

A New Era of Immigration Politics: The Evolution of Right-Wing Immigration Stances in BC from 1991 to 2024

Jayson Biana | Department of Political Science, Simon Fraser University

Canadian exceptionalism — a widespread **consensus** on immigration's economic and cultural benefits to society, whereas it is a divisive issue in other countries — is fraying.

Federalization of immigration: provincial governments have taken an increasingly active role in immigration policy since the 1990s (Provincial Nominee Program).



How have right-wing parties in BC discussed immigration in election platforms in the modern era of politics in British Columbia?

Content Analysis of 10 Right-Wing Election Platforms

Year	Government	Official Opposition	Third Party	Total Seats
1991	BC NDP (51)	BC Liberals (17)	BC Social Credit (7)	75
1996	BC NDP (39)	BC Liberals (33)	BC Reform (2)	75
2001	BC Liberals (77) ¹	BC NDP (2)	-	79
2005	BC Liberals (46)	BC NDP (33)	-	79
2009	BC Liberals (49)	BC NDP (35)	-	85
2013	BC Liberals (49)	BC NDP (34)	BC Greens (1)	85
2017a ²	BC Liberals (43)	BC NDP (41)	BC Greens (3)	87
2017b	BC NDP (41)	BC Liberals (43)	BC Greens (3)	87
2020	BC NDP (57)	BC Liberals/United ³ (28)	BC Greens (2)	87
2024	BC NDP (47)	BC Conservatives (44)	BC Greens (2)	93

Table 1. BC Election Results from 1991–2024.

Coding Framework

- Tone**
 - pro-immigration
 - anti-immigration
- Ideology**
 - liberalism
 - neoliberalism
 - conservatism
- Policy Focus:**
 - attract
 - integrate
 - scrutinize
- Immigrant Type:**
 - skilled workers
 - business immigrants
- Role in Federation:**
 - increased role
 - collaborative role

Four Eras of Immigration Framing in BC's Right-wing

Table 2. Immigration Stance of Major Right-Wing Political Parties in BC from 1991–2024.

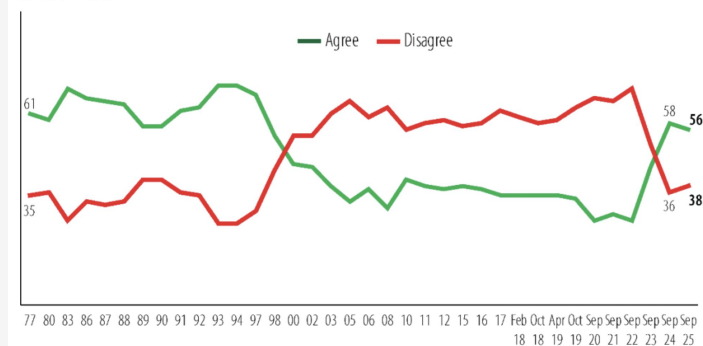
Year/Platform	Tone	Motive/Ideology	Policy Focus	Immigrant type	Role in Immigration Policy	
1991 BC Liberal	Pro-immigration	Classical liberalism Social liberalism	Integrate immigrants	–	Increased role	 Immigration Enters the Provincial Agenda
1996 BC Liberal	–	–	–	–	–	
2001 BC Liberal	Pro-immigration	Neoliberal	Attract immigrants	Skilled workers	Increased role	 Immigration as an Economic Driver
2005 BC Liberal	Very pro-immigration	Neoliberal	Attract immigrants Integrate immigrants	Skilled workers Business immigrants	Increased role	
2009 BC Liberal	Very pro-immigration	Neoliberal	Attract immigrants Integrate immigrants	Skilled workers Business immigrants	Increased role	
2013 BC Liberal	Pro-immigration	Neoliberal	Attract immigrants	Business immigrants Skilled workers	Increased role	 The Neoliberalization of Immigration
2017 BC Liberal	Very pro-immigration	Neoliberal	Attract immigrants	Business immigrants Skilled workers	Collaborative role	
2020 BC Liberal	Pro-immigration	Neoliberal	Attract immigrants	Skilled workers	–	
2024 BC United	Pro-immigration Anti-immigration	Neoliberal Classical conservative	Attract immigrants Scrutinize immigration	Skilled workers	–	 Immigration as a Destabilizing Force
2024 BC Conservatives	Pro-immigration Anti-immigration	Neoliberal Classical conservative	Attract immigrants Scrutinize immigration	Skilled workers	Increased role	

Key Takeaways

1. Confirms the literature that the provinces are taking a more active role in immigration policy.
2. Demonstrates an evolution in right-wing immigration stances in BC, and more broadly, an ideological evolution.
3. Reflects the rapidly changing attitudes towards immigration in Canada.

Overall there is too much immigration in Canada

% 1977 – 2025



Looking ahead:

- Immigration will remain a highly charged and dynamic topic that will be a **central political issue** in Canada.

Thank you!

Keep an eye out for my upcoming large-scale immigration project.

Jayson Biana

jeb19@sfu.ca