

IMMIGRATION AND IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE IN CANADA
POST-CONFEDERATION

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Immigration and Immigrant Experience in Canada During Post-Confederation

It is important to note that Canada experienced a high rate of immigrants during the post-confederation period. The movement of individuals from one nation to another specifically, for the purpose of resettlement makes a central and fundamental Canadian migration history. Notably, some scholars argue that the history of Canadian immigration has been, as well as remains to be a catalyst to Canadian economic development and a considerable mirror of the country's attitudes and its values. On the same note, this story has been unashamedly economically self-serving as well as ethnically or even racially biased. It is noteworthy that Canada is considered one of the globe's most generous countries as far as immigrants are concerned¹. Similarly, the country provided residency to many immigrants as well as refugees during the post-confederation, and this earned the nation a worldwide reputation for an open arms attitude. With that said, it is important to comprehend that immigration is regarded as a fundamental aspect that shaped Canada's culture and society towards the positive way. In simple terms, the country's policy was controlled by a desire for expansion that allowed many immigrants to settle in rural frontier areas.

Many factors contributed to the high immigration rate that was experienced in Canada during the post-confederation period. To begin with, the country at hand, had policies that were lenient to the immigrants. In this case, Canada's policy on immigration focused on shaping its society and culture. Precisely, the policy was fueled by a desire to expand, and this allowed a

¹ Chilton, Lisa. "Managing migrants: Toronto, 1820–1880." *Canadian Historical Review* 92, no. 2 (2011): 231-262.

considerable number of immigrants to settle in rural areas. In addition, agriculture is another factor that contributed to the increased immigration rate in Canada during the post-confederation period. It is important to note that the country at hand underwent a shock when it realized that its arable land started to disappear from the market². Specifically, the country experienced gradual commercial and industrial development and was in need of great farmers to continue with the farming activities in the nation³. Therefore, many immigrants to Canada committed themselves and their resources to explore agriculture. The development of Canada's urban centers was a substantial factor that contributed to the increased number of immigrants to the state during the post-confederation period. In particular, the immigrants who were not into agriculture committed themselves to businesses and ventures in the developed towns and cities of Canada. Lastly, immigration and racism is another factor that allowed many immigrants into Canadian borders. Many countries had immigration regulations based on race. However, Canada welcomed many individuals from different races who did not find a place for themselves as well as their families. Simply put, the paper at hand covers the factors that motivated foreigners to move into Canada as well as the experiences of these immigrants in the country, during the post-confederation period.

During the post-confederation period, the Canadian immigration policy was structured in three fundamental categories, namely economic, family reunification, as well as refugees. To

² A number of factors motivated many foreigners to move into Canada during the post-confederation period such as the country's immigration policy, agriculture, development of urban centers, as well as immigration and racism.

³ Kelley, Ninette, and Michael J. Trebilcock. *The making of the mosaic: A history of Canadian immigration policy*. University of Toronto Press, 1998.

begin with, the economic category represents the largest segment of immigrants during the post-confederation period. In this case, the country's migration authorities as well as military personnel offered a number of supplies to the new settlers as well as organized the distribution of the available land⁴. On the same note, because of erratic and slow economic growth, the country opted to encourage immigration from Scotland, the US, as well as England to fill and boost new commercial or even administrative towns⁵. Research indicates that many immigrants were similar to that of the developed community and they played a critical role in enhancing the country's economic growth. For example, the Irish settlers played a substantial role in initiating fundamental social and economic transformations in Canada. It is noteworthy that the Irish were the country's first considerable wave of foreign immigrants. In spite of the fact that the Irish spoke English, they did not mirror the religious, social, or even cultural values of the majority.

It is evident that the Canadian towns and cities developed Irish parts. For instance, the Anglo-Protestant majority took part in measuring the Irish contribution economically as well as the Irish deficiencies racially, religiously, as well as socially. In fact, a number of the Irish immigrants played a vital part in creating a labor force that was ready as well as capable of filling the available seasonal employment needs of the country's expanded canal scheme, burgeoning railway network, and lumber industry⁶. This makes it clear that the Irish immigrants played a critical role in supplying the base of working class labor force that was necessary for the

⁴ Winks, Robin W. *Blacks in Canada: A History*. Vol. 192. McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP, 1997.

⁵ The Canadian immigration policy is divided into three fundamental categories, namely economic, family reunification, as well as refugees

⁶ Belshaw, John Douglas. *Canadian History: Post-Confederation*. Campus Manitoba, 2016.

slow advancement of industry, commerce, as well as communication. In simple terms, the gradual commercial, as well as industrial development, from migration played a significant role in servicing the country's agricultural field.

In addition, family reunification is considered a great Canadian immigration policy that led to an increased number of immigrants to the country during the post-confederation period. The aforementioned category of immigrants consisted of spouses, as well as children, joining their family members that were already living in Canada. Notably, this is regarded as the second largest group of immigrants admitted to the country in question. For example, many immigrants who opted to settle in Canada or that who were unable to return to their homes due to political upheavals, established themselves in the country and brought their families to join them. The country allowed them into its borders to satisfy its need for cheap labor force or even acquire a pool of skilled as well as professional artisans adaptable to factory as well as construction work⁷. The country's policy recognized the foreigners in such, that they were in the country to stay with their important labor skills being very vital. On the same note, their children were integrated in the country's system and given good education. Lastly, Canada's policy allowed refugees. Notably, this is considered the smallest group of immigrants admitted to Canada during the post-confederation period. In simple terms, the Canadian immigration policy played a vital part in allowing many immigrants into the country.

Apart from the country's immigration policy, agriculture is regarded as the great aspect that led to the increase of immigrant numbers into Canada during the post-confederation period. Research indicates that Canada underwent a shock when it realized that its arable land started to

⁷ Chadha, Ena. "'Mentally Defectives' Not Welcome: Mental Disability in Canadian Immigration Law, 1859-1927." *Disability Studies Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (2008).

disappear from the market⁸. Specifically, the country experienced gradual commercial as well as industrial development and was in need of great farmers to continue with the farming activities in the nation. Therefore, many immigrants to Canada committed themselves and their resources to explore agriculture. With that said, it was Canada's hope that the immigrants would guarantee the sovereignty of the prevailing colonial land claims as well as the exploitation of natural resources on behalf of the European investors. Because of this reason, settlement in Canada grew without difficulty.

It is important to comprehend that many immigrants were in search of temperate climate as well as familiar social institutions of the British colonies to the south. Research indicates that Canada's loyalist migration was not uncontrolled or even unassisted. In this case, the available imperial authorities as well as the military personnel during the Post-Confederation period supplied to the new settlers and organized adequate distribution of land for farming⁹. In spite of the hardships the settlers experienced, their plight was undeniably made less severe by the government's intervention, a practice that has been repeated in the country many times. On the same note, the country at hand knew that agriculture would boost its economic growth. Therefore, allowing immigrants to take part in agricultural events was a strategy to ensure that the nation's economy grew as required¹⁰. In this case, Canada encouraged immigration from

⁸ Bennett, Donna. "English Canada's Postcolonial Complexities." *Essays on Canadian Writing* 51-52 (1993): 164.

⁹ Grant, John N. "Black Immigrants into Nova Scotia, 1776-1815." *The Journal of Negro History* 58, no. 3 (1973): 253-270.

¹⁰ Hay, Keith AJ. "Money and cycles in post-confederation Canada." *Journal of Political Economy* 75, no. 3 (1967): 263-273.

various countries, such as the US, Scotland, as well as England to fill the available agricultural lands in the colony as well as bolstered new administrative or even commercial towns.

The other aspect that motivated many foreigners to move into Canada during the Post-Confederation is the development of urban centers. In particular, the development of Canada's urban centers was a substantial factor that contributed to the increased number of immigrants to the state during the post-confederation period. In fact, the immigrants who were not into agriculture committed themselves to businesses and ventures in the developed towns and cities of Canada¹¹. It is noteworthy that despite the government precautions, not all immigrants committed themselves to agriculture or even resource exploration. Most of the immigrants from non-English speaking as well as non-protestant areas rejected a rural isolation life. Most of these individuals chose to work in cities and many of them saw themselves as living in Canada as well as earning a substantial amount of financial resources to buy a piece of land at their homes.

The country at hand accepted the idea of immigrants because it wanted to develop its urban areas such as cities and towns. In this case, the country wanted the immigrants to take part in seasonal labor in mining or even lumbering and this forced the immigrants to drift back into towns and cities during the off-season¹². In fact, Canada knew that the immigrants provided

¹¹ See, Scott W. "'An unprecedented influx': Nativism and Irish Famine Immigration to Canada." *American Review of Canadian Studies* 30, no. 4 (2000): 429-453.

¹² Canada encouraged the immigration idea and motivated many people from different parts to come into its borders to bring effective skills, expertise, and professionalism required to develop its urban centers.

necessary labor as well as skills in the towns and cities. Specifically, the involvement of immigrants in various business activities and employment vacancies contributed to the development as well as growth of Canadian towns as well as cities. In fact, the individuals contributed to the skills, expertise, as well as professionalism that led to the development and growth of the country's cities and other urban areas.

The last factor that motivated several foreigners to move into Canada during the post confederation period is immigration and race. Specifically, a number of countries had immigration regulations based on race. However, Canada welcomed many individuals from

different races who did not find a place for themselves as well as their families¹³. Thanks to the Canadian policy as well as the administration that bowed to economic necessity by enabling individuals from different races into its borders. However, some scholars argue that Canadian authorities were against the settlement of Asian women because they feared this would encourage Asian men temporarily in the country as railway or even mine laborers to settle permanently and become the parents and lead to another generation of the yellow peril. However, the selective encouragement of immigration into Canada faded when the country experienced a devastating collapse that was contributed by the Great Depression.

It is important to understand that the removal of racial as well as ethnic barriers contributed to the increase of immigrants into the country. The demand for labor and a need for positive economic growth led Canada to open its doors to various individuals from different races. Therefore, this led many immigrants from the southern Europe to enter the country¹⁴. In the post confederation period, the country at hand experienced dramatic changes that led its governments, provinces, as well as federal agencies to follow the human rights reform and allow different people into its borders. Therefore, the Canadian immigration regulations and legislation opened doors for many individuals. Notably, this allowed the non-European ancestry¹⁵. In simple terms, Canada is a multicultural society as well as a multiracial society to a level unimaginable to earlier generations of Canadians.

¹³ Walker, Barrington. *Race on trial: Black defendants in Ontario's criminal courts, 1858-1958*. University of Toronto Press, 2010.

¹⁴ Thorner, Thomas, and Thor Frohn-Nielsen, eds. *A country nourished on self-doubt: Documents in post-confederation Canadian history*. University of Toronto Press, 2010.

¹⁵ Simmons, Alan B. *Immigration and Canada: Global and transnational perspectives*. Canadian Scholars' Press, 2010.

Overall, it is evident that the history of Canadian immigration has been as well as remains to be a catalyst to Canadian economic development as well as a considerable mirror of the country's attitudes as well as values. It is important to understand that various factors motivated foreigners to move into Canada during the post confederation period. The aspects include the country's policies about immigrants, agriculture, development of urban centers, as well as immigration and racism. Notably, the aforementioned factors were the critical forces that attracted many people from different parts of the world to migrate to Canada during this time. In simple terms, the factors above made Canada to be considered as one of the world's most generous countries that welcomed many immigrants from various parts of the globe.

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