

Global Migration and the New Pacific Canada

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Over the last half century, a wholesale shift of immigration patterns from trans-Atlantic to trans-Pacific flows has created a new Canada. The changes were quiet at first, beginning after the creation of a the new “points system” for immigration in 1967, but rising in volume during the 1980s so that increasingly the voices of the “New Canada” are spoken in various Asian languages, a powerful new blend of multilingual Canadians that has created a globally connected “Pacific Canada” in the last 50 years. We have become a new nation that remains in conversation with the dominant Anglo-French society of the mid-20th century, but our future no longer makes sense as a bilingual dialogue solely between English and French. Our national past, built on the outer edges of British imperial settlement that displaced indigenous societies already existing in North America, is at the present moment a complicated global conversation in multiple languages, and if we are to embrace a future that builds upon the strength and diversity of this new Canada rather than silencing the great potential we now possess, we must recognize what we have become and reconcile with a colonial past that continues to haunt us.