



Event: Workshop on Some Estimates of Canadians Abroad: Methodologies and Data

Participants: 18 researchers and analysts

Location: Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, Vancouver, B.C.

Date: September 26, 2008

Main conclusions: Canada does not collect exit data when Canadian citizens leave the country. However, Canadian census and registration sources will allow accurate global estimates of Canada's permanent resident overseas population by country of birth. In addition country-specific portraits of up to 12 regions that are the overseas home to Canadian citizens must be made to supplement the data-based estimates of the activities and roles of these overseas Canadian citizens.

Workshop on Some Estimates of Canadians Abroad: Methodologies and Data

Summary Report

Prepared by the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada

Introduction

The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada hosted a one-day workshop entitled *Some Estimates of Canadians Abroad: Methodologies and Data* on September 26, 2008 in Vancouver, B.C., with the support of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Western Economic Diversification Canada, the B.C. Government and the Gordon Foundation.

The number of Canadian citizens residing abroad and their demographic and economic profiles have increasingly led to a series of policy-related questions. Therefore, the Canadians Abroad Project is currently developing techniques to estimate the number of Canadian citizens residing abroad by country of birth.

The purpose of this workshop was to report and discuss the progress to date on alternative data sources and methodologies that could be employed to obtain more precise estimates and to ultimately arrive at a meta-estimate of Canadian citizens residing abroad.

There were 18 workshop participants whose names are listed in Appendix B. The workshop consisted of four sessions that are attributed to the global estimates and country profiles as shown in Appendix A.

The remainder of this summary report is organized in two sections: global estimates and examples of country profiles of Canadians abroad.

Section One: Global Estimates

The workshop was chaired by Dr. Don DeVoretz, Research Director of the APF's Canadians Abroad Project.

It was initially noted at the workshop that Canada does not collect exit data which would allow an exact estimate of Canadian citizen population abroad.

Given this obvious shortcoming the workshop addressed the question of what secondary sources could be used to estimate the Canadians abroad. It was reported that various secondary data sources, including estimates made by the OECD, UNPD and APF Canada, provide alternative estimates, but each source has its own definition of Canada's overseas population and each suffers from other inherent limitations.

The workshop next addressed the question of what lessons can be drawn from service providers to estimate the number of Canadians abroad? It was noted that Canadian service providers do have some mechanisms to estimate Canadians living abroad. These sources include information collected in the *Registration of Canadians Abroad* file compiled by Canadian Foreign Affairs (<http://www.voyage.gc.ca>), and records of Canadian passport renewals or new passports issued at overseas offices, etc. Based on these mechanisms, the estimated number of Canadians abroad ranges from 2.5 million to 3 million. However, these measures contain biases since, for example, not every Canadian abroad has registered on the *Voyage* system, and passport renewals arise under a variety of conditions that are not linked to residence, including lost or stolen passports.

Given this paucity of reliable data we revisited the possibility of using Canadian sources, particularly the databases of the IMDB and Canadian census. It was reported at the workshop that the IMDB does allow the derivation of estimates of foreign-born Canadians who have left Canada. Moreover, the Canadian census can also be used to estimate the Canadian population, both native-born and foreign-born, who have left Canada using a residual analysis between two censuses.

It was confirmed that the project team would further explore the technical details required to use both the Canadian censuses and the IMDB, including re-defining population groups and continuing to attempt to access a larger public use sample of the Canadian census. It was agreed that APF Canada team would redo the estimates with the 20% Census sample (upon approval by SSHRC and Statistics Canada) and produce numbers for the disappearance of the Canadian- and foreign-born in the census. The CIC team would produce parallel estimates from the Longitudinal File.

Even given the possibility of generating a global estimate of Canadians living abroad the cited methodologies do not tell us where the leavers went and for how long, and why. Therefore, the workshop decided that specific country profiles for approximately 10-12 countries would be an important approach to provide detailed supplementary information about Canadians abroad.

Section Two: Examples of Country Profiles

The project team has adopted a country profile approach to put faces on overseas Canadian citizens residing in key destinations. The country profile is in fact a case study for a specific country/region using a template designed by APF Canada, which includes an estimate of Canadian citizens in the country/region; portraits of Canadian individuals and organizations and a description of relevant immigration and citizenship policies that may affect Canadian citizen residents.

The project team has decided to look into 10-12 major destinations for Canadian citizens, including the US and Hong Kong SAR. There were three case studies reported at this workshop, namely, country profiles for the US, Hong Kong SAR and Taiwan.

It was reported that there were over 1 million Canadians living in the US according to the 2000 US census. The Hong Kong SAR 2006 census reported 12,000 Canadian citizens in Hong Kong, representing 3% of the foreign population in Hong Kong. In the case of Taiwan, according to some administration figures, there could be over 30,000 Canadian citizens.

However, the Hong Kong and Taiwanese numbers of Canadian citizens are very likely underestimates given the complexity and implications of declaring dual citizenship. In short, Canadians who have dual citizenship will often only declare their local citizenship when entering the region or reporting their citizenship to a census taker. Thus, it is a challenge to derive a reliable estimate of the number Canadian citizens in these territories.

In addition to officially derived numbers, it was noted that Canadian organizations, for example, business, social network and alumni associations, were other sources to complement the picture presented in the portraits of Canadians abroad.

Wrap-up

All participants agreed the workshop had fully met the goals of the organizers. It was determined that this summary report would be circulated among participants and stakeholders.

Appendix A: Workshop Program

Workshop on “Some Estimates of Canadians Abroad: Methodologies and Data”

Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada
Boardroom, 220 – 890 West Pender Street, BC
Friday, September 26, 2008

Workshop Moderator: Don DeVoretz, APF Canada

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| 9:00-9:30am | Registration and Continental Breakfast |
| 9:30-9:45 | Welcome & Opening Remarks |
| 9:45-10:45 | Session 1: Global Estimates <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Presentation*: Overview of secondary sources, Kenny Zhang, APF Canada- Presentation*: Estimate from service providers, Ariel Delouya, DFAIT |
| 10:45-11:00 | Coffee Break |
| 11:00-12:00 | Session 2: Global Estimates (continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Presentation*: Data from IMDB, Benoit St-Jean, CIC- Presentation*: Data from Canadian censuses, Victor Chen, APF |
| 12:00-1:00pm | Lunch Break |
| 1:00-2:00 | Session 3: Roundtable Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Can we construct a meta-estimate?- Are there alternative data sources? |
| 2:00-2:15 | Coffee Break |
| 2:15-3:30 | Session 4: Country Profiles <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Overview: Don DeVoretz, APF Canada- Presentation: Canadians in the United States, Diane Coulombe, Independent Researcher- Presentation: Canadians in Hong Kong, Kenny Zhang, APF Canada- Presentation: Canadians in Taiwan, Victor Yan, APF Canada |
| 3:30-4:00 | Wrap up and Future Directions |

Note *: Each presentation is recommended to cover the followings:

1. Overview of the data source
2. Overview of the methodology used to obtain estimates from this data source
3. Presentation of the estimated numbers from this data source: global numbers, key countries and characteristics (if applicable)
4. What are the caveats for these estimates (reasons why number may be overestimating or underestimating actual number of the Canadians abroad)

Appendix B: List of Participants

Satwinder Bains

Director
UFV - Centre for Indo Canadian Studies

Francois Bertrand

Senior Policy Advisor
Immigration policy and Intergovernmental relations
The government of British Columbia

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Member
Project Advisory Committee

Victor Chen*

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Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada

Diane Coulombe*

Independent Researcher

Ariel Delouya*

Director
DFAIT, Policy Research Division

Don DeVoretz*

Senior Fellow
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A/ Director
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Howard Lin**

Professor
Ted Rogers School of Management
Ryerson University

Don McRae

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Jill Price

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Research Officer
CIC, Strategic Research and Statistics

Yuen Pau Woo

President and CEO
Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada

Victor Yan*

Researcher
Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada

Kenny Zhang*

Senior Project Manager
Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada

Note:

* Presenters and Speakers

** Attendees via tele-conference.

For more information about this workshop, please contact:

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