

ANTI-IMMIGRANT SENTIMENT IN CANADA

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Historical and Contemporary Trends

INTRODUCTION

Changes in immigration patterns and policy tend to invoke significant public reaction, ranging from “reluctant acceptance” to “outright rejection” (Ceobanu and Escandell 2010, 311). It is imperative to understand these attitudes for several reasons. For one, politicians respond to the expressed preferences of the voting public. People’s attitudes may also indicate how members of the receiving society treat immigrants in everyday interactions (Esses, Dovidio, and Hodson 2002, 70). More positive feelings toward immigration on a societal level probably result in more positive behavior toward immigration in everyday encounters and vice-versa. Attitudes toward immigration and immigrants also contribute to the construction of national identity and belief systems about which persons or groups constitute accepted and valued members of a society. Seeing one’s country as a “nation of immigrants,” for example, may foster more positive attitudes toward newcomers (Esses, Dovidio, and Hodson 2002, 71). Given the recent increase in the breadth of comparable cross-national data, much of the recent work in the field of anti-immigration and immigrant studies (known as *ATI* research) (Ceobanu and Escandell 2010, 310) focuses on explaining cross-national differences in public opinion about immigrants.

In these cross-national comparisons, Canada emerges with some of the most positive public attitudes toward immigration. In a cross-national study of 22 countries using data from the ISSP National Identity Module (ISSP-NI), Mayda (2006) finds that Canada ranks first in terms of the public’s positive association between immigration and both the economy and society’s overall “openness.” In other words, Canadians, more than citizens of other countries, feel that immigrants make a positive contribution to Canada’s culture and economy. Canadians are also the most likely to believe that immigration levels should be increased. In a question gauging the strength of attitudes on increasing immigration levels, Canada ranks second only to Ireland (Mayda 2006, 527). These findings are echoed by recent Canadian research. Although characterized by negative attitudes in the 1980s, public senti-

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ment has grown increasingly positive over time (Wilkes, Guppy, and Farris 2008, 312). This trend is related to the pervasiveness of multiculturalism discourses, as well as a more positive economic environment and a government that has actively worked to promote the view that immigration is good for the economy (Wilkes and Corrigan-Brown 2010, 16).

This article considers Canada's early history of outright anti-immigrant policy and attitudes, how these changed over time, and their implications for the present. In what follows, we consider policy on and attitudes toward immigration in Canada, highlighting three major historical periods: Canada's period of openly racist immigration policy (pre-1962), the post-war period in which the policy of official multiculturalism developed (1946-1988), and contemporary attitudes and ideas about immigration, particularly following several episodes of moral panic since 1999. We argue that the positive attitudes toward immigration and immigrants in Canada are a product of a long history. This stems from a concerted official policy by successive governments since the late 1960s, and especially the 1980s, to promote immigration as essential to the nation and to national identity.

Early History (pre-1962)

Canada has a long history of anti-immigrant sentiment. The first prime minister, Sir John A. MacDonald (1878-1891), envisioned it as a white man's country. This "White Canada" nation-building project was to be accomplished first through the subjugation of indigenous peoples and expropriation of their land, and subsequently, through a number of policies encouraging *white* settlement. Immigration by the "sons and daughters of the British Empire," Anglo-Saxon British and Americans, was encouraged while racialized migrants were barred from entry (Dua 2007, 446; Gabriel and Abu-Laban 2002, 38). Other immigrants were allowed in according to a "descending order of ethnic preference" that depended on the changing economic conditions. Least desired were Asians, Jews, and blacks, tolerated only when holed up in lumber camps deep in the forest or farming the more marginal areas of the western wheat frontier (Abella and Troper 1991, 5). Canada's immigration history remains deeply scarred by its early treatment of the Chinese and South Asians, its rejection of Holocaust refugees, and the internment of the Japanese during World War II.

Canadian fear and exclusion of "Oriental immigration" was the earliest and most pronounced, carrying well into the twentieth century (Miki 2004, 19). Early Chinese migration to Canada began in the mid-nineteenth century when Chinese pioneers followed the Gold Rush up the Fraser River, establishing Canada's first Chinatown in Victoria in 1858 (Ng 1999, 10). Other migrants from southern China joined them and, gradually, small Chinese communities appeared along the Fraser River and on Vancouver Island. Chinese laborers were recruited in large numbers for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR) from 1881-1885, during which time 17 000 Chinese migrants landed in British Columbia. While many returned to

China, by 1884 British Columbia's Chinese population numbered 10 000 (Ng 1999, 10). Despite their foundational role in linking eastern and western Canada through the railroad (another of Canada's nation-building projects), the increasing Chinese presence was seen as a threat to "White Canada," the "popular bar-room cry" of the era (Yu 2009, 1015). A Royal Commission warned of the "ill effects of Chinese immigration," and every effort was made to contain and discourage their presence once work on the CPR was complete (Li 2008, 128). In 1885, a "head tax" of Can\$50 was imposed on all Chinese immigrants entering Canada (Kobayashi and Jackson 1994, 38). It was justified on the grounds that Chinese immigrants were "morally depraved" and could threaten the moral fiber of white Canadian society (Dua 2007, 453). It also stipulated that there could only be one Chinese immigrant for "every fifty tons of a ship's weight" (Anderson 1991, 58). Male Chinese workers were not allowed to bring their wives and families, a measure taken to discourage permanent residency. The initial tax proved ineffective, and by 1901, it was raised to Can\$100, and by 1904 to Can\$500 (James 2004, 889).

As Canada worked —unsuccessfully— to prevent Chinese migration, South Asian and Japanese migration to Canada were also increasing. A period of economic decline coupled with an increasing number of "Orientals" spread fear of "Yellow peril" through Vancouver. It was believed that Asian migrants intended to take jobs from "white workers" and "take control first of BC [British Columbia] and eventually the nation" (Miki 2004, 20). By 1907, the Asiatic Exclusion League had formed in Vancouver. Representing a wide swath of Vancouver society, the league was entrusted with protecting British Columbia from the harmful influx of Japanese, Chinese, and Indian migrants. The anti-Asian hysteria culminated in September of that year, when a parade organized by the league to protest the Asian presence turned into a riot (Johnston 1989, 4). Thousands of people, many of them European immigrants, marched on Chinatown and Japantown. This violence was symptomatic of growing anti-immigrant sentiment in Canada. By 1923, Chinese immigration was banned entirely by the Chinese Immigration Act, and would not be reinstated until 1947.

Anti-Indian sentiment, although bound up similarly in ideas of morality and Asiatic "invasion," necessitated a different strategy. Like the Chinese migrants, efforts were made to contain South Asian settlement. These newcomers were hustled off boats and into jobs in farming and contracting in the interior of British Columbia. Indians in the city of Vancouver were harassed and often forced to live in buildings outside the urban center, with no electricity or running water (Johnston 1989, 3). Because they were British subjects, however, they could not be excluded outright by Canadian government policy. Japan had entered into a gentleman's agreement with Canada, consenting to limit Japanese migration to 400 persons per year. A similar arrangement could not be reached with British India because the colonial government feared that limiting Indians' ability to move throughout the Empire would strengthen Indian nationalism —"What kind of an empire was it that did not allow free movement of its subject people?" (Johnston 1989, 4). It was in the interests of both British India and Canada to "disguise" the limitations on the migration of Indians. This was done through the Continuous Journey Order in Council in 1908.

The order stipulated that all immigrants entering Canada must have come via direct “passage” from their home country. It was then arranged privately with steamship companies to stop providing “continuous passages” between India and Canada and to limit the number of sailings (Johnston 1989, 5). The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) operated the only direct trip from India to Canada and simply stopped providing this service to Indians. This policy effectively allowed for a diplomatic closing of the doors to Canada to all Indian migrants.

Famously, Gurdit Singh challenged Continuous Journey in 1914. Chartering a steamship himself, named the *Komagata Maru*, he brought 376 Indians to Canada (Dua 2007, 461). They were refused landing in Vancouver, however, on the grounds that the ship had sailed from Japan, and not directly from India. The ship sat in Vancouver’s harbor for six weeks while the issue was debated and Vancouver’s South Asian community worked to appeal the government’s decision. The case was dismissed on the grounds that not all the passengers had Can\$200, a rule established by a previous Order in Council. In the six years that followed, only one South Asian migrant gained entry into Canada (Miki 2004, 14).

Canada’s anti-Jewish history has also been well documented by Abella and Troper (1991). The official Canadian position on Jewish refugees fleeing Nazism during World War II was that “none is too many.” The nearly 1 000 Jewish refugees aboard the German ocean-liner *St. Louis* were denied entry to Canada, forcing their return to Europe, and leading eventually to many of their deaths. As the situation in Europe worsened, in 1941, Canadian immigration officer William R. Little maintained that it was in the best “interest of Canada to prevent Jewish people from coming to Canada” for fear of being over-run by an “exodus of European refugees from the Far East” (Abella and Troper 1991, 79). The Canadian Immigration Branch enforced this position stridently despite the wide array of actors who fervently worked on behalf of the Jews, such as the World Jewish Congress (WJC), the Federation of Polish Jewry, the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society, and the Canadian ambassador to France, George Vanier.

The internment of the Japanese during World War II also reinforced the white vision of Canada, albeit through a discourse of national security (Kobayashi 1992, 1; Dhamoon and Abu-Laban 2009, 165). The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 precipitated the arrest of 26 Japanese men in Canada, along with the closure of Japanese newspapers and government seizure of Japanese fishing boats (Dhamoon and Abu-Laban 2009, 170). By 1942, the Canadian government, under the leadership of Mackenzie King, called for the “mass uprooting of all people of Japanese ancestry living in the ‘protected zone,’” an area stretching along the west coast of British Columbia and 160 kilometers inland (Miki 2004, 2). Twenty-three thousand Japanese living in Canada, most of whom had been born there or were naturalized, were rounded up and interned as “enemy aliens,” taken to camps in the interior of British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario. Following the war, every effort was made by the government to prevent Japanese Canadians from rebuilding their lives, failing to return their property and dispersing them across the country (Kobayashi 1992, 2). The term “Jap,” a “linguistic residue of the war,” along

with the memory of the internment, has had a profound impact on Japanese-Canadian identity (Miki 2004, 14). The government denied any wrongdoing until the Redress Settlement of 1988.

Many of these statutes remained on the books until 1962.

The Post-War Period (1946-1988)

The current low levels of anti-immigrant sentiment in Canada can be traced to a series of broader processes beginning in the 1940s. British identity among Canadians had begun to wane in the wake of WWII (Hawkins 1988, 80). The weakened attachment to the “mother country” raised questions about defining a separate *Canadian* identity and citizenship, and particularly how they would differ from the United States. In 1946, the Canadian Citizenship Act formally established the conditions for Canadian citizenship (Canadians had previously been considered British subjects). Shortly thereafter, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration was created (1949), shifting the focus of immigration policy from migration within the British Empire, to migration to Canada (Hawkins 1988, 95).

As ties to Britain weakened, a general international movement supporting human rights, civil rights, and humanitarianism gained strength. The horrific consequences of ignoring refugees in the Holocaust were widely known; the phrase “Never Again” became a worldwide motto. The year 1960 was designated by the United Nations as “World Refugee Year,” leading Canada to admit 6 000 refugees. To the south, the U.S. civil rights movement was gaining steam, as were protests against the war in Vietnam. The political, social, and cultural climate of the 1960s came to emphasize the concept of the “global village” (Knowles 2007, 269), and the concept of a “rights-based society” began to take hold in Canada and the United States. In Canada, the trend to liberalism culminated in the creation of the Bill of Rights in 1960 by Prime Minister John Diefenbaker.

Diefenbaker and the Progressive Conservatives were elected in 1957 on the platform of increasing Canada’s population to 40 million. Diefenbaker appointed the first female cabinet minister, Ellen Fairclough. She was intended to serve as a “caretaker minister” because Diefenbaker did not envision drastic changes to the portfolio. But this would soon change. A large number of Southern Italian immigrants had begun arriving to Canada in the late 1950s and early 1960s through family sponsorship. These Southern Italian immigrants, who were poor, generally unskilled, and considered racially undesirable, occupied a disproportionate percentage of Italy’s quota. Family sponsorship, or chain migration, magnified this trend over time, leaving little room for the more desired Northern Italians, who were more skilled and considered more Western European. To remedy this situation, the Progressive Conservatives (PCs) created Bill 310 in 1959, which would limit the number of “sponsorable” relatives to “immediate family members” only for “Egypt, Europe, North America, Latin America, Lebanon, Turkey, and Israel” (Knowles 2007, 181). By the end of the 1950s, however, there were significant urban concentrations of

Southern Italians (Kelley and Trebilcock 2000, 142), and they wielded considerable influence over the political representatives in their ridings, mainly held by Liberal members of Parliament. Surprisingly strong opposition from the ethnic lobby and the Liberals momentarily forced the PCs to abandon Bill 310 (Knowles 2007, 181). Interestingly, the PC goal of “prioritizing” sponsored relatives stemming from the Italian question led to Canada becoming the first country to abandon its “white immigration policy.” In 1962, Fairclough introduced a policy based on three immigration categories: sponsored, nominated relatives, and independent immigrants (Knowles 2007, 187).

The Liberals ousted the PCs in 1963, under the leadership of Lester B. Pearson. They continued the project of re-tuning Canada’s immigration policy to have more control over the economic/skill characteristics of the people entering the country, creating the Department of Manpower and Immigration in 1966. The new department was created under the assumption that “immigration policy must be administered in the interests of the country and of the immigrants themselves in a context that takes into account the entire position of employment, training, and placement in Canada (Pearson 1966, quoted in Knowles 2007, 192). Immigration became linked to the labor market and changing economic conditions. The deputy minister of this department, Tom Kent, created Canada’s famous immigration Point System in 1967, with the goal of creating a way to evaluate immigrant applications based on their skills objectively, efficiently, and uniformly (Knowles 2007, 195). The Point System functions by awarding set numbers of points to potential immigrants for various characteristics: skill, age, language ability, education level, etc. The pass mark was 50/100 points—it is now 67/100. The system was revisited in 1976, when points became allocated for “nominated relatives” (Hawkins 1988, 32). The point system is intended to foster “long-term...economic growth,” as then-Canadian Minister of Manpower and Immigration Jean Marchand said in 1966 (Schachar 2006, 171). It was the world’s first “talent for citizenship,” or merit-based immigrant selection strategy arrangement (Schachar 2006, 164).

While modifications in selection policy changed the nature of immigration to Canada, official multiculturalism has been instrumental in creating a Canada that values immigration and immigrants. In addition to the processes that contributed to the creation of the Point System, several other factors were crucial to the adoption of the multiculturalism policy. For one, the so-called “ethnic lobby” had grown. A particularly strong Ukrainian community began to press for formal recognition of their cultural contribution to Canadian society (Lupul 2005; Lalonde 2006, 48). Second, the move toward multiculturalism (as opposed to biculturalism) cannot be separated from the tension between Canada’s Francophone national minority, Quebec, and the majority Anglophone culture (Wood and Gilbert 2005, 682). How to reconcile these “two solitudes,” and avoid Quebec separation from Canada, was a central problem on Trudeau’s agenda. Trudeau believed that a policy of biculturalism (the recognition of two founding peoples, English and French) would prove fatal to Canadian unity.

Official multiculturalism was adopted in 1971. Its early aim was to recognize the important role of cultural groups in Canada (Hiebert and Ley 2003, 17) and

to encourage immigrants to “visibly and proudly express their ethnic identity” (Banting and Kymlicka 2010, 49). Diversity became “reinterpreted...as a defining ingredient of Canadian identity” (Hiebert and Ley 2003, 12). In the 1980s multiculturalism shifted from a policy supporting the expression of cultural identity, to a policy geared toward equity (Kobayashi 1993, 205). Overall, multiculturalism continues to denote a commitment to four principles: “the recognition and accommodation of cultural diversity; removing barriers to full participation; promoting interchange between groups; and promoting the acquisition of official languages” (Banting and Kymlicka 2010, 50). Multiculturalism was given statutory standing by the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988 and “renewed” in 1997 (Banting and Kymlicka 2010, 50).

Multiculturalism operates on many levels. At one level, the Multiculturalism Directorate is an official government body housed in the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. It provides a small amount of funding and programming for multicultural activities. At a broader level, multiculturalism also represents a “government-wide commitment” to a set of goals and guiding principles intended to guide the policies and activities of federal government bodies. The directorate oversees these goals (Banting and Kymlicka 2010, 50). Multiculturalism has also been implemented variously by provincial and municipal governments, as well as by the private sector. Furthermore, on a societal level, multiculturalism signifies a demographic reality about the changing composition of society through immigration. As Banting and Kymlicka argue,

In this sense, multiculturalism policies have permeated Canadian public life, with ripple effects far removed from their original home in one branch of the federal government. The 1971 federal statement on multiculturalism has initiated a long march through institutions at all levels of Canadian society. (2010, 52)

Given the multi-faceted and multi-scalar nature of the concept of multiculturalism in Canada, the term has taken on a rather “ambiguous” connotation for the Canadian public (Banting and Kymlicka 2010, 51). People are cognizant that the official policy exists and that the make-up of society is changing around them, but are unclear about what this actually means for their everyday lives. Despite this uncertainty, public and political opposition have been relatively muted in Canada compared to European countries that have also adopted multicultural policies (i.e., the Netherlands, Britain, and Germany). While public debate over multiculturalism in Canada has always existed, the only significant political attempt to dismantle the official policy came from the —since dissolved— Reform Party in the early 1990s. In contrast, there has been a marked “retreat” from multiculturalism by European countries in the last decade, coupled with the rise of right-wing anti-immigrant policies (Joppke 2004, 238). Most recently, German Chancellor Angela Merkel declared Germany’s attempt at multiculturalism had “utterly failed” (Wente 2010).

The Contemporary Period (1999-Present Day)

Canada has come a long way since the 1940s. Attitudes have become much more positive. Efforts have been made to address the wrongdoings of the past through official government apologies for the Chinese Head Tax in 2006 and for the *Komagata Maru* steamship incident in 2008. Nevertheless, the overall positive Canadian attitudes toward immigration have been punctuated by a series of moral panics that seem to be the cause of a periodic abandonment of support for multiculturalism, immigration, and humanitarianism.

Although there is a longstanding debate about the origins of moral panics — specifically whether such crises are imposed by elites (Hall et al. 1978, 41), driven by the media or other interest groups (Cohen 1972, 7), or begin with a pre-existing “social anxiety” at the grassroots level (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994, 25)— they represent a mixture of the three (see Hier and Greenberg 2002). Several periods of significant immigration-related moral panic have taken place in recent years.

MORAL PANICS: CHINESE AND TAMIL “BOAT PEOPLE”

On July 21, 1999, following rumors of a “ghost ship” appearing off the Queen Charlotte Islands on British Columbia’s northwestern coastline, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) stopped a Chinese fishing boat carrying 123 mostly undocumented Chinese migrants. Initially, very little was known about where they had come from, where they were headed, and why they had come. Despite these uncertainties, the media rushed to portray the event as an “invasion” of “illegal aliens,” representing the migrants as “boat people,” “human cargo,” and “detainees,” and raising the alarm about their potential as a public health risk and criminal activity (drug trafficking and organized crime) (Hier and Greenberg 2002, 501). In media images, the migrants appeared as “unkempt criminals,” escorted in handcuffs by police to detention centers (Hier and Greenberg 2002, 493).

Over the next few months, three more boats carrying Chinese migrants would arrive in British Columbia. By September 11, 1999, 599 migrants had arrived in all. With each successive arrival, the outcry grew. Groups of citizens could be seen gathering at key BC ports. It appeared that Canadian sovereignty was “in crisis” (Hier and Greenberg 2002, 493). The perceived inability of Canadian officials to stop the boats was taken as a sign that Canada needed to take a stronger stance on refugees and that “decisive intervention” was needed (Hier and Greenberg 2002, 490). Canadian newspapers began publishing polls of their readers’ opinions on what should be done with the refugees. According to one poll, conducted by the *Times Colonist*, 98 percent of respondents believed that “migrants should be returned immediately.” As Hier and Greenberg explain, although the poll was “dubiously” conducted, similar results were echoed by several of the countries’ national newspapers like the *National Post* and the *Toronto Sun*. A number of editorials began appearing echoing this sentiment. Canadian Alliance member Betty Granger

resigned after accidentally referring to the incident as an “Asian invasion” (Hier and Greenberg 2002, 497). Town hall meetings and radio phone-in shows also emphasized this message.

The event was used as a platform for a wider discussion about who could be considered a “Canadian.” The media had tapped into a still deeply rooted “uncertainty and fear” about Chinese migration in Canada that had existed since the nineteenth century. This longstanding hostility was compounded by increased migration in the lead-up to and following the handover of British Hong Kong to China. This new cohort of migrants was “upwardly mobile,” wealthy, and was rapidly changing both the financial and physical landscape of Vancouver (Hier and Greenberg 2002, 494; Mitchell 2004, 163; Ley 2008, 183, and 2010, 126). In particular, the new influx challenged a “deeply entrenched nostalgia for tradition and heritage, cultural-aesthetic values and political habits” (Hier and Greenberg 2002, 494).

There have been several similar cases since then. On August 12, 2010, 490 Tamil refugees arrived on Vancouver Island aboard the MV *Sun Sea*. The Canadian response to this event has been strikingly similar to that of the Chinese boat people 10 years earlier. In the same way, the effectiveness of Canada’s immigration and refugee policy has been called into question. Like in 1999, similar concerns have been raised as to the potential health risks posed by refugee claimants (in this case, tuberculosis). Key policy officials, for example Public Safety Minister Vic Toews, have sounded warning bells that the *Sun Sea* is a “test boat,” foreshadowing a situation that may spiral out of control (Chase 2010). The event was also an issue of concern in the 2010 Toronto mayoral election, given the city’s large Tamil population, particularly after then-candidate and now Mayor Rob Ford stated, “We can’t even deal with the 2.5 million people in this city. I think it’s more important to take care of the people now before we start bringing in more” (Cohn 2010). The figure of the “queue jumper” and their “abuse of Canada’s generosity” (Gunter 2010) have figured prominently in editorials and online newspaper comment sections.

Despite the similarities, there are some important differences between the two cases. First, many of the Tamil refugee claimants are likely “genuine refugees,” whereas the Chinese were largely economic migrants. Second, much of the controversy surrounding the Tamil case relates to the refugees’ potential relationship to the terrorist activities of the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka. In the last 10 years, the discourses of securitization and terrorism have infiltrated Canadian policy and public thinking, in a way that did not exist in 1999. An Angus Reid Global Monitor public opinion poll is cited regularly in Canada’s national newspapers, reporting that, “Almost half of Canadians would deport Tamils.” In Ontario, where outcry over the Tamil case has been the strongest, Angus Reid reports that 55 percent would send Tamil refugees home even if their cases were found to be “legitimate and there is no discernible link between the migrants and the terrorists” (Cohn 2010).

The recent crisis was compounded in early October 2010 when nine Moroccan stowaways were discovered aboard the Mediterranean Shipping Company’s *Lugano* when it docked in Montreal (Chung 2010). The chain of events has opened

up a series of debates about immigration, refugee policy, religious diversity, and multiculturalism. Angus Reid now reports that nearly half of Canadians (46 percent) feel that immigrants are “having a negative impact” on Canada (Abraham 2010). Refugee advocacy groups across the country have been actively trying to combat this reaction.

Conclusion

Recent cross-national comparisons show that Canadians have some of the most positive attitudes toward immigration and immigrants and comparatively low levels of anti-immigrant sentiment (Mayda 2006, 526). This article has situated these findings within the historical development of multiculturalism in Canada. In particular, the relatively positive levels stem from official policy support for the Canadian project of multiculturalism, which, in spite of its equivocality, has filtered through to many levels of society. Canada today is strikingly different from the Canada that promoted openly racist attitudes and policies in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century.

Still, despite the relatively positive attitudes toward immigrants and immigration, Canada’s long history of anti-immigrant sentiment should not be overlooked, nor should Canada be complacent about the contemporary situation. For nearly 100 years after Confederation, Canada had an explicitly “white” policy of immigration that actively excluded and racialized migrants who were not from the preferred white and Western European countries. This policy included a “head tax” and eventually an outright ban on Chinese migration in the early twentieth century. Strategies, such as the Continuous Journey Order, limited the numbers of South Asians entering the country. During World War II, Canada refused Jewish refugees entry and interned Japanese Canadians as enemies of the state. This white immigration policy was “on the books” until 1962, making Canada’s current relatively positive attitudes toward immigrants all the more striking. Nor is the contemporary period immune from anti-immigrant sentiment. Amplified by the media and elites, an undercurrent of anti-immigrant sentiment surfaces periodically in the form of moral panics about Canada’s inability to patrol its borders against unwanted migrants and in discourses about national security and radicalization. These attitudes reflect and influence policy decisions, and reveal deeper constructions of national identity and belonging, as well as the extent to which immigrants are welcomed into Canadian society.

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