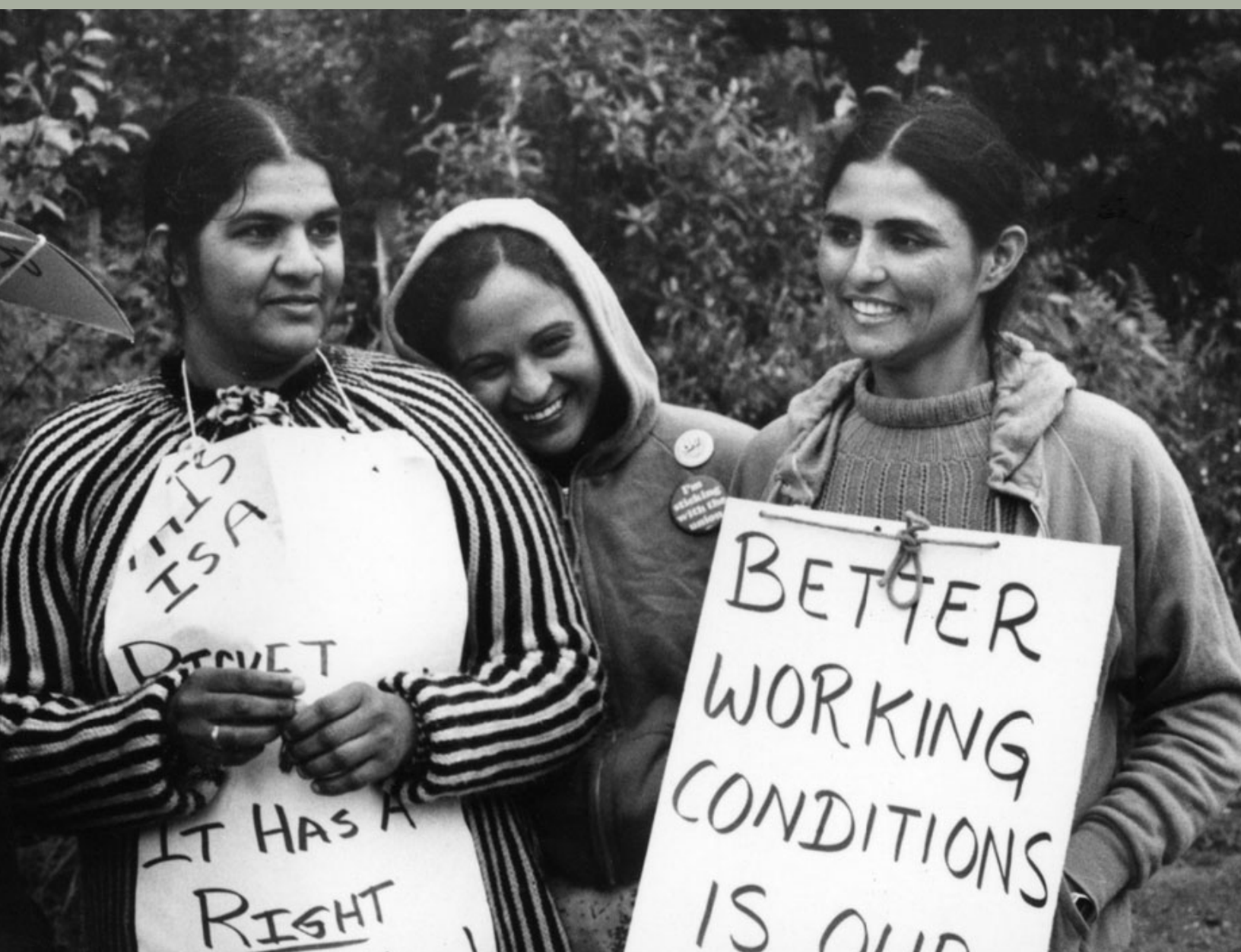


South Asian Women's Immigration to Canada

Questions of Race, Gender and Nationhood



Acknowledgments

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We acknowledge the generous support of Ontario Women's History Network, Canada's History, Thinking Historically – for Canada's Future Research project, University of Ottawa Faculty of Education and SSHRC – CRSH.

We also want to thank McGill-Queen's support in granting the rights to use content from the Framing Our Past (2001) original book.

Typesetting and cover design: Dany Lagueux

Cover image: Craig Berggold photo, Image Photos-047, Canadian Farmworkers Union Collection, Simon Fraser University Library.



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sciences humaines du Canada

Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada



Introduction

South Asian women have faced significant barriers to immigration throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Public discussions of race, gender, and nationhood, including debates over discriminatory immigration policies, impacted the way in which Canada was imagined and constructed as a country.

In these discussions, South Asian women often held an ambiguous place, viewed as either dangerous and/or desirable to the Canadian nation-building project. Despite the fact that South Asian-Canadian Women were the target of exclusionary immigration policies that dually impacted them because of both their race and gender, they have made significant

contributions to their communities as leaders and activists. By examining diverse historical representations, this lesson encourages learners to draw connections between historic forms of discrimination in Canadian immigration policy, South Asian women's experiences of immigration, and contemporary notions of "Canadianness".

Grade:

This lesson is suitable for grade 10 to 12
(Ontario curriculum example next page)

Lesson Topic (s):

South Asian Women's Immigration to
Canada – questions of race, gender and
nationhood.

Lesson Framing Critical Questions:

- A) How have Canadian immigration regulations impacted the lives of South Asian women and their communities?
 - B) What roles do concepts such as race, gender and class play in shaping immigration policy and notions of Canadian identity?
-

Estimated Lesson Length (s):

Two to three class periods.

Lesson Planning and Curriculum Expectations

Grade 10 – Canadian History since World War I, Academic (CHC2D) Strands A, B

Grade 12 – Canada: History, Identity, and Culture (CHI4U) Strands A, D, E

Relevant Curriculum Expectations

B. Canada, 1914-1929

B2.4 explain the goals and accomplishments of some groups, organizations, and/or movements in Canada

B2.6 describe attitudes towards as well as discrimination against and other significant actions affecting non-Indigenous ethno-cultural groups in Canada during this period

B3.3 describe some significant developments in the rights and lives of women in Canada

B3.4 describe Canadian immigration policy during this period and analyse immigration to Canada

A1. Historical Inquiry

A1.1 formulate different types of questions

A1.2 select and organize relevant evidence and information

A1.3 assess the credibility of sources and information A1.4 interpret and analyse evidence and information

A1.5 describe various approaches to the study of history

A1.6 use the concepts of historical thinking

A1.7 evaluate and synthesize their findings to formulate conclusions

A1.8 communicate their ideas, arguments, and conclusions

A1.9 use accepted forms of documentation

A1.10 use appropriate terminology when communicating the results of their investigations

A2. Developing Transferable Skills

A2.2 apply in everyday contexts skills and work habits developed through historical investigation

A2.3 apply the knowledge and skills developed in the study of Canadian history when analysing current social, economic, and/or political issues

D. Canada, 1867-1945

Specific Expectations:

D1. Setting the Context

D1.1 analyse some key social developments as well as dominant social attitudes and values during this period

D1.5 analyse how key political developments during this period contributed to the development of Canada

D1.6 analyse a variety of government policies during this period

D2. Interactions and Interdependence

D2.2 explain the main causes of key conflicts between groups in Canada during this period

D3. Diversity and Citizenship

D3.4 analyse the development of ethnocultural identities in different regions of Canada during this period

D3.5 analyse key changes in Canadian immigration policy during this period

D3.6 explain the significance of the denial of citizenship rights to certain groups in Canada during this period

E. Canada Since 1945

Specific Expectations:

E1. Setting the Context

E1.1 analyse key social/cultural trends and developments in Canada during this period

E3. Diversity and Citizenship

E3.2 analyse how the lives, roles, and rights of Canadian women changed during this period

E3.4 describe the contributions of various individuals and groups

Lesson Learning Goals/Objectives:

(Learning goals can be communicated with learners as follows: We are learning about.../ We are learning how to...)

- Students will interpret and form inquiry questions about primary sources they encounter.
- Students will learn about how South Asian individuals and communities were impacted by Canada's immigration policies at the beginning of the 20th century.
- Students will use a feminist lens to understand how gender intersects with other aspects of identity such as race and class in the establishment of policies that discriminate against ethnocultural communities.
- Students will examine South Asian women's resistance to discriminatory policies and their contributions to Canadian society.
- Students will problematize public interpretations of notions of Canadian identity and belonging.

Links to Historical Thinking Concepts:

Historical Significance

In this lesson, students will examine the historical significance of debates over Canadian immigration policies, and questions of Canadian nationhood at the beginning of the 20th century. They will also investigate the long-term impact of these debates by connecting them to contemporary events and conversations.

Primary Sources: Evidence

Students will examine biases and omissions in primary source documents. They will learn to assess which voices are included and which ones are omitted, and whose opinions are highlighted in news media coverage of debates over immigration policies.

Continuity and Change

In comparing previous and current immigration policies, students will determine what has remained the same and what has changed over time, with particular attention paid to aspects of identity that impact immigration requirements.

Cause and Consequence

Students will critically assess the causes and consequences of discriminatory immigration policies. They will examine the numerous issues influencing public debates regarding immigration during this period, including concerns related to race, gender and class, as well as understandings of Canadian identity and nationhood.

Historical Perspectives

Students will examine debates over immigration policies as they occurred at the turn of the 20th century from the perspective of the different groups involved. In addition, students will analyse the historical perspectives of racialized women which are often overlooked in historical inquiry. By highlighting the historical perspectives of South Asian women, their resistance to discriminatory policies, and their contributions to Canadian society, students will understand the long-term impacts of political decisions on specific ethnocultural communities.

Links to Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and/or Transformative Justice:

- Students will learn to apply a critical feminist lens to historic and current immigration policies in Canada, to better understand their discriminatory impacts on particular populations based on factors such as race, gender, and class.
- Students will take an anti-racist, intersectional approach to history by examining diverse historical perspectives with particular attention paid to the experiences of South Asian women.
- Students will reflect on the inequities inherent in commonly held assumptions regarding notions of Canadian identity and belonging.

Part 1: Minds On

****Note:** Teachers should consider choosing activities from each section (Minds On, Inquiry Work, Consolidation) as it suits students' interests, time constraints, and classroom limitations. The lesson designers suggest choosing at least one activity from each section. Consider also giving learners a choice between activities to differentiate instruction.

Pre-lesson Preparation and Suggestions:

Students in your classroom may have lived experiences, some traumatic, of immigration. It is important to foreground this lesson with a collaborative discussion with learners about the importance of respecting and accepting classmates with all identities and experiences.

One recommended activity to prepare students for difficult discussions is to create a “classroom constitution” at the beginning of the semester where rules for discussion are outlined explicitly, and if possible, collaboratively. In groups, learners can draft rules for respectful discussion, listening, and class conduct.

These rules can be posted in a visible place in the classroom.

Depending on the class profile, teachers are also advised to provide students with trigger warnings and allow learners to step out from the classroom briefly if the lesson content is overwhelming.

Activity 1: Identity and Immigration Experiences

Focus Question: In what ways might identity and / or positionality affect an immigrant or refugee's experiences?

Split the class into several groups of learners. Each group is assigned an “Aspect of Identity” (e.g. race, gender, ability, language). On a large piece of chart or graph paper each group brainstorms and records how their assigned aspect of identity might impact each part of a migrant's experience as they seek to move to another country. Learners are asked to identify barriers and challenges for each

of three stages of the immigration journey, as they apply: before moving, during transit, and after arriving. However, you may take away a column or categories or add to them.

***Note:** “Aspects of Identity” can be brainstormed collectively with the class by asking learners to discuss which aspects of identity / positionality they think might be the biggest determinant of an immigrant's experience coming to Canada.

Some guiding questions might include:

- What barriers might be unique to a person of a marginalized group related to the aspect of identity assigned to your group?
- How might your identity or positionality intersect with another identity to create additional barriers to immigration?
- In what ways do you think Canada's policies towards certain groups of immigrants have changed over time?

Aspect of Identity	Before Arriving in Canada	In Transit	After Arriving in Canada
Group 1: Race or ethnicity			
Group 2: Gender			
Group 3: Socio-economic class			
Group 4: (Dis)ability			
Group 5: Religion			
Group 6: Language			

Have learners nominate a speaker to summarize the group's discussion and research. Students can record and organize answers in a chart similar to the one above. (AaL)

Activity 2: Canadian Immigration Policy Timeline

Focus Question: How were Asian immigrants affected by changes in Canadian immigration policy between the late 19th century and early 20th century?

Have students carefully examine the immigration policy timeline included in Appendix A, in order to complete the following activity.

Timeline Discussion Questions:

1. Choose one event on the timeline that you think is the most historically significant. Describe the criteria you used to make this decision.
2. What role do race and gender play in the event you have chosen? What other political, economic, or social factors might have influenced immigration policy at that time?

Activity 3: Representations of South Asian-Canadian History Today

Focus Question: As a class, view the following [Canadian Heritage Minute about Paldi](#) [1 minute], a South Asian mill town established in British Columbia in 1917. In addition, watch the [CBC News segment](#) [8 minutes] with Dr. Satwinder Kaur Bains (professor, University of Fraser Valley) about the significance of the creation of this new Canadian Heritage Minute.

Video Discussion Questions:

1. What historical realities does the Heritage Minute reflect?
2. Why do you think it took so long for a Canadian Heritage Minute to be made about Paldi and the South Asian immigrants who founded it?
3. In the CBC news segment about the Paldi Heritage Minute, the professor describes how the film was viewed over one million times. What might this tell us about the significance of this kind of media in educating the public about diverse histories?
4. How might the Canadian Heritage Minute simplify or gloss over some of the serious challenges that South Asian women might have faced when they first immigrated to Canada?

Part 2: Inquiry Work

Activity 1: Newspaper Primary Source Analysis

Focus Question for Inquiry: What were the issues raised in the debates over South Asian women's right to immigrate to Canada in the early 20th century? Why were race and gender important factors, and how were they tied into notions of Canadian identity and nationhood?

A. As a class, read the excerpt from "State Control of Women's Immigration: The Passage to Canada of South Asian Women" included in Appendix A.

B. Before analyzing the newspaper articles in Appendix B, ask students to look at the vocabulary in the chart below. Discuss, as a class, the definitions of the terms, their significance, and how the terminology differs today.

Language from 1912	Definition	Terms used today
"Oriental", "Asiatic", "the Oriental problem", "the Orient"	Obsolete terms for individuals from Asia or of Asian descent that have pejorative/colonialist connotations (see the concept of Orientalism)	
"The Hindus"	Obsolete term used to refer broadly to individuals from India or of Indian descent (who were not necessarily practitioners of Hinduism). Has pejorative connotations similar to the terms noted above.	
Imperial/Empire	A reference to the British empire, including the numerous territories and populations colonized and controlled by Britain, such as Canada and India, particularly during the imperial century (1815-1914).	
"The white race", "white brothers"	Imperialism was tied to a false but pervasive belief in the racial superiority of Anglo-Saxons, referred to as "the white race" (see prejudice and discrimination in Canada and the concept of race).	For a discussion of the modern concept of whiteness see the Calgary Anti-Racism Education website.

C. Split students into small groups and have each group examine one excerpt from a newspaper article, found in Appendix B. Ask learners to answer at least **two of the four** following questions:

A. What arguments for or against the discriminatory immigration policy are raised in the newspaper article? Who is quoted? Whose voices are left out of the discussion?

B. What does the notion of "morality", raised in several of the articles, refer to in this context? How were racism and sexism tied into notions of morality?

Materials and Set Up:

(Activities, resources, worksheets, data collection charts, videos/music/images, and others)

- Digital or paper access to charts used in lesson plan
- Access to computer or digital device for consolidation activity
- Digital or paper access to appendix materials

Primary Sources:

The Sikhs in Canada. (1917, December 31). *The Globe and Mail*, p. 4. As discussed in Dua, E. (2007). Exclusion through Inclusion: Female Asian migration in the making of Canada as a white settler nation. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 14(4), 445–466.

Stowe Gullen, A. (1912, January 30). Champions the Sikh women [Letter to the editor]. *The Globe and Mail*, p. 5. As discussed in Dua, E. (2007). Exclusion through Inclusion: Female Asian migration in the making of Canada as a white settler nation. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 14(4), 445–466.

Favor admission of Hindu's wives: Local Council of Women passes resolution after discussion. (1912, January 23). *Victoria Daily Colonist*, p. 7. As discussed in Dua, E. (2007). Exclusion through Inclusion: Female Asian migration in the making of Canada as a white settler nation. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 14(4), 445–466.

Unfavorable to Hindu women. (1912, February 10). *Victoria Daily Colonist*, p. 18. As discussed in Dua, E. (2000). 'The Hindu woman's question': Canadian nation building and the social construction of gender for South Asian-Canadian women. In M. Aguiar, A. M. Calliste, & G. J. S. Dei (Eds.), *Anti-racist feminism: Critical race and gender studies* (pp. 55–72). Fernwood Publishing.

Would create an insoluble problem: Ex-Indian army officer strongly against admission of Hindu women to British Columbia. (1912, February 20). *Victoria Daily Colonist*, p. 18. As discussed in Dua, E. (2000). 'The Hindu woman's question': Canadian nation building and the social construction of gender for South Asian-Canadian women. In M. Aguiar, A. M. Calliste, & G. J. S. Dei (Eds.), *Anti-racist feminism: Critical race and gender studies* (pp. 55–72). Fernwood Publishing.

Asiatic immigration. (1912, March 9). *Victoria Daily Colonist*, p. 4. As discussed in Dua, E. (2000). 'The Hindu woman's question': Canadian nation building and the social construction of gender for South Asian-Canadian women. In M. Aguiar, A. M. Calliste, & G. J. S. Dei (Eds.), *Anti-racist feminism: Critical race and gender studies* (pp. 55–72). Fernwood Publishing.

Secondary Sources:

Aujla, A. (2000). Others in their own land: Second generation South Asian women, racism, and the persistence of colonial discourse. *Canadian Woman Studies*, 20(2), 41–47.

CBC News. (2023, April 22). *Canadian Heritage Minute represents B.C. South Asian community for first time*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqnY2Vd7scg>

Dua, E. (2000). 'The Hindu woman's question': Canadian nation building and the social construction of gender for South Asian-Canadian women. In M. Aguiar, A. M. Calliste, & G. J. S. Dei (Eds.), *Anti-racist feminism: Critical race and gender studies* (pp. 55–72). Fernwood Publishing.

- C. How do the arguments presented in the article fit into the understandings of women's roles at that time? What role(s) was it believed South Asian women would play in Canada? How might racism have factored into both arguments for exclusion, and arguments for inclusion, of South Asian women?
- D. How were notions of race and gender implicated in the concept of Canadian nationhood? What similarities and differences do today's discussions surrounding immigration and identity in Canada share with those in the early 20th century?

Activity 2: South Asian Women's Experiences

Focus Question for Inquiry: What were the experiences of South Asian immigrant women in Canada?

- A. South Asian women who immigrated to Canada have made valuable contributions to their communities, and to Canada as a country. Split students into small groups and have them choose one South Asian woman's story to watch or read from the links below, or from another source of their choosing. (They may also conduct a brief interview with an individual in their local community, if time allows).

Kaur Harnam

South Asian Stories – Ep7 – Harjit Dillon

South Asian Stories - Ep9 - Shushma Datt

South Asian Stories - Ep4 - Banto (Betty) Gill

Rupi Kaur

Mobina Jaffer

- B. Have each group complete the table below. Using their findings, have students create a biographical poster (digital or on paper). Print out the posters to create a shared classroom display.

Name of Historical or Contemporary Figure of Choice:

What kind of barriers did they face?	What were some of their achievements?	I would ask this person...

Dua, E. (2007). Exclusion through Inclusion: Female Asian migration in the making of Canada as a white settler nation. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 14(4), 445–466. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09663690701439751>

Historica Canada (Director). (2023, April 19). *New Heritage Minute: Paldi*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmxzagGJ1EQ>

Ralston, H. (2001). State control of women's immigration: The passage to Canada of South Asian Women. In S. A. Cook, L. R. McLean, & K. O'Rourke (Eds.), *Framing our past: Canadian women's history in the twentieth century* (pp. 263–266). McGill-Queen's University Press.

Teaching Strategies:

(collaborative learning, culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy, inquiry-based learning, differentiated instruction)

- Collaborative learning and peer-led learning
- Culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy
- Differentiated instruction and student choice
- Close reading of primary sources

Assessment: Assessment Tools

(checklist, rubric, observations), peer and self-assessment

Assessment for, as, and of learning. (AfL, AaL, AoL)

Minds on Activities:

- Aspect of Identity Chart and Discussion (AaL)
- Heritage Minute Video Discussion (AaL)
- Immigration Policy Timeline Discussion (AaL)

Inquiry Work:

- 1912 historical terms vocabulary chart (AfL, AaL)
- Questions based on group analysis of newspaper articles (AaL, AoL)
- Historical Profile of South Asian-Canadian Woman (AaL, AoL)

Consolidation:

- Defining "Canadianness" Journal Entry (AaL, AoL)
- Contemporary Immigration System Discussion/ Exit Ticket (AaL, AoL)

Accommodations:

(Students with IEPs, ELLs)

- Review of definitions and/or provide learners with a word wall before primary source reading activity
- Use of multiple forms of media, including videos, websites, and posters
- Use of charts, timelines, and scaffolded questions to chunk information
- Group work and group discussions for collaborative learning and peer-led learning
- Additional time provided learners on each activity based on student feedback

Part 3: Consolidation and Debrief

Activity 1: Defining “Canadianness”

Scholar Angela Aujla (2000) asks “at what point do multigenerational South Asian Canadians cease being seen as from somewhere else? ... South Asian Canadian women are in a predicament of perpetual foreignness – constantly being asked where they come from and having stereotypical characteristics assigned to them despite their “Canadianness”. Though they are in their country of origin, they are not of it” (p. 43).

Have students write a journal entry or short essay (250-500 words) that reflects on this statement and answers the following questions:

1. What defines “Canadianness”? What do people expect Canadians to look/act/be like? What part might racism, sexism and other systemic biases play in these assumptions?
2. How do you define your own Canadianness? What personal experiences have impacted your definition? How do you think this is similar or different from the experiences of South Asian women that Aujla describes?

- Students demonstrate and reflect on learning
- Students share research work
- Provides opportunities for consolidation and action plans
- Links back to the historical thinking questions

Activity 2: A More Equitable Immigration System?

In 1967, Canada incorporated a “points-based” immigration system that was allegedly designed to be free of discrimination.

Activity: Have students explore the [Canadian Comprehensive Ranking System \(CRS\)](#) which assigns points based on a set of qualifications.

Discussion questions or exit ticket:

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being extremely inequitable and 5 being perfectly equitable, where do you think the Canadian points-based immigration system would be? Justify your answer.
2. Do you think that the points-based system discriminates against certain groups? Why or why not?

Appendix A

Timeline and Text Excerpt

Materials for the Lesson and Additional Learning:

Minds On – Activity 2

Timeline of Asian Immigration to Canada in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries

1867

In a speech to Parliament John A. MacDonald, the first prime minister of Canada, proclaims that Canada is 'a white man's country'. This is despite the fact that Canada has many Indigenous, Chinese, and Black residents at that time.

1872

British Columbia's provincial legislature passes the Act to Amend the Qualifications and Registration of Voters which precludes Aboriginal and Chinese residents from voting.

1883

The federal government begins discussing the question of female Asian immigration. British Columbian politicians, white settlers and trade unions pressure the government to restrict immigration from China. Politicians like John A. Macdonald argue that restricting Chinese women from migrating would ensure that Chinese male residents only have temporary status in Canada.

1885

The Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration claims that Chinese women migrants are immoral. Those who testify at the royal commission complain that Chinese women work as prostitutes.

1887

The House of Commons amends the 1885 Act, allowing it to differentiate Chinese migrants on the basis of class. Merchants are exempt from the tax, as well as the implicit restrictions in sponsoring their spouses.

1887

The Act to Restrict Chinese Immigration introduces the head tax which restricts Chinese migration by charging a tax on Chinese migrants wishing to enter Canada. The first recorded migrants from Japan arrive in Canada.

1903

The first recorded migrants from India arrive in Canada landing in Vancouver and Victoria, B.C.

1906

The Chinese head tax is raised from \$100 to \$500, effectively restricting immigration.

1907

South Asians are denied the right to vote in Vancouver, and subsequently, in federal elections. Later the same year race riots erupt in Vancouver targeting Chinese and

Japanese individuals and businesses. Its organizers, the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council and the Asiatic Exclusion League, pressure the government to exclude Asians from Canada.

1908

The Canadian government negotiates the Hayashi-Lemieux Agreement that limits the number of male Japanese migrants to 400 per year, but does not restrict the entry of their wives, resulting in the arrival of numerous "picture brides" selected by Japanese settlers via photographs mailed to them from home.

The Immigration Act is amended to include the "continuous journey regulation" which prohibits any immigrant from entering the country unless they had come on a continuous journey from their 'native' country. The Canadian government pressures steamship companies in India to stop direct services, and not to sell through-tickets from Indian ports.

1910

The Immigration Act is amended to expand the list of prohibited immigrants and gives the Canadian government new powers to arbitrarily deny entry to individuals it deems "unsuited to the climate or requirements of Canada."

1911

Amendments are proposed to the Chinese Immigration Act which would allow Chinese men to sponsor their wives. The amendments do not pass. A delegation of Sikh men travels to Ottawa to request changes to the immigration regulations so that their wives and children can join them in Canada.

1912

White women's groups, Christian religious organizations, and some politicians argue that Indian women should be let into Canada over fears of mixed-race relations between Indian men and white women.

1914

The arrival of the steamboat Komagata Maru, which brings more than 300 Indian migrants to Canada's Western shores challenges Canada's exclusionary immigration laws. The Canadian government refuses the ship to land.

1919

An Order in Council is passed to allow Indian immigrants already in Canada to apply for their families to join them, however, bureaucratic roadblocks make application impractical until the Indian government puts registration procedures in place in 1924.

1923

The Canadian government enacts legislation that disallows any Chinese migrants from entering Canada. This legislation remains in effect until after the Second World War.

Inquiry Work – Activity 2:

Excerpt from Ralston, H. (2001). State control of women's immigration: The passage to Canada of South Asian Women. In S. A. Cook, L. R. McLean, & K. O'Rourke (Eds.), *Framing our past: Canadian women's history in the twentieth century* (pp. 263–266). McGill-Queen's University Press.

The perceived racial threat of massive Asian immigration provoked a riot in Vancouver in 1907 and prompted a series of legislative measures to restrict Asians' entry to Canada. In 1908 the federal government approved an order-in-council that required an immigrant to come to Canada by "continuous passage" from the country of national origin or citizenship and with a through ticket purchased in that country. There was a further stipulation that Asian immigrants from countries without "special arrangements" possess at least \$25 on arrival in Canada, with the understanding that this amount would be increased should it prove inadequate to deter such immigrants.

Canada negotiated with the British government to restrict South Asian immigration. William Lyon Mackenzie King, as deputy minister of labour, was sent on a mission to England "to confer with the British authorities on the subject of immigration from the Orient, and immigration from India in particular." King reported that " [the British authorities expressed] a ready appreciation of Canada's position ... That Canada should desire to restrict immigration from the Orient is regarded as natural, that Canada should remain a white man's country is believed to be not only desirable for social and economic reasons, but highly necessary on political and national grounds."

The rhetoric of racist, sexist and nationalist ideology combined to justify discriminatory policies in the interests of an imperial capitalist economy. The continuous passage stipulation was aimed specifically at Indians. It remained in effect until 1951 and effectively halted further South Asian immigration. In particular, it banned the migration of wives of South Asian men already settled in Canada. Between 1908 and 1912, only twenty men and six women from South Asia entered Canada.

The Immigration Act of 1910 reaffirmed the continuous - journey stipulation; it overtly used racial terminology for the first time and explicitly restricted Indian immigration. White settlers of British Columbia vehemently opposed any suggestion that South Asian men should be allowed to bring in their wives, for this would mean the establishment of a permanent community. In 1912 the editor of the *Daily Province* reflected public opinion when he wrote that British Columbians

did not desire South Asians to "fuse with the white population... We do not want a mixed breed, half Oriental, half Occidental, in this country." In the context of this social and political stance, the editor of the *Vancouver Sun* offered this opinion one year later: "The point of view of the Hindu [in wanting Canada to admit wives and families] is readily understood and appreciated. But there is the point of view of the white settler in this country who wants to keep the country a white country with white standards of living and morality.[...] We must not permit the men of that race to come in large numbers, and we must not permit their women to come in at all [emphasis added]. Such a policy of exclusion is simply a measure of self-defence ... We have no right to imperil the comfort and happiness of the generations that are to succeed us."

Appendix B

Newspaper Articles

THE SIKHS IN CANADA.

The Globe agrees with its correspondent, Mr. James E. Dobbs, that the Sikhs in Canada ought to be exempted from compulsory military service so long as they are denied the full status of Canadian citizenship. A larger question, which has been long discussed, is raised by the refusal of the Canadian authorities to permit Sikhs now in the country to be joined by their wives and children. The hardship involved in these cases could not be redressed without creating a serious menace. The policy of setting strict limits to Oriental immigration is necessary to preserve British Columbia for the white race. If the demand of the Sikhs were granted, the Sikh families would be the nucleus of a growing colony. The Oriental problem can be kept under control by immigration regulations, but not if it were rooted in the soil by family life. The domestication of Asiatics has been permitted in a small way in this country, but it has gone

Article 1 – "The Sikhs in Canada", The Globe and Mail, Dec. 31, 1917, p. 4.

"The Globe agrees with its correspondent, Mr. James E. Dobbs, that the Sikhs in Canada ought to be exempted from compulsory military service so long as they are denied the full status of Canadian citizenship. A larger question, which has long been discussed, is raised by the refusal of the Canadian authorities to permit Sikhs now in the country to be joined by their wives and children. The hardship involved in these cases could not be redressed without creating a serious menace. The policy of setting strict limits to Oriental immigration is necessary to preserve British Columbia for the White race. If the demand of the Sikhs were

granted, the Sikh families would be the nucleus of a growing colony. The Oriental problem can be kept under control by immigration regulations, but not if it were rooted in the soil by family life. The domestication of Asiatics has been permitted in a small way in this country, but it has gone far enough. The Canadians of today must not forget that they are trustees for the generations to come.

An Asia organized and developed will afford plenty of room for the Asiatics. It is better for the permanent interests of the people of Asia that they should remain in the Orient and work out destiny there. For the whites it is not merely a question of the standard of living, though this is vitally important. Their civilization, built up through the ages, is at stake."

Champions the Sikh Women

To the Editor of The Globe: The action of the immigration authorities of Vancouver, in excluding the wives and children of the Hindus already settled in that Province, must have occasioned not only great surprise, but alarm.

The family is universally accepted as the foundation of all national life; consequently, such a decision, directed as it is against the preservation and integrity of family life, is neither in the interests of morality nor consonant with British ideals. Logically, the Canadian authorities have but one of two lines of action: Either all foreigners must be denied ingress to our country, or, if admitted, the wives and children must also be welcomed.

Justice demands no less.

Such a miscarriage of ethical principles towards peace-loving, industrious British subjects from afar is a travesty upon our boasted civilization, and a direct denial of the fundamental teachings of Christianity.

Happily, such an invasion of the sacredness of human rights and human relationships will not for long be tolerated nor overlooked by Canadians, who are essentially lovers of justice and liberty.

Augusta Stowe Gullen.

Article 2 – "Champions the Sikh Women", The Globe and Mail, Jan. 30, 1912, p. 5.

"To the Editor of The Globe: The action of the immigration authorities of Vancouver, in excluding the wives and children of the Hindus already settled in that Province, must have occasioned not only great surprise, but alarm.

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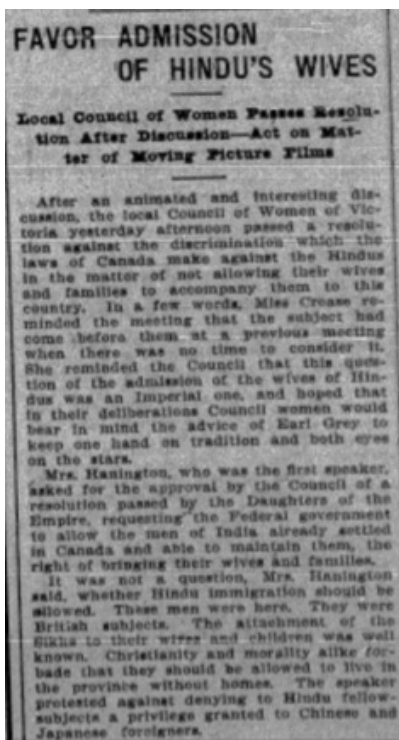
two lines of action: Either all foreigners must be denied ingress to our country, or, if admitted, the wives and children must also be welcomed.

Justice demands no less.

Such a miscarriage of ethical principles towards peace-loving, industrious British subjects from afar is a travesty upon our boasted civilization, and a direct denial of the fundamental teachings of Christianity.

Happily, such an invasion of the sacredness of human rights and human relationships will not for long be tolerated nor overlooked by Canadians, who are essentially lovers of justice and liberty.

Augusta Stowe Gullen"



Article 3 – “Favor Admission of Hindu’s Wives: Local Council of Women Passes Resolution After Discussion”, Victoria Daily Colonist, Jan. 23, 1912, p. 7.

“After an animated and interesting discussion, the local Council of Women of Victoria yesterday afternoon passed a resolution against the discrimination which the laws of Canada make against the Hindus in the matter of not allowing their wives and families to accompany them to this country. In a few words, Miss Crease reminded the meeting that the subject had come before them at a previous meeting when there was no time to consider it. She reminded the Council that this question of the admission of the wives was an Imperial one, and hoped that in their deliberations Council women would bear in mind the advice of Earl Grey to keep one hand on tradition and both eyes on the stars.

Mrs. Hanington, who was the first speaker, asked for the approval by the Council of a resolution passed by the Daughters of the Empire, requesting the Federal government to allow the men of India already settled in Canada and able to maintain them, the right of bringing their wives and families.

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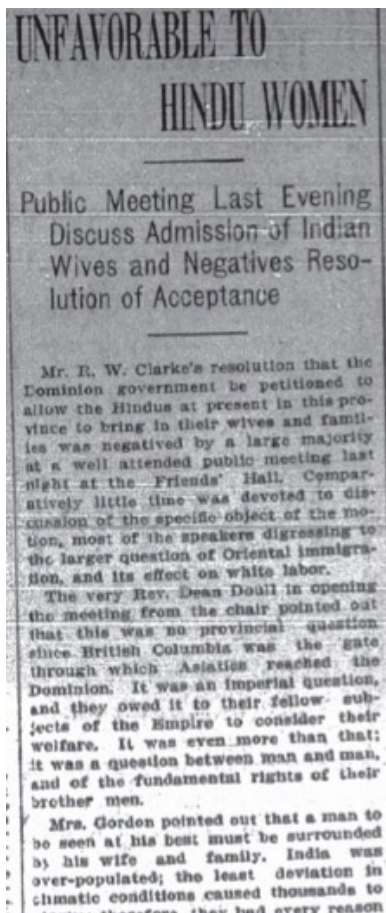
It was not a question, Mrs. Hanington said, whether Hindu immigration should be allowed. These men were here. They were British subjects. The attachment of the Sikhs to their wives and children was well known. Christianity and morality alike forbade that they should be allowed to live in the province without homes. The speaker protested against denying to Hindu fellow-subjects a privilege granted to Chinese and Japanese foreigners.

[...]

Mrs. Gordon Grant showed that the present state of affairs tended to immorality and asked that the women should do what they could to put an end to it on that account.

[...]

Mrs. Jenkins said that this question was not a political one but a moral one and the Women’s Council stood for morality.”



Article 4 – “Unfavorable to Hindu Women”, Victoria Daily Colonist, Feb. 10, 1912, p. 18.

“Mr. R. W. Clarke’s resolution that the Dominion government be petitioned to allow the Hindus at present in this province to bring in their wives and families was negated by a large majority at a well attended public meeting last night at the Friends’ Hall. Comparatively little time was devoted to discussion of the specific object of the motion, most of the speakers digressing to the larger question of Oriental immigration and its effect on white labour.

[...]

Mrs. Gordon pointed out that a man to be seen at his best must be surrounded by his wife and family. India was overpopulated; the least deviation in climatic conditions caused thousands to starve; therefore, they had every reason to come here. The Hindu was desirable as a citizen; he was industrious, and law-abiding. Vast areas of the interior of the province failed to be developed owing to lack of labor. It was impossible to get sober white labour at any rate after the first pay day. White men would not stay on the farm.

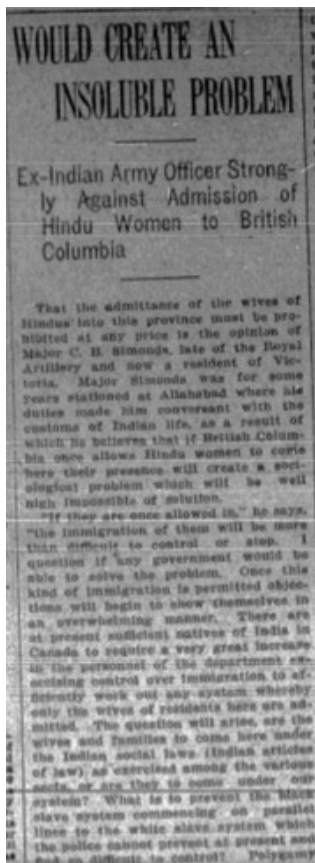
[...]

The Rev. W. Stevenson endorsed all Mrs. Gordon’s principles, but could not adopt her inferences. If sentiment was to settle the question it was settled already. Let them beware in their zeal for justice to the Hindu that they did not do their white brother an injustice. The Hindu wife was not excluded; she had to show possession of \$200.

Mr. Hall – “Indians must travel on a through continuous ticket, which no steamship company issues”. Mr. Stevenson, continuing, contended that Canada like any other part of the Empire had a right to say who should or should not come in.

[...]

Mr. Frank Andrews only desired not to hand down to descendants a gigantic problem such as the United States has to face in their Southern States, a problem which staggered the wit of man to solve. Let the wives in, and in a few years no one could tell the results. Either Japan or China, if emigration was unrestricted, would flood the country. They all knew of the high wages paid here, and would all try to come. White peoples’ children, of whatever race could be put through the schools, and made into Canadians; not so with the Hindus or other Asiatics.”

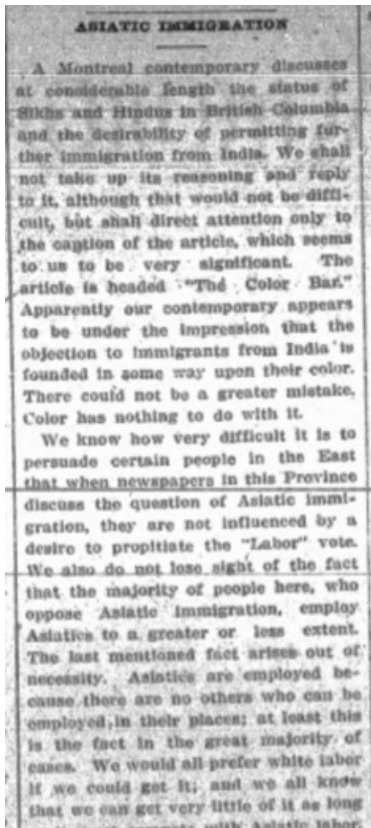


Article 5 – “Would Create an Insoluble Problem: Ex-Indian Army Officer Strongly Against Admission of Hindu Women to British Columbia”, Victoria Daily Colonist, Feb. 20, 1912, p. 18.

“That the admittance of the wives of Hindus into this province must be prohibited at any price is the opinion of Major C. B. Simonds, late of the Royal Artillery and now a resident of Victoria. Major Simonds was for some years stationed at Allahabad where his duties made him conversant with the customs of Indian life, as a result of which he believes that if British Columbia once allows Hindu women to come here, their presence will create a sociological problem which will be well nigh impossible of solution.

“If they are once allowed in,” he says, “the immigration of them will be more than difficult control or stop. I question if any government would be able to solve the problem. Once this kind of immigration is permitted objections will begin to show themselves in an overwhelming manner. There are at present sufficient natives of India in Canada to require a very great increase in the personnel of the department exercising control over immigration to adequately work out any system whereby only the wives of residents here are admitted. The question will arise, are the wives and families to come here under the Indian social laws (Indian articles of law) as exercised among the various sects, or are they to come under our system? What is to prevent the black slave system commencing on parallel lines to the white slave system which the police cannot prevent at present and find so difficult to control? Polygamy

over immigration to efficiently work out any system whereby only the wives of residents here are admitted. The question will arise, are their wives and families to come here under the Indian social laws (Indian articles of law) as exercised among the various sects, or are they to come under our system? What is to prevent the black slave system commencing on parallel lines to the white slave system which the police cannot prevent at present and find so difficult to control? Polygamy is a part of the sociological conditions of the Hindu, so the question comes up as to whether all or only one or two wives of each person are to be admitted. If the latter is the case, is the government of India to decide which are the women who shall immigrate to this country? Those who are sent might not be those who are wanted by the Hindus here. Then again, with the advent of family life among the Indians here how are the laws to be administered among them? Are they to have native leaders and the joint magistrate system, or will the matter be left in the hands of the police? These are all questions to be considered before Hindu women are allowed to come to British Columbia.”



Article 6 – “Asiatic Immigration”, The Victoria Daily Colonist, Mar. 9, 1912, p. 4.

“A Montreal contemporary discusses at considerable length the status of Sikhs and Hindus in British Columbia and the desirability of permitting further immigration from India. We shall not take up its reasoning and reply to it, although that would not be difficult, but shall direct attention only to the caption of the article which seems to us to be very significant. The article is headed “The Color Bar”. Apparently our contemporary appears to be under the impression that the objection to immigrants from India is founded in some way upon their color. There could not be a greater mistake. Color has nothing to do with it.

[...] We also do not lose sight of the fact that the majority of people here, who oppose Asiatic immigration, employ Asiatics to a greater or lesser extent. The last mentioned fact arises out of necessity. Asiatics are employed because there are no others who can be employed in their places; at least this is the fact in the great

majority of cases. We would all prefer white labour if we could get it; and we all know that we can get very little of it as long as it must compete with Asiatic labour.

[...]

The objection to the Asiatic is that he does not and cannot assimilate with the white race. This fact exists, and all that can be said or written about it will not alter it in the slightest degree. Their ways are not our ways; their thoughts are not our thoughts.

[...]

We judge from what we read in Eastern contemporaries that an opinion prevails in some quarters that the Sikhs for example only wish to come here and become Canadians. This is a mistake. They do not wish it, and if they did wish it they could not do it. If they were permitted to come in limited numbers they would set up communities distinct from white communities. If they were permitted to come in unlimited numbers, they would in very short time so occupy the land that the white population would be in a minority. If British Columbia is not kept “white”, Canada will become Asiatic.”

Appendix C

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