of immigrants – as the first mayor of the 1960s Toronto was a telling barometer of the effect that immigration was having on the municipal polity; it represented something of a civic revolution of the mind.

The revolution was of many parts, but had its genesis in the late 1940s with the redefining of community through the introduction of a distinct and separate Canadian citizenship. Until 1947 there was no such thing as Canadian citizenship; people living in Canada were legally designated British subjects who were residents of Canada, not Canadians. Pressure for change began in the post-war period and the name most associated with that change was Paul Martin, a Liberal backbencher who was appointed secretary of state towards the end of the war. In his autobiography, he claimed to have previously flirted with the notion of a distinct Canadian citizenship, but his total conversion to the necessity of separate citizenship came during an official visit to recently liberated Europe in 1945. In France he visited the Canadian military cemetery at Dieppe where, walking amid the rows of graves, some still fresh with wooden markers, he reported being deeply moved by the incredible diversity of names found among the Canadian fallen – names which spoke to the pluralism of origins that even then made up Canadian society. Martin later wrote, 'Of whatever origin, these men were Canadians.' They had fought and died for Canada; they deserved to be remembered as Canadians. In their memory, Martin claimed, he championed the creation of a Canadian citizenship (Martin 1983, 437).

Without negating Martin's contribution, it has to be acknowledged that other factors prodded the government towards instituting a separate Canadian citizenship. Certainly, there was desire to build on pride at Canada's major contribution to the Allied war effort – distinct from that of Britain's – but there was also a desire by Ottawa to carve out an independent place for Canada in the post-war United Nations and in the family of nations. An independent Canadian voice would be well-served by having a separate Canadian citizenship. On the domestic

level, it was hoped that Canadian citizenship would become a focal point for a national unity that all – Canadian-born and immigrant, French- and English-speaking – could share (Martin 1983; Brown 1996).

It took several years but Canadian citizenship became a reality on January 1, 1947. The adoption of Canadian citizenship turned out to be far more than simple post-war patriotic puffery or flag-waving sentimentalism; it proved a far-reaching act. By rejecting the notion of layered citizenship, a citizenship of degrees, Canada pronounced itself inclusive. Henceforth, individual Canadian citizens were promised that, under the law, all would be treated the same, irrespective of whether they were Canadian- or foreign-born, no matter their heritage, religion, or national origin, and irrespective of any proprietary claim that one group might make to being more Canadian than another. It would take time for reality to match rhetoric, but with post-war immigration just building up a head of steam, the introduction of an inclusive Canadian citizenship paved the way for all subsequent human rights initiatives that became so important to immigrants to Canada.

The inauguration of a distinct and separate Canadian citizenship was only the first step towards a major expansion of human rights legislation in Canada. If anything, the implementation of Canadian citizenship raised expectations about more openness in civic society and about unprecedented equality of access to public institutions for all Canadians, and fuelled the demand for legislated equality before the law. This human rights agenda was soon being driven by a coalition of organized labour, liberal churches, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), and older Canadian ethnic communities who had embraced the Canadian war effort, sent their children off to fight, and, in the aftermath of war, refused to ever again accept second-class status for themselves or their children. Alive with expectations raised by Canadian citizenship, the coalition was also swept along by a number of contributing forces: revulsion at the racial excesses of Nazism; a popularization of the new social sciences and the consequent academic-led assault on social Darwinist and eugenic thinking; a growing sense of the disfunctionality of the Anglo-centric urban Canadian world-view now rendered an anachronism by the erosion of colonialism and the British imperial dream; a spillover of social justice ideology from the nascent Black civil rights struggle in the United States; and, of major importance, a recognition that civic society had to clear away encumbrances to smooth the social, economic, and political integration of immigrants moving into cities like Toronto.

Canadian human rights activists pushed for legal protections against racial, religious, or ethnic discrimination. If few believed social attitudes could change overnight, all worked to ensure that the law would. And the law did. In the first decade after the war, Canadian provinces followed Saskatchewan's lead and enacted fair employment and accommodation legislation barring discrimination on account of race, religion, or country of origin. In the international forum, Canada's signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights added symbolic urgency to the new Canadian human rights agenda. Canadian courts were soon responding to the more progressive spirit of the day by using their powers to expand society's human rights thrust (Walker 1997).

This embrace of a singular citizenship and the legal guarantees of human rights for all Canadians mirrored a new spirit in urban Canadian thinking. It even remade language. Immigrants were no longer foreigners; they were 'New Canadians.' And, for that matter, they were no longer part of cities like Toronto by sufferance. They were there by right, and now by right of law. It was only a matter of time before the domestic human rights upheaval impacted on Canadian immigration legislation and administration.

In Toronto, where most immigrants lived, the revitalization of the notion of citizenship and human rights reinforced the realization that yesterday's immigrants and their children were becoming tomorrow's taxpayers and voters. Urban politicians, once leery of 'foreigners,' now reached out to New Canadians. Issues that were important to immigrant communities were being taken up by city hall. Most important to many immigrants, boards of education that had long been home to assimilationist, if not nativist, assumptions about the place of the foreign-born and their children in Canadian society were being forced to reinvent themselves as open and inclusive. Public expressions of racism shifted from being normative to being anti-social and from being anti-social to being legally punishable violations of community-wide standards. Toronto's urban polity had changed.

Immigration showed no sign of slowing. While Southern Europeans continued to dominate the stream of European immigrants entering Canada through the 1950s and into the 1960s, in 1956 the Cold War unexpectedly increased immigration from Central Europe. When the Soviets crushed the Hungarian uprising, they unleashed a flood of refugees westward into Austria. This first major European refugee crisis of the Cold War came at a fortuitous moment for Canada. The economy was still strong and the plight of exiled Hungarian 'freedom

fighters' moved Canadians. At first, Ottawa was cautious. Canadian security personnel warned that the Soviets might salt this refugee movement with secret agents seeking entry into unsuspecting Western countries. For its part, the Canadian government seemed less concerned with Communists than with costs. Unlike the earlier DP movement, in which labour-intensive industry, ethnic communities, and families shouldered much of the financial burden, any Hungarian resettlement program promised to be largely Ottawa's responsibility.

As the government dithered, public sympathy and media pressure grew. Press editorials, savaging the government for inaction, demanded that Canada take the lead in welcoming victims of Soviet aggression. Under withering pressure, the Cabinet finally cut a path through immigration red tape. Normal immigration procedures, including pre-embarkation medical and security checks, were sidestepped or postponed until after arrival in Canada. Jack Pickersgill, the minister of immigration, hurried to Vienna and hard on his heels came immigration teams authorized to scoop up the best of the well-educated and highly motivated Hungarian refugees before other countries got them.

The Hungarian refugee resettlement program ran remarkably smoothly in spite of its lurching start and a lack of preparedness on the part of education and social service officials to deal with the influx. In Toronto, after some initial confusion, government officials at all levels joined forces with non-governmental organizations to help settle the new arrivals. And, in the end, Canada did well by doing good. The refugee resettlement program brought almost 37,000 Hungarians to Canada, with Toronto soon becoming home to the largest community. Many of these refugees were established professionals who, once they received orientation and English-language training, gradually found employment in the retail, commercial, or white-collar sectors. But, successful as this refugee resettlement exercise was, it was hardly a routine immigration program. Immigration officials regarded it as a one-time initiative, a singular exception to the procedural guidelines they so closely guarded. Time would prove them wrong (Dirks 1977; Dreisziger 1982).

THE WHITE PAPER

After two decades of almost uninterrupted growth, Canada's economy began to weaken in the early 1960s. With insistent 'I-told-you-so' warnings from many economists and government planners that Canada

now faced serious industrial burnout, demand for new immigrant labour took a nosedive. Toronto's economy flagged along with the rest of the national economy, federal immigrant recruitment was curtailed, and immigration numbers soon fell by half. As the number of immigrant arrivals dropped off, some officials, convinced that immigrant absorptive capacity of the Canadian economy had been reached if not exceeded, called for a permanent cap on immigrant inflow. Responding to the chorus of naysayers, Ottawa commissioned a review of Canadian immigration with an eye towards redefining immigration priorities.

A white paper on immigration was released in 1966. The policy document attempted to walk a tightrope between the still-vocal pro-immigration lobbyists and a growing body of immigration opponents. For immigration advocates the white paper was infused with the liberal rhetoric of the day, even though it called for a complete overhaul of Canadian immigration law, regulations, and procedures, including a final purge of every last hint of racial or ethnic discrimination. While these were hailed as long overdue reforms, some immigration advocates viewed other white paper policy recommendations with alarm. Perhaps reflecting the larger public debate in the 1960s on optimum population size, the white paper questioned the long-term wisdom of taking in so many job-hungry immigrants at the prime of their fertility cycle. The white paper's recommendations were far from the Malthusian warnings of an earlier time and were certainly not endorsing the then-fashionable zero population growth, but they did offer a blueprint for capping immigration numbers. This stirred up a hornets' nest of controversy. Particularly controversial was the document's plan for tightening regulations on family reunification, which accounted for almost half of all immigrant entries into Canada, in favour of more skilled, independent immigrants. The white paper recommended that landed immigrants, those who were not yet citizens, be restricted to sponsoring only immediate dependents, the closest of family, while those who were Canadian citizens only be allowed to sponsor relatives who satisfied the educational and occupational qualifications in place for the admission of independent immigrants. If implemented, these moves would sharply restrict the possibility of sponsoring family, especially for immigrants who had come to Canada from Southern Europe.

Perhaps still unaware of the depth of controversy brewing over the family reunification issue, Cabinet referred the white paper to the Parliamentary Committee on Immigration for public input and discussion.

The committee soon got an earful. Italian, Jewish, and Eastern European ethnic leaders, particularly in Toronto – now home to large and increasingly resourceful post-war immigrant and ethnic communities – were outspoken in their hostility to any reduction in family sponsorship. They warned politicians that enraged ethnic voters would neither forgive nor forget any political party that slammed the door on their kith and kin. Mainstream churches and the Canadian Labour Congress joined the chorus of those demanding a broadening, not a narrowing, of family reunification provisions of the immigration regulations. Members of Parliament from Toronto, especially those from immigrant-heavy ridings, who feared that campaign contributions and ethnic votes would go elsewhere, waded in on the side of family sponsorship.

Ducking the political buckshot, the federal government set aside the proposed changes, at least as recommended in the white paper. Instead, Ottawa tinkered with the regulations. The list of those family members entitled to entry into Canada as first-degree relatives was narrowed. At the same time, however, a new class of immigrant, a nominated class, was announced. Nominated immigrants, primarily non-dependent family members who seemed likely to integrate well, were given priority in immigration processing. Their Canadian sponsor or nominator was also relieved of some of the legal and fiscal liability assumed in the case of sponsorship of immediate family. As a result, family migration was not curtailed. It was restructured and, to some degree, expanded. For years to come, the largest single subset of immigrants arriving in Toronto would continue to be family or other sponsored categories (Statistics Canada 1990).

There was another and, conceivably, more significant impact of the sponsorship battle. Thoughtful political observers of the day may have sensed the emergence of a newly empowered urban immigrant and ethnic political constituency, largely based in Toronto. In the white paper debate, that constituency seemed to be serving notice that it was prepared to take its place as a player on the Canadian political stage. But was this particular political victory an aberration, a one-time single-issue success by a coalition of otherwise disparate ethnic groups? Political commentators were unsure and began discussing a possibly fundamental and far-reaching shift in urban politics. One thing was certain, though, in Toronto, yesterday's immigrants were emerging as political, social, and economic powerbrokers in their own right – a 'third force' whose origins were neither English nor French (Porter 1972; Burnet 1976, 1979; Troper 1978; Breton 1979; Lupul 1983).

FROM ETHNIC TO RACIAL PLURALISM

Several other white paper recommendations were implemented, including the final expunging of racial and ethnic barriers to Canadian entry. A few years earlier, in 1962, in line with human rights initiatives at the provincial and federal levels, Cabinet approved the lifting of racial and ethnic restrictions on the processing of independent applicants. But the government stopped short of universalizing the policy change. To assuage public concerns about any sudden influx of dependent Chinese or other Asians, especially in British Columbia, racial restrictions remained in place for Asian family reunification cases. Nonetheless, even if the direction of public policy seemed clear, *de facto* racial and ethnic discrimination lingered for a time under administrative guise: the resources of the immigration bureaucracy were almost exclusively concentrated in areas of traditional immigrant preference – the United Kingdom, the United States, and Western Europe.

By contrast, few on-site immigration services were available and little immigration promotion money was spent in the developing world. In 1960, for example, Canada operated twenty-seven immigration offices outside North America. Twenty-four were in Europe and three were in Asia (one of which was in Israel). There was not one in all of black Africa, the Caribbean, or South America. But change would not be denied. In 1967, as a result of one of the key white paper recommendations, all vestiges of racial and ethnic discrimination were finally and officially expunged from Canadian immigration regulations and procedures, including all those relating to sponsored and nominated immigration. The privilege of applying to bring in family was extended to all Canadian citizens and landed immigrants alike, including family from the developing world (Ramcharan 1982).

Canada's network of immigration offices abroad were gradually expanded. A Canadian immigration office was opened in Egypt in 1963; in Japan in 1967; and in Lebanon, the Philippines, the West Indies, and Pakistan in 1968. And, as part of the package in which Ottawa restructured family reunification regulations and ended racial and ethnic preferences, the government also overhauled the procedures by which independent immigration applicants were admitted into Canada. Again, without enacting new legislation, the government both reined in the discretionary powers of immigration officials to reject an applicant and brought immigration admissions more exactly into line with domestic economic fluctuations. The point system, as it came to be known, was

instituted to calibrate the desirability of each independent applicant. Simply stated, points were granted each applicant for specific skills, for their background, or for Canadian links. In addition to education and employment experience, points were assigned for character, market demand for skills, English- and French-language proficiency, age, proposed Canadian destination, and pre-arranged employment. Should Canadian economic conditions or skill demands change, the point system could be quickly adjusted to reflect these new priorities.

While the interviewing immigration officer still influenced approvals, the approved system was now more governed by the iron laws of mathematics rather than by the vagaries of subjective assessment. Some argued that a point system that rewarded education, professional status, and English- or French-language skills disadvantaged most potential applicants from the developing world, but few would argue that the kind of bedrock racism that was so inherent in the previous selection system was still operative (Hawkins 1972; St John-Jones 1973; Stasiulis 1985; Satzewich 1989).

REFUGEES

By affirming universality in its immigration policy, Canada took a big step towards further routinizing immigration procedures. But in another area – the issue of refugee policy – there were still no routine procedures. If there was a policy at all it seemed to be one of non-commitment. As had been the case with displaced persons and the Hungarian refugees, Canada's response to refugees who had well-founded fears of being persecuted in their homeland remained largely ad hoc. Even with Canada's high-profile role at the United Nations and its 1969 signing of the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees, for most of the next decade, Canada made no legislative commitment to guarantee sanctuary for those seeking asylum. Indeed, the DP and Hungarian episodes, which brought so many immigrants into Toronto, were understood by government as exceptional cases, outside normal and routine Canadian immigration activity.

Another such exception came in 1968. The end of the Prague Spring sent thousands of Czechoslovakian refugees westward in what seemed a repeat of the Hungarian exodus a decade earlier. But this time there was no Canadian stalling. Moved by a mixture of humanitarianism, Cold War posturing, and the opportunity to enhance Canada's human capital, Ottawa moved quickly to gather up its share of the new home-

less. The Canadian economy was on the mend, events had produced a pool of well-educated and available immigrants to be picked over, and Canadian immigration teams swung into action. Not even the usually cautious Canadian security service raised strong objections to the Czech resettlement scheme. In short order, immigration authorities set aside regular immigration procedures to bring approximately 12,000 Czech refugees into Canada. Again, disproportionate numbers of the new arrivals eventually settled in Toronto (Dirks 1977).

The fortuitous mixture of altruism and economic self-interest that drove the Canadian resettlement effort in the case of Czech refugees did have limits and, like the refugee problem itself, these limits also appeared to be grounded in politics. Refugee advocates repeatedly attacked the government for favouring refugees from Communist or other high-profile and unpopular regimes over victims of equally repressive right-wing persecution. The charge was not without merit. For example, there was a glaring discrepancy between the government's response to Ugandan Asian refugees expelled by Idi Amin in 1972 and to Chilean refugees from the 1973 right-wing coup d'état against Salvador Allende's democratically elected left-wing government. In the case of the approximately 50,000 Asians with British passports expelled from Uganda, the British, fearing a domestic backlash against the sudden influx of so many Asians, appealed to Canada and other countries for assistance. Canada responded positively. Just as it was winding down its Czech resettlement program, as if to underscore the non-racial thrust of revamped Canadian immigration practice, authorities swung into action and quickly admitted 5,600 Ugandan Asians who, it was judged, could do well in Canada.

The Ugandan program stands in sharp contrast to the Chilean experience a year later. The Canadian government may have become colour-blind to race, but not to ideology; when it came to Chileans, immigration and security personnel saw red. After the fall of Allende's socialist government in an American-supported coup, Canada, protective of major Canadian investment in Chile, was among the first to recognize the new Pinochet regime. The Pinochet government may have been hospitable to Canadian investment, but was less so to those it had recently ousted from power. Arrests, 'disappearances,' and political repression were the order of the day. Canadian officials regarded this reign of political terror as a regrettable, but still an internal, problem of post-coup Chilean political adjustment. They would have continued to do so were it not for a small group of terrified Chileans who refused to

leave the Canadian Embassy in Santiago, begging for sanctuary and political asylum in Canada. Ironically, while Chilean authorities respected the right to sanctuary in the embassy, Canada did not (Immigration 1974). As external affairs officials and embassy staff scrambled to dislodge the unwelcome guests, in Canada a vocal lobby group, including high-profile academics and labour leaders, coalesced under the umbrella of the Canadian Council of Churches to pressure Ottawa into accepting significant numbers of Chileans facing torture or imprisonment for their political views (Carroll 1974).

In contrast with Ugandan Asian refugees or with the earlier Czech and Hungarian resettlement programs, the Chileans did not fare nearly so well. Perhaps Canada was uneasy about accepting any large group of potentially left-leaning immigrants, or perhaps it was concerned about a negative American or Chilean government reaction. In any case, it proceeded with deliberate caution – too much caution in the eyes of some. While, by special arrangement with Chilean authorities, many of those camped in the embassy were allowed to leave for Canada, Canadian immigration authorities did not rush to process other applications. Just the opposite. They showed a marked reluctance to wave immigration regulations and, in spite of continuing pressure from pro-refugee advocates, immigration officials were slow in setting up shop in Chile.

Two years after the fall of Allende, in the face of continuing protests at the wholesale abuse of civil liberties – or worse – by the Pinochet regime, less than 2,000 Chileans were processed for entry into Canada, most of whom came to Toronto. Many were educated, white-collar professionals who, under other circumstances, might well have been granted entry as independent immigrants. This is not to argue that Chilean refugees were any more or less deserving of admission to Canada on humanitarian grounds than were Ugandan Asians. But, it does underscore that there was more to Canadian refugee policy than humanitarian concern. And if humanitarian concerns might sometimes take second place to economic self-interest, economic self-interest could also take second place to political considerations (Dirks 1977).

MULTICULTURALISM

By the early 1970s, three separate but interrelated phenomena had combined to reshape the immigrant experience in Canada and, in par-

ticular, in Toronto – multiculturalism as federal policy, a major shift in immigration demographics, and a downturn in the economy. With immigration continuing to expand the mosaic of peoples who constituted urban Canada, in 1971 the federal government announced its support for a policy of multiculturalism, a policy that symbolically recognized the positive and enduring impact of past immigration on Canadian society and that put forward a pluralist model for nation-building. While observers debated the complex political pressures that nudged the Liberal government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau towards adopting multiculturalism, there is no doubt that the policy, as articulated by government, suggested a radical reconstruction of Canadian cultural definitions. It eschewed formal recognition of any overriding or primary national cultural tradition. In so doing, the multicultural policy statement affirmed English and French as the two official national languages, but rejected biculturalism – a notion of Canada as a product of the nation-building efforts of two charter groups, the English (British) and the French, in which these two groups retained both a proprietary right to determine the boundaries of Canadian identity and a custodial prerogative to preserve the primacy of their respective cultural heritages. Instead, multiculturalism espoused respect for diversity and acceptance of pluralism as the true and only basis of an inclusive Canadian identity.

In another context, it might be interesting to speculate as to whether multiculturalism was good policy, or, for that matter, how and whether it made any appreciable difference in the lives of individual Canadians. But, for this discussion, what is most important is that the Canadian government, with wide provincial support in English-speaking Canada, was conceding that no overriding national cultural consensus had taken root through more than one hundred years of national development. As the policy statement asserted, 'there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other. No citizen or group of citizens is other than Canadian, and all should be treated fairly.' Instead, the government declared that the binding force in the Canadian social compact would henceforth be articulated as a function of mutual respect rooted in cultural diversity, the same cultural diversity that was now the reality of the urban Canadian street. Nowhere was that diversity more visible to the eye than in the greater Toronto area, the destination of more than one-in-three post-war immigrants to Canada.

Multiculturalism has recently been under attack as a detriment to the development of a singular and bonding Canadian identity and a diver-

sion from more pressing issues – that it ignores issues of racial and economic disparity in favour of funding folk dancing in church basements – but, at the time, multiculturalism struck a positive chord especially in urban English-speaking Canada. Whatever else multiculturalism did or did not do, it symbolically rounded the circle begun with the implementation of a separate and distinct Canadian citizenship. If multiculturalism was not the Magna Carta for group rights that some ethnic activists hoped for and their detractors feared, it was a clear statement to Canadians of all backgrounds that individual or group cultural affinity exercised in accord with Canadian law was neither antithetical to the common good, nor should it be allowed to encumber citizen participation in the civic society. Stripped of its policy rhetoric and political puffery, for many Canadians in the early 1970s, multiculturalism simply translated as ‘live and let live.’

It is easy in retrospect – maybe even fashionable – to be cynical about official multiculturalism, and it is certainly appropriate to chastise politicians for attempting, without much success, to spin multiculturalism into a vote-buying device. It is also true that, for some, multicultural rhetoric rang hollow in the face of ongoing economic disparities and human rights abuses. It is similarly all too easy to find gaps in the net of Canadian human rights protections, especially as they relate to racial discrimination affecting immigrants and refugees. Few would claim that the lot of immigrants and refugees in urban Canada is anything close to problem-free. Not by a long shot. All of this notwithstanding, multiculturalism as government policy did make a difference. Canadian urban experience is now an immigrant and ethnic experience and, equally important, it is accepted as such in spite of the fact that less than a generation ago, the very idea of urban-bound immigration – let alone immigration of non-Europeans – would have been rejected as a nightmare vision. Any government that advocated large scale urban-bound immigration would have been driven from office by the wrath of voters. That is not true today. There can be no doubt that Canadians generally, and Torontonians in particular, acknowledge that theirs is a pluralist society in which equality remains an important social goal. For all its flaws, multiculturalism helped frame that view (Troper 1999).

THE GREEN PAPER

Multiculturalism was not the only public policy initiative to affect public attitudes towards pluralism in the 1970s; there was a shift in

immigration policy itself. From the early 1950s to the late 1970s, immigration authorities laboured under the 1952 Immigration Act. The legislation had been amended a number of times and the immigration regulations that shaped day-to-day immigration operations were forever being reviewed, but Canada of the 1970s was a very different place from that of early 1950s. The social and economic priorities that shaped the 1952 legislation were no longer operative; a law that was designed to attract a large pool of unskilled agricultural and industrial workers seemed out of place in one of the most urban and technologically advanced Western states. Revisions to the old legislation, including the abandoning of racial and ethnic discrimination and the adoption of a point system, attempted to bridge the yawning gap between life in 1952 and the social and economic realities of the 1970s. But there was a difference between papering over the flaws in the 1952 legislation and designing a new act. To successfully meet the demands imposed by changing domestic and international world markets, government again hoped to move immigration away from its emphasis on family reunification towards a policy that would encourage the immigration of people with immediately employable skills and capital-productive potential. Along with new immigration priorities, new thinking was required; a new immigration law was overdue.

The first step towards tabling new legislation was an announcement by the minister of manpower and immigration in September 1973 that a federal commission would undertake yet another review of Canadian immigration policy that would be subject to public debate. After almost eighteen months of study and hearings, of collecting expert testimony and weighing suggestions for reform of immigration law and procedures, in late 1974, the commission issued its four-volume *Report of the Canadian Immigration and Population Study*.² Described more as a discussion paper than a blueprint for the future, the green paper on immigration, as the report was commonly known, put forward a number of recommendations that the commission hoped would encourage wide and thoughtful public debate.

But if the review was timely, the public debate misfired; not all of it proved to be thoughtful. Some people dismissed the green paper recommendations as little more than a retread of existing practice. To the surprise of no one, the document affirmed the need for a close relationship between immigration and labour supply. In opposition to the earlier white paper, however, recommendations in the 1974 document called for very tightly controlled population growth through increased

immigration. Without sustained population growth, particularly among those in their wealth-generating years, the green paper warned, declining Canadian fertility rate and low mortality rate could hasten a time when the number of people generating wealth would be outstripped by those requiring support. The commission posited that the number of immigrants admitted would not only determine Canada's population growth, it would also be the key factor determining the pace of that growth (Department of Manpower and Immigration 1974).

On the other hand, the green paper advised that the dual problems of runaway urbanization and slippage in the percentage of francophones in the population were also a direct result of immigration. As a result, the paper recommended that Canada should both raise the skills bar for immigrants and cut back on the admission of family-class immigrants, while, at the same time, encouraging immigrants to settle in areas of designated need, rather than allowing them to congregate up in Canadian cities, particularly in the greater Toronto area (Department of Manpower and Immigration 1974; *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 1975).

Unfortunately for the commission, it could not have been a worse time for debate on the green paper recommendations. Just as a parliamentary committee geared up to hold hearings, the Canadian economy went into a tailspin triggered by the 1973 Middle East oil embargo. With economists talking about stagflation in the face of a steep rise in unemployment and a sharp jump in interest rates, thoughtful discussion of immigration among ethnic, business, and labour leaders in the media and the academy were almost drowned out in the flurry of finger pointing over who was to blame for Canada's faltering economy and the fearmongering that immigrants were poaching jobs from 'real' Canadians. Few people seemed prepared to entertain the argument that immigration was important to national population renewal or that immigration created jobs. As long as there were so many unemployed in Canada, many Canadians – including former immigrants threatened with job loss – saw little good in allowing job-hungry immigrants into the country.

But was this spike in anti-immigration sentiment just a reflection of a poor economy? Some immigration advocates felt that the talk about jobs and Canada's economic carrying capacity was a thinly veiled cover for racism. Charging that any upward adjustment of the immigration skills bar, restrictions on sponsorship or family reunification, or demands that immigrants be streamed into designated areas was a transparently crude attempt to reinstitute a preference for country of origin

and ethnic or racial selectivity, many ethnic leaders cried foul. If some of these leaders were overstating the case, they were not entirely wrong. Home-grown racists, lurking beyond the margins of respectable discourse, needed no prodding to denounce the increasing immigration of non-whites (Barrett 1987). Their racist ranting found few receptive ears, but it was no secret that the racial and ethnic composition of immigration was changing. After the removal of racial selection criteria and the opening of immigration offices in previous areas of non-traditional Canadian immigration, the admission of persons of colour – visible minorities primarily from the developing world – increased. In 1967, shortly after Canadian immigration operations were upgraded in Asia and the Caribbean, less than 15 per cent of immigrants into Canada were of African or Asian descent, but in the early 1970s, economic pressures in the Caribbean and South Asia induced more people to grab at the chance of relocating abroad. By 1975, as the green paper debate raged, members of visible minorities constituted the majority of immigrants entering Canada each year. Ethnic pluralism, already the hallmark of urban centres like Toronto, was gradually being paralleled by racial pluralism (Richmond 1976).

NEW LEGISLATION

In 1976, the clamour over the green paper had subsided and, although the economy was still sluggish, the government was prepared to wait no longer. It pressed ahead with its own immigration agenda, including new immigration legislation. The preamble to the immigration bill submitted to Parliament that year promised a new vision of immigration. The bill did reaffirm the close tie between immigration and Canada's economic needs in tough economic times and, in a preamble that also reflected heightened concern for the welfare of individual immigrants, the government's continued commitment to family reunification. But for some people, the government's words sounded a little tinny. In spite of the progressive tone in the bill's preamble, when it came to delivering on family reunification, generosity of heart seemed to have worn thin. In practice, to be eligible for reunification with kin in Canada, other than a spouse or dependent child under ten, the new legislation gave priority admission to family members from abroad who could satisfy government personnel that their education, employment record, or skills were an immediate asset to Canada. This was hardly an open door.

The bill did break new ground in other areas. For the first time, immigration authorities began working with a form of quota system. In consultation with the provinces, Ottawa established a yearly target for the number of immigrants of various categories it hoped to admit the following year. The Canadian immigration target, more a guideline allowing provinces and urban municipalities to plan for immigrant arrivals than a fixed commitment, could be shifted up or down depending on prevailing conditions at home and abroad. But it was hoped that by agreeing on a target figure, including one for refugees and family sponsorships, the resources necessary for the smooth integration of immigrants would be in place as they arrived. As a rule of thumb, in recent years, the immigration target has been set at about 1 per cent of the total Canadian population each year or, by the late 1990s, about 300,000 immigrants per year. On a per capita basis, the 1 per cent target is almost three times the immigration rate of the United States.

Unfortunately, the federal-provincial consultation process was not always smooth. The issue was not so much the number of immigrants, but the number of dollars. Who was going to put up the money to pay for immigrant-related services? For the greater Toronto area, a magnet for almost one-third of all immigrants entering Canada, the often fractious debates between federal and provincial officials over who would cover what costs and for how long was critical. After all, it is the city and its agencies, together with the province, that deliver the essential grass-roots services immigrants need and that the municipal property taxes are often strained to provide. But Toronto was not officially part of these consultations. No doubt federal and provincial officials who discussed immigration options were well-briefed on the special needs of the Toronto immigration catchment area. But being briefed and making Toronto's needs a priority were not one and the same. As a result, Toronto politicians, public servants, social agency officials, and ethnic leaders worried that shrinking resources would force a reduction in services to new arrivals. Stretched thin, Toronto immigrant-service providers always seemed to be waiting for a cheque from either the federal or provincial levels that, when it came, was seldom enough (Statistics Canada 1990).

The new immigration act also opened the door to a new class of immigrant: business-class immigrants, who were divided into several categories, including entrepreneur and investor classes. As part of their

admissions process, would-be entrepreneur-class immigrants were required to submit to Canadian authorities a business plan that offered promise of employing a number of Canadians, while investor-class immigrants were required to show a net worth of \$500,000 and be ready to invest half of that amount in a job-creating project. While there were those who attacked the business-immigrant scheme as little more than 'Canadian citizenship for sale,' it is important to remember that government never confused immigration with charity. Whatever the agenda of the individual immigrant, for government, immigration has always been regarded as serving national economic development. From this perspective, how is the current juggling of the immigration point system going to favour applicants who will best serve Canadian economic and business expansion in any way different from the previous ingathering of immigrants who promised to prime the national economic pump – not with money or professional training, but with raw muscle?

In the years after the business category was initiated, entrepreneurial immigration jumped by 600 per cent and Canada became a favourite destination for capital in flight (Statistics Canada 1990). Before 1997, many business-class immigrants who came to Canada were from Hong Kong. With the impending Chinese takeover of the British colony, many Hong Kong businesspeople, looking for a safe harbour for family and money, welcomed the opportunities being offered for capital investment in Canada, particularly in Vancouver and Toronto. The previously small Toronto Chinese community now constitutes the largest ethnic community in the greater Toronto area, almost half a million strong, and includes immigrants from mainland China, Taiwan, and the Chinese diaspora (Cannon 1989; DeMont and Fennell 1989; Lai 1992).

For independent immigrants – those not blessed with a pool of available capital to invest or without a sponsoring Canadian family – getting into Canada might prove somewhat more difficult. Under immigration regulations that applied during the early 1980s, applicants with more modest resources and no family sponsor would find it difficult to enter Canada unless they had a job waiting for them. This was not easy to arrange. Before offering employment to a would-be immigrant, a prospective employer had to be prepared to satisfy immigration officials that no satisfactory Canadian candidate was available or willing to take the job.

REFUGEE POLICY

The new Immigration Act did underscore a Canadian humanitarian commitment in one area: refugees. Of course, Canada had accepted refugees in the past – displaced persons, Hungarians, Czechoslovakians, Ugandan Asians, Chileans – but they had always been regarded as special cases admitted by special permission, exceptions to the normal and administrative routine of Canadian immigration procedure. Under the new immigration legislation, for the first time, Canada agreed that people who were ‘displaced or persecuted,’ who, as defined by the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees, had ‘a well-founded fear of persecution,’ were declared a class eligible for admission to Canada even though, as individuals or as a group, they might not meet Canada’s usual selection standards.

But what did this mean in reality? With a world increasingly awash in refugees and the end of one refugee crisis all too often the beginning of the next, official Ottawa struggled to institute a policy to replace the ad hoc response to refugees that had characterized the previous decades. In practice, as part of its annual immigration consultations with the provinces, the government set aside a specified number of refugee admissions as part of the total number of immigrants Canada expected to admit during the coming year. The cost of refugee integration would be covered by the government, but with provision for private groups to sponsor refugees as well. It was expected that refugees, in the main, would be selected and processed abroad from among those who had already been judged by international refugee officials to fit within the definition of the UN Convention. However, Canada reserved for itself the prerogative of expanding the definition or designating specific groups as special cases, eligible for Canadian admission as refugees, even though they might not technically fit the definition. And, while Canada did not envision itself as a first haven for refugees – the first country a refugee might reach after leaving his or her home country – Canada left open the possibility of individuals or groups arriving in Canada and making an inland claim to refugee status. This internal route demanded that Canada establish domestic procedures for determining the legitimacy of individual refugee claims.

The new Immigration Act’s refugee provisions, which came into effect in 1978, were quickly put to the test during the Vietnamese ‘boat people’ crisis. Stirred by press and television reports of desperate refugees fleeing Vietnam by sea in tiny boats, sometimes hardly more than

rafts, the strength of the pro-refugee sympathy in Canada took Ottawa by surprise. While some people in government and among the larger civic society may have harboured private doubts about the wisdom of Canada accepting a large number of the boat people, influential public and media demands for action grew louder. Across Canada, friend joined with friend, neighbour with neighbour, and church group with church group in applying to sponsor the arrival and settlement of Vietnamese refugees under the refugee sponsorship provisions of the new legislation. Ottawa responded to these sponsorship groups with both humanity and dispatch. The government promised that it would work with private sponsorship groups and match the sponsorships refugee for refugee.

By the end of 1980, the government had agreed to the admission of more than 60,000 Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, and ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia in a blend of government and private sponsorship programs unique in Canadian history. By the time this refugee crisis subsided, Canada was distinguished by having the highest per capita boat people resettlement of any country. Toronto soon became home to the largest number of Southeast Asian refugees, adding yet another layer to the city's remarkable ethnic and racial mix (Adelman 1980; Canada Employment and Immigration Commission 1987; Adelman 1982).

Since the boat people episode, refugee admissions have continued to be an important, if often controversial, part of Canada's immigration program. In 1980, at the height of the crisis, slightly more than 28 per cent of all immigrants admitted to Canada were refugees. During the subsequent ten years, the percentage hovered between 14 and 20 per cent (Statistics Canada 1990). But the core of the controversy regarding refugees had little to do with the number of refugees admitted to Canada. That number moved up or down on a year-by-year basis, depending on federal negotiations with the provinces and the state of international refugee supply. The problem for government and the source of much heated public and media debate was the issue of inland applicants – those who, instead of being selected and processed abroad by Canadian authorities and, if acceptable, granted Canadian admission, entered Canada one way or another and claimed refugee status once they were in Canada. Canada did not pick them; they picked Canada.

While Canadian immigration regulations made provision for inland refugee claims, Canadians and Canadian officials had likely given little

thought to the notion that refugees would arrive on the national doorstep seeking admission. It was certainly not easy for refugees to get to Canada – the only land border is with the United States and the country is otherwise sheltered from large-scale refugee movements by vast oceans. Indeed, compared with Western European countries – closer by distance and communication links to countries of persecution than Canada – the number of refugees who arrived in Canada remains small.

Nevertheless, officials were initially ill-prepared for people who found some way to enter Canada and claim refugee status. It was not long before the existing inland refugee determination process was clogged; hearing a claim and getting a decision sometimes took months or even a year or more. And until each claimant was individually assessed and a decision rendered, the legal status of these people remained in limbo.

This was most problematic in Toronto, where so many refugee claimants settled as they awaited their refugee hearing. Questions as to the municipality's responsibilities to the refugees remained to be answered. Were they entitled to social assistance or municipal housing? If not, who would pay their living expenses until their status was decided? What about educating refugee children? Were children of refugee claimants entitled to be in public school before refugee status was decided? Again, who would pay the costs – the federal government, the province, the municipal ratepayer, individual refugee claimants? Would claimants be allowed to work? And what would become of those who were eventually judged not to be refugees? Would they be sent home? Easier said than done. By making a refugee claim in Canada, a claimant was asserting that he or she had been persecuted at home. True or not, after making such a claim how would claimants who were denied refugee status in Canada be received if they were deported back to their home country?

While these issues were being resolved and refugee processing procedures streamlined, there were still issues of public perception that had an effect on refugee policy. While advocates of a progressive refugee policy were actively lobbying government, others warned that Canada was being hoodwinked, that refugee policy was a back door into Canada for those who would otherwise be rejected. There were rumours of unscrupulous refugee consultants and travel agents abetting fraudulent refugee claimants from people who had no 'well-founded fear of persecution.' The press was rife with discussions of false claim-

ants taking advantage of so-called lax Canadian refugee procedures to jump the immigration queue or otherwise bypass regular immigration procedures. It was not long before government critics began calling for a wholesale overhaul of refugee regulations. For some, the issue of refugees may also have been clouded by whispered fears over the growing presence of visible minorities in Canadian cities. In 1985 non-European immigration topped 60 per cent (Canada Employment and Immigration 1987). And while most Canadians continued to reject racism, there is no doubt that they were increasingly aware of the changing ethnographic face of Canada, especially urban Canada.

In 1985 the Supreme Court ruled in *Singh v. Minister of Employment and Immigration* that once they were in Canada, refugee claimants, like everyone else in Canada, are protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Specifically, the court held that any government attempt to bypass its own regulations for refugee claimant hearings was a violation of the Charter. If the government wanted to speed up the determination process, it had to change the regulations within the framework of the Charter. Better still, from the government's point of view, the court would welcome mechanisms to stem the flow of refugees claimants before they could get to Canada and be protected by the Charter.³

While the government was considering options for tightening up Canadian inland refugee procedures, the issue heated up again. Two ships illegally stranded their respective refugee cargoes on Canadian shores in the dead of night – 155 Tamils in Newfoundland in 1986, and 174 Sikhs in Nova Scotia in 1987. Refugee claims were not unknown in Newfoundland. The airport in Gander, a regular refuelling stop for flights on the route from Eastern Europe to Cuba, was often the site of numerous requests for Canadian asylum. Nevertheless, the arrival of the Tamils was a surprise and the Canadian public and media responded as much with curiosity as with concern. The landing of the Sikhs a year later was another thing altogether. Public attention became riveted on the refugee issue as the government hinted that boatloads of additional refugees might be on their way to Canada. Over the protests of pro-refugee advocates who warned against overreacting, Parliament was recalled and passed legislation that, among other things, threatened sanctions against anyone who aided people who entered Canada illegally for the purpose of making a refugee claim. The legislation also tightened up regulations by, for example, denying refugee status to individuals who had passed through another country where a refugee

ing women and children, were apprehended while smuggling themselves into Canada aboard three small and dangerously overcrowded vessels. The crews of the vessels were arrested and charged with various violations of the Canadian Criminal Code. The migrants faced a different and uncertain future: once in Canadian custody, most of the migrants claimed to be refugees fleeing persecution in China. In accord with established Canadian immigration procedures, as soon as an individual makes a refugee claim on Canadian soil, a review process is set in motion designed to determine the legitimacy of the individual's claim. While there was talk of fast-tracking the refugee determination process for these migrants, the process promised to be difficult and lengthy. It also promised to be controversial. But in the end, claimants who eventually satisfied officials that they did indeed have a well-founded fear of persecution in China were granted refugee status and allowed to stay in Canada. Those whose claims were rejected could be deported back to China.

With the review process under way, some of the Chinese migrants were released from custody pending their hearings before a refugee review panel and warned not to work without a special permit. Unable to work legally and without financial resources, most of the refugee claimants would likely require public support until their claims were decided. A number of those who were released were reported to have disappeared, likely secreted across the American border and headed for New York City, to the world of sweat labour reserved for illegal immigrants.

The media were generally unsympathetic to the migrants, but no more so than many Canadians. If radio talk shows and letters to the editor are in any way reflective of the public mind, than the Chinese migrants sparked widespread Canadian anger. The anger was not only directed at the migrants for attempting to smuggle themselves into Canada, but also at the government for its seeming laxity in dealing with people who enter Canada illegally. Many Canadians resented that the country's sovereignty had been violated, fearing that Canadian immigration and refugee regulations were little more than a sieve that allows almost everyone and anyone to slip into Canada. No other country, some people charged, would stand for this kind of wholesale violation of its borders. If these illegal Chinese migrants were allowed to remain, they warned, Canada would become an international laughingstock. And to make matters worse, weren't Canadian tax dollars paying the bills to feed, house, and cloth these migrants, let alone

pay for all the legal and administrative overhead involved in processing their refugee claims? Some critics argued that there were many needy Canadians who were being denied assistance while undeserving foreigners – illegal immigrants – were quick to get government handouts.

As time passed, the controversy subsided. Media and public attention focused elsewhere. However, the events of September 11, 2001, and the repercussions have implications for Canadian immigration and refugee policy. The potential for immigration and refugee issues to erupt again in the public discourse remains high.⁶

TORONTO-BOUND IMMIGRANTS

In the late 1990s, thousands of inland refugee claimants awaited hearings in Toronto and many immigrants found it difficult to access affordable housing, employment matching their skill levels or experience, and language training. Policy debates on immigration continued and so did immigration. Indeed, as the Canadian economy started to improve, the flow of immigration into Canada and into the Greater Toronto Area, in particular, showed no signs of slowing. The measure of that immigration is not just its continuity, but also its diversity and impact – an impact that not even the most far-seeing policy planner of an earlier era could have predicted. Toronto, the hub of Canadian economic development, has been a draw for immigrants. This is unlikely to change. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Toronto's Pearson International Airport remains the major port of arrival for immigrants into Canada and many immigrants are sticking very close to that port of arrival. Numbers continue to tell a story. Almost 40 per cent of all those living in Toronto were born outside Canada. The foreign-born, together with their Canadian-born children, now constitute a majority of the city's residents, a majority of the urban polity. Almost three-quarters of immigrants moving into Toronto in recent years have been of non-ethno-European origin and most of them are in or are just preliminary to their birthing cycle.

Accordingly, immigration has not only transformed community definitions, it has also transformed urban space. Since the Second World War, Anglo Toronto has given way to a rich montage of ethnic villages, an urban complex where variegated ethnic and racial core zones nuzzle up against one another in an overlapping pattern that stretches from the inner city well into the outer suburban ring. These villages may be

characterized by vast stretches of single family homes or, in recent years, by vertical villages, high-rise developments dominated by one or another ethnic or racial community. These villages are commonly replete with ethnic shopping, business, and cultural areas, where any one of many home languages or dialects coexist alongside English. Here one can find a sometimes uneasy middle ground between adopted mainstream Canadian ways and an effort to withstand the forces of homogenization. And at the cutting edge of discourse between the immigrant's memories of the old country and hopes for the new, there are the worlds of children and of the infill of popular culture, the impact of the marketplace, and the often painful realization that change, sometimes unwelcome change, is the inevitable price exacted for survival in the new urban home.

What of interethnic and interracial tension in Toronto? For all the potential for intergroup conflict to be found in Toronto's cultural and racial mix, and in spite of the kind media-influenced outburst witnessed on the landing of Chinese migrants in British Columbia in the late summer of 1999, it might be argued that the level of public civility in Toronto remains remarkably high. This is not to say that there are not areas of interracial or interethnic tension. There are many. Some tensions swirl around a growing distancing of the city from the larger Ontario hinterland, a distancing shaped at least in part by different visions of what Toronto has become after several decades of large-scale immigration. While Toronto publicly boasts of being a cosmopolitan and pluralist city, a multicultural if not transnational city, this vision holds little or no appeal to those who distrust the city as a crude and alien space, home to foreigners and foreign ways, distant from their orderly sense of what and who is Canadian.

Other immigration-related tensions are found much closer to home. As a new immigrant community begins to move into an established neighbourhood, shifting the existing racial or ethnic balance, turf wars are sometimes the result. This phenomenon is as much a feature of Toronto's suburban ring as it is of the inner city. For example, in Toronto's suburban northeast corridor, part of the up-market 905 region, a sizable infusion in the early 1990s of often well-heeled Hong Kong immigrants caused alarm among some members of the previously dominant community. Struggles sometimes took place over high-profile community anchors. When several large neighbourhood shopping centres adopted an all-Chinese language format, the reaction from some non-Chinese speakers was anger. Controversy also dogged new arriv-

als who purchased 'tear-down' homes on large lots and built what came to be called 'monster homes.' Charges of Chinese neighbourhood-busting were met with countercharges of anti-Chinese racism.

Closer to the city core, there have been confrontations and even shootings involving police and youth, particularly Black youth and so-called Asian youth gangs. Sometimes problems are one-on-one and may seem trivial, but they are worrying nonetheless. Recently, two Toronto neighbours settled a much-publicized dispute over the smell of ethnic cooking. One neighbour sued the other over what were claimed to be 'disagreeable' cooking odours vented out of the kitchen of the other. While the problem was eventually resolved by an agreement to extend and redirect the vent, the whole affair was played out on a canvas of intergroup interpretation.

With so much possibility for ethnic and racially based misunderstanding, municipal officials in Toronto continue to wrestle with ways and means of adapting municipal services to accommodate the pluralist reality. For example, in order to stay on top of Toronto's shifting demographic reality, the police have had to rethink their role and public profile. Among other things, this is precipitating a process of more vigorous race-sensitivity training for police and an accelerated minority-hiring program. The police are not alone. Other street-level services – the courts, non-governmental organizations, and social welfare agencies like children's aid societies, hospitals, and schools – are also attempting to offer culturally and racially sensitive services. But this is not as easy as it seems. It may be possible to offer multilingual services, or even to make agency staff more reflective of the demographics of the larger civic society, but how far should public agencies and services bend to accommodate the different cultural norms, values, gender relations, religious beliefs, and family structures reflected in so diverse a community? Should ethnic or racial groups be encouraged to organize services to serve their own and, if so, at whose expense?

Adding to concerns in the late 1990s and in the new millennium, the government of Ontario has downloaded the cost of many public programs onto municipalities and, in the case of Toronto, began siphoning educational dollars out of the city's schools to support schools in the more distant suburban and rural ring. Relying on its property tax base, Toronto found it increasingly difficult to sustain adequate services without driving up taxes to impossible levels. Faced with less money, the public sector had been forced to make triage-like decisions about competing needs. Services essential to immigrant integration have not es-

caped the chopping block. In Toronto schools, for example, programs of English as a second language for children were severely cut back and those for adult learners eliminated almost completely. Low-end rentals have disappeared, and legal aid for refugee claimants has been cut back. All the while, immigrant and refugee arrivals continued. The implications of downloading by federal and provincial governments and a consequent downsizing in community-based services for the long-term integration and economic health of new arrivals to Toronto has yet to be seen.

For all these problems and the potential for tension, nothing so defines Toronto at the millennium as its cultural and racial pluralism. But it remains a pluralism of contradictions. Some might say Toronto loves pluralism, but is uneasy about immigrants. If this is a contradiction, it is one Torontonians seem destined to live with.

Notes

- 1 One of the truly great Canadian novels, Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion*, is about Macedonian labourers in urban Canada in the 1920s.
- 2 The *Report of the Canadian Immigration and Population Study* (Ottawa: Manpower and Immigration, 1974) was issued in four volumes: *Immigration Policy Perspectives*; *The Immigration Program*; *Immigration and Population Statistics*; *Three Years in Canada*. All volumes were published simultaneously in French.
- 3 The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees to which Canada subscribes defines refugees as 'any person who ... owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a political social group or political opinion, is outside his country of nationality and is unable or ... unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.'
- 4 In 1988, Employment and Immigration Canada issued a press release noting that Canada had a backlog of 85,000 claims for refugee status (Employment and Immigration Canada 1988).
- 5 In one important area, the Canadian categories for determination of refugee status have been expanded. Beginning in 1993, Canadian guidelines were issued regarding women refugee claimants claiming gender-related persecution. These guidelines were an important step in recognizing that women refugee claimants often suffer from gender-based persecution and have served as a model for other countries, including the United States and

Australia, which have adopted similar versions to protect women who do not qualify as refugees under the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Valji 2001).

- 6 Media reports about the two boat loads of Chinese migrants were a mainstay of the front pages of Canadian newspapers from early August through to September 1999. While the tone and texture of editorial comment, news, and feature articles may not have been uniform from paper to paper, an examination of the four Toronto-based dailies, the *Globe and Mail*, *National Post*, *Toronto Star*, and *Toronto Sun*, show that, on the whole, the papers raised alarm at both the arrival of the Chinese migrants and the state of Canadian immigration and refugee policy.