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**Working Paper**

## Let a thousand flowers bloom: A short note on the multidimensional benefits of Chinese immigrants to Canada

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## ABSTRACT

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# **Let a Thousand Flowers Bloom: A Short Note on the Multidimensional Benefits of Chinese Immigrants to Canada**

A rise in Chinese immigrant arrivals would have respectively decisive and unambiguous positive socio-economic effects on Canadians. The multidimensional positive impacts accruing to Canada from the increased arrival of Hong-Kong, Taiwanese and PRC immigrants would be manifested in terms of the long term presence of highly educated immigrants increasing Canada's productivity which will in turn diversify Canada's trade patterns beyond Canada's current NAFTA/USMCA boundaries. Cultural enrichment in terms of increased financial and artistic support for Canada's fine arts and musical world would also be encouraged by an increased presence of Chinese immigrants in Canada's cultural milieu.

**JEL Classification:** J60, J61, J68

**Keywords:** immigration policy, Canada, cultural enrichment

Canada, Hong Kong, and Taiwan form an international triangle in three powerful dimensions—economic, demographic and political. In all three geographical spaces the presence of a vibrant and productive ethnic Chinese – Canadian population appears within each respective set of borders. However, the most important common dimension for this geographically disbursed Chinese–Canadian population is not its ethnicity, economic prowess, or geographical location. Canadian citizenship and the embedded legitimacy of these Canadian–Chinese citizens to freely express their views binds these geographically dispersed groups.

In 1970, the unilateral Canadian decision to recognize the political existence of the People’s Republic of China was a dramatically important decision which ultimately led to the United States and more importantly to the United Nation’s recognition of the PRC as a nation state with sovereignty claims over Taiwan and later Hong-Kong. Circa 1970 until 2019 this political status quo for both Hong-Kong and Taiwan was largely unquestioned or unchallenged by these two Chinese prefectures or influential democratically independent nations including Canada. However, recently nascent forces of political change have emerged in Hong Kong and Taiwan to challenge the emerging political naïveté of the People’s Republic of China.

The continued demise of the prowess of the Peoples Republic of China has been marginally accelerated by recent U.S. economic and military sanctions which can easily be augmented by Canadian immigration policy initiatives. Canada’s uniquely flexible immigration policy opens avenues for Hong Kong and Taiwanese-born emigres to reside in Canada and eventually acquire Canadian citizenship and/or permanent Canadian residency. Moreover, Canada’s immigrant entry criteria and its subsequent citizenship prerequisites favour the inflow into Canada of highly educated, linguistically compatible and youthful emigres from both Hong Kong and Taiwan as well as ironically the PRC. Moreover, Canadian immigrant entry conditions already exist in a generous atmosphere with no yearly explicit limits on immigrant entry quotas. In short, yearly Canadian immigrant flows are not restrained by explicit Canadian numerical limits. Theoretically, if one earns the required entry points with the appropriate human capital assets no entry barriers exist for independent immigrant applicants wishing to move to Canada. In addition, Canada can alter its yearly immigrant entry levels by policy initiatives and not via potentially time consuming and restrictive legislative initiatives such as exist in the United States. In short, Canada’s immigration door for Hong Kong and/or Taiwanese emigres can be as wide open as Canadians choose to hold it.

Thus, Canada’s flexible immigration entry policy coupled with Canada’s sparse population density provides qualified Chinese emigres with an unfettered freedom of entry into Canada and ascension to Canadian citizenship to counter any PRC efforts to suppress the freedoms of Hong Kong or Taiwanese dissidents. Canada’s strategic rule of thumb that the percentage of yearly immigrant inflow from any country should mimic its share of the world’s population implies that twenty percent or more of Canada’s yearly planned immigrant inflow of 400,000 movers can originate in an unfettered fashion from the combined sources of Hong Kong, Taiwan and the PRC. This rule of thumb implies a yearly immigrant inflow to Canada of eighty thousand emigres from these three source regions. In addition, recent history provides us with examples of Canada’s near wide open door immigration policy when dire circumstances arise. To wit, in the past, Vietnamese, Ugandan, Lebanese and American short term immigrant

entry limits to Canada were substantially exceeded. If these historical refugee entry levels are repeated now, the current pro-rata Chinese immigrant inflow into Canada can rise to well over three hundred thousand refugee entrants in any particular year on an interim basis.

A rise in Chinese immigrant arrivals would have respectively decisive and unambiguous positive socio-economic effects on Canadians. The multidimensional positive impacts accruing to Canada from the increased arrival of Hong-Kong, Taiwanese and PRC immigrants would be manifested in terms of the long term presence of highly educated immigrants increasing Canada's productivity which will in turn diversify Canada's trade patterns beyond Canada's current NAFTA/USMCA boundaries. Cultural enrichment in terms of increased financial and artistic support for Canada's fine arts and musical world would also be encouraged by an increased presence of Chinese immigrants in Canada's cultural milieu.

One major economic and cultural limitation inherent in the potential increase in Chinese immigrant inflows into Canada would be locational in nature. The recent geographical destination of most recent Canadian immigrants, especially Chinese, have centred in particular areas in Canada, namely greater Toronto and Vancouver. However, the geographical dispersion of recent immigrant arrivals can easily be encouraged by Canadian immigrant entry incentives to locate recent arrivals in secondary urban locations.

The nature of this impending Chinese immigrant mobility phenomenon may have another unique and important mobility element in the contemporary Canadian context. Unlike in the recent past, the Chinese immigrant flow to Canada will be unidirectional. Once Chinese emigres arrive in Canada the historical economic and political incentives to return by naturalized Chinese-Canadians will descend to a minimum. Only an immediate restoration and enhancement of political and social rights and security by the PRC will provide a gateway to encourage the return migration of Chinese Canadians to Hong Kong, Taiwan or the PRC itself.

The sole negative unilateral impact derived from this potential unidirectional Chinese immigrant flow to Canada will appear in the form of reduced trade flows between Canada and the PRC. A rise in PRC trade barriers for Canadian exports will be ironically offset by increased Canadian exports to the rest of the world produced by these highly productive Chinese arrivals and their educated progeny. Ironically, this rise in Canada's world exports can easily compensate any reduction in Canadian-PRC bilateral trade owing to a Canadian open immigration policy for Chinese emigres.

In sum, Canada's Immigration policy encouraging more Hong Kong, Taiwanese and PRC emigres is a sufficient peaceful tool which can rule the day and allow Mao Ze-dong's flowers to bloom in Canada.

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