

Françoise Armand  
 Robert Armstrong  
 Jason Azmier  
 Morton Beiser  
 Chedly Belkhodja  
 Paul A. Bramadat  
 Diane Dagenais  
 Colleen Dempsey  
 Douglas Durst  
 Rick Enns  
 Michael Farrell  
 J.S. Frideres  
 Grace-Edward Galabuzi  
 Sophie Gravel  
 Feng Hou  
 Razia Jaffer  
 Jack Jedwab  
 Fran Klodawsky  
 Audrey Kobayashi  
 Jean Lock Kunz  
 Solange Lefebvre  
 Clarence Lochhead  
 Patrick Mackenzie  
 Joseph Mensah  
 Linda Ogilvie  
 Jacqueline Oxman-Martinez  
 Valerie Preston  
 Mythili Rajiva  
 Brian Ray  
 Myrta Reyes  
 Myer Siemiatycki  
 Hieu Van Ngo  
 Joanna Anneke Rummens  
 Kareem D. Sadiq  
 Grant Schellenberg  
 Barbara Schleifer  
 Evangelia Tastsoglou  
 Marika Willms  
 Tracy Wityk

Supported by Integration  
 Branch, Citizenship and  
 Immigration Canada;  
 Multiculturalism Program,  
 Canadian Heritage and  
 the National Secretariat  
 on Homelessness.

\$5.95 Également disponible en français



disponible jusqu'au 1<sup>er</sup> juin 2005  
 on display until June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005

# CANADIAN ISSUES

# THÈMES CANADIENS

Spring / Printemps 2005

Guest Editor  
 Myer Siemiatycki,  
 Ryerson University

Including a series  
 of texts on immigration  
 and homelessness



# Immigration

and the Intersections  
of Diversity



# A NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TEACHING, LEARNING & COMMUNICATING THE HISTORY OF CANADA



## New Frontiers in our History: 100 Years of Alberta and Saskatchewan in Confederation The Past, Present and Future

The Westin Hotel  
and Conference Centre  
Edmonton, Alberta  
October 28-30, 2005



*alfredo garcia 2004*

For more information please visit our website : [www.acs-aec.ca](http://www.acs-aec.ca)



# CANADIAN ISSUES THÈMES CANADIENS

Spring / printemps 2005

3 Introduction  
*Myer Siemiatycki*

5 Interview with the Honorable Joe Volpe

7 Interview with the Honorable Raymond Chan

10 Interview with the Honorable Joe Fontana

## SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND IMMIGRATION

13 Negotiating the Nexus of Immigration, Sexuality and Citizenship: Canadian and American Comparisons  
*Brian Ray and Audrey Kobayashi*

17 Canadian Immigration Law & Same-Sex Partners  
*Marika Willms*

## AGE AND IMMIGRATION - CHILDREN AND YOUTH

21 The New Canadian Children and Youth Study: Research to Fill a Gap in Canada's Children's Agenda  
*Morton Beiser, Linda Ogilvie, Joanna Anneke Rummens, Robert Armstrong and Jacqueline Oxman-Martinez*

25 Bridging the Generation Gap: Exploring the Differences Between Immigrant Parents and their Canadian-Born Children  
*Mythili Rajiva*

29 Immigrant Children and Youth in Focus  
*Hieu Van Ngo and Barbara Schleifer*

## AGE AND IMMIGRATION - ELDERLY

34 More Snow on the Roof: Canada's Immigrant Seniors  
*Douglas Durst*

38 Seniors and Immigration: Services and Issues  
*Tracy Wityk and Myrta Reyes*

41 Applying a Life-Course Lens to Immigrant Integration  
*Jean Lock Kunz*

44 Elderly Immigrants in Canada: Income Sources and Self-Sufficiency (Summary)  
*Colleen Dempsey*

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND IMMIGRATION

49 The Economic Well-Being of Recent Immigrants to Canada  
*Grant Schellenberg and Feng Hou*

53 Factors Affecting the Social Economic Status of Canadian Immigrants in the New Millennium  
*Grace-Edward Galabuzi*

## ETHNICITY AND IMMIGRATION

58 Ethnogenesis: Immigrants to Ethnicities and the Development of a Rainbow Class Structure  
*J.S. Frideres*

61 Race, Ethnicity and Immigration in the Workplace: Visible Minority Experiences and Workplace Diversity Initiatives  
*Kareem D. Sadiq*

67 Immigration and Racialization in Canada: Geographies of Exclusion?  
*Valerie Preston and Ann Marie Murnaghan*

72 On the Ethno-Cultural Heterogeneity of Blacks in our 'Ethnicities'  
*Joseph Mensah*

## RELIGION AND IMMIGRATION

78 Beyond the Trojan Horse: Religion, Immigration and Canadian Public Discourse  
*Paul A. Bramadat*

82 Religion, Pluralism and Faith-Based Arbitration: Consequences for Canadian Muslim Women  
*Razia Jaffer*

87 Religion in the Public Sphere  
*Solange Lefebvre*

## GENDER AND IMMIGRATION

91 Gender and Migration Intersections in a Canadian Context  
*Evangelia Tastsoglou, Brian Ray and Valerie Preston*

## DISABILITY AND IMMIGRATION

94 Barriers in Access to Compensation of Immigrant Workers Who Have Suffered Work Injuries  
*Sylvie Gravel, Michel Fournier, Laurence Boucheron and Louis Patry*

## OFFICIAL LANGUAGES AND IMMIGRATION

99 Languages and Immigration: Raising Awareness of Language and Linguistic Diversity in Schools  
*Françoise Armand et Diane Dagenais*

103 Integrating Newcomers into the Canadian Labour Market  
*Clarence Lochhead and Patrick MacKenzie*

## HERITAGE LANGUAGES AND IMMIGRATION

107 Intersections of Duality: The Relationship Between Ethnocultural Identity and Minority Language  
*Jack Jedwab*

112 Immigration and the Challenge of Regionalization: Francophone Immigration in New Brunswick  
*Chedly Belkhodja*

116 Western Canada's Unique Immigration Picture  
*Jason Azmier*

## POLICY SPOTLIGHT: HOMELESSNESS

119 Responding to Housing Instability Among Newcomers  
*Michael Farrell*

123 The Panel Study on Homelessness: Secondary Data Analysis of Responses of Study Participants Whose Country of Origin is not Canada  
*Fran Klodwasky*

127 Immigrant Households and Homelessness  
*Rick Enns*

131 Event Schedule: Immigration and Intersections of Identity

**Canadian Issues is published by  
Thèmes canadiens est publié par**



INTERIM PRESIDENT / PRÉSIDENT INTÉRIEURE  
Hector Mackenzie, Foreign Affairs Canada

FRENCH LANGUAGE SECRETARY / SECRÉTAIRE DE LANGUE FRANÇAISE  
Nicole Neatby, St-Mary's University

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SECRETARY / SECRÉTAIRE DE LANGUE ANGLAISE  
Minelle Mahtani, University of Toronto

ATLANTIC PROVINCE REPRESENTATIVE / REPRÉSENTANTE DE L'ATLANTIQUE  
Penny Bryden, Mount Allison University

QUEBEC REPRESENTATIVE AND TREASURER /  
REPRÉSENTANT DU QUÉBEC ET TRÉSORIER  
Christopher Manfredi, McGill University

ONTARIO REPRESENTATIVE / REPRÉSENTANT DE L'ONTARIO  
Chad Gaffield, University of Ottawa

PRAIRIE PROVINCES AND NORTHWEST TERRITORIES REPRESENTATIVE /  
REPRÉSENTANT DES PRAIRIES ET DES TERRITOIRES DU NORD-OUEST  
Gerald Gall, University of Alberta

BRITISH COLUMBIA AND THE YUKON REPRESENTATIVE /  
REPRÉSENTANT DE LA COLOMBIE-BRITANIQUE ET DU YUKON  
Peter Seixas, University of British Columbia

STUDENTS REPRESENTATIVE / REPRÉSENTANTE DES ÉTUDIANTS  
Carla Peck

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ACS / DIRECTEUR GÉNÉRAL DE L'AEC  
Jack Jedwab

DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EVENTS / DIRECTEUR D'ÉVÉNEMENTS SPÉCIAUX  
James Ondrick

## CANADIAN ISSUES THÈMES CANADIENS

EDITOR / RÉDACTRICE EN CHEF  
Allison Anderson

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS / ASSISTANTES À LA RÉDACTION  
Catherine Lachance, Marie-Pascale Desjardins

DESIGN / GRAPHISME  
Llama Communications • (819) 776-6888 • marc@llamacom.ca

ADVERTISING / PUBLICITÉ  
allison.anderson@acs-aec.ca • (514) 925-3094

DISTRIBUTION  
Disticor Direct  
695 Westney Road South, Unit 14  
Ajax Ontario L1S 6M9

CITC/ACS STREET ADDRESS / ADRESSE CIVIQUE CITC/AEC  
1822A, rue Sherbrooke Ouest, Montréal (Québec) H3H 1E4  
Tel / Tél.: (514) 925-3094 – Fax / Téléc.: (514) 925-3095  
E-mail / Courriel: general@acs-aec.ca

RUN OF 10,000 COPIES / TIRAGE DE 10 000 EXEMPLAIRES

CANADIAN ISSUES / THÈMES CANADIENS (CITC) – ISSN 0318-8442  
CONVENTION POSTE PUBLICATION, 41006541

**Ce numéro de Thèmes canadiens  
est commandité par le projet Metropolis.**



Patrimoine  
canadien Canadian  
Heritage

CITC est une publication trimestrielle de l'Association d'études canadiennes (AEC). Il est distribué gratuitement aux membres de l'Association. CITC est une publication bilingue. Tous les textes émanant de l'Association sont publiés en français et en anglais. Tous les autres textes sont publiés dans la langue d'origine. Les collaborateurs et collaboratrices de CITC sont entièrement responsables des idées et opinions exprimées dans leurs articles. L'Association d'études canadiennes est un organisme pan-canadien à but non lucratif dont l'objectif est de promouvoir l'enseignement, la recherche et les publications sur le Canada. L'AEC est une société savante, membre de la Fédération canadienne des sciences humaines et sociales. Elle est également membre fondateur du Conseil international d'études canadiennes.

CITC bénéficie de l'appui financier du Gouvernement du Canada par le biais du Programme d'études canadiennes du ministère du Patrimoine canadien et Le Fonds du Canada pour les magazines pour ce projet.

CITC is a quarterly publication of the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS). It is distributed free of charge to individual and institutional members of the Association. CITC is a bilingual publication. All material prepared by the ACS is published in both French and English. All other articles are published in the language in which they are written. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ACS. The Association for Canadian Studies is a voluntary non-profit organization. It seeks to expand and disseminate knowledge about Canada through teaching, research and publications. The ACS is a scholarly society and a member of the Humanities and Social Science Federation of Canada. The ACS is also a founding member of the International Council for Canadian Studies.

CITC acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canadian Studies Programme of the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canada Magazine Fund for this project.

## LETTERS / LETTRES

**Comments on this edition of Canadian Issues?**

**We want to hear from you. Write to:**

Canadian Issues - Letters, ACS  
1822A Sherbrooke Street West  
Montréal, Québec H3H 1E4

**Or e-mail us:**

allison.anderson@acs-aec.ca

**Your letters may be edited for length and clarity.**

**Des commentaires sur ce numéro ?**

**Écrivez-nous :**

Thèmes canadiens - Lettres, AEC  
1822A, rue Sherbrooke Ouest  
Montréal (Québec) H3H 1E4

**Ou par courriel :**

allison.anderson@acs-aec.ca

**Vos lettres peuvent être modifiées pour des raisons éditoriales.**

# INTRODUCTION

The articles in this collection remind us how many meanings and variations may be contained in the single words: ‘immigrant’ and ‘citizenship.’ In the process, they convey an enriched research and policy agenda for understanding and shaping global migration to Canada.

To be sure, each term contains a core, common-denominator definition. Immigrants are foreign-born permanent residents in Canada; and citizenship is the formal acquisition of membership in the Canadian polity. From these foundational understandings have arisen some defining narratives of ‘the Canadian condition.’ We self-regard as ‘a nation of immigrants,’ united by the shared citizenship of equal rights and responsibilities.

Our self-understanding as a nation of ‘immigrant-citizens’ (and their descendents) may well stem from a desire to construct a narrative of commonality for so diverse a socio-political entity as Canada. Underlying this has been an impulse to emphasize what unites rather than divides Canadians. Positive outcomes have included: a communitarian re-definition of Canada as open and accepting of immigrants from around the world, and a rapid pathway to citizenship rights for these immigrants.

But our generic emphasis on a universal ‘immigrant-citizen’ may also generate a ‘one-size-fits-all’ mindset about the immigrant experience in Canada. Nothing could be more at odds with reality. Differences *among* immigrants in Canada (often even *within* the same newcomer community!) are as great as differences *between* immigrants and native-born Canadians.

The reasons flow back to the many different circumstances and characteristics combined under the simple, singular term ‘immigrant.’ Consider the multiple intersections of diversity which distinguish any of Canada’s 5.4 million immigrants today. Did they enter Canada through the Independent, Family Unification or Refugee Class? Where did they come from? Where in Canada did they settle? How old were they when they arrived? How long have they been here? What is their mother tongue? What is their facility in French or English? What is their religion? How much education do they have? Was it attained in Canada and/or abroad? Are they male or female? What is their ethno-racial identity? What is their gender? What is their sexual orientation? Do they have any disabilities? What was their class background when they arrived? What is it now?

Different answers to *any* of these questions can significantly impact the settlement and integration experience of immigrants in Canada.

Nor is there only a single trajectory for the citizenship experience of Canadian immigrants. There are multiple scales of citizenship attachment for immigrants to Canada. Their overwhelming tendency to settle in a small number of urban areas suggests there is a potent attachment which newcomers have for our largest cities, particularly Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. Immigrants to Canada are declaring – with their feet – a form of urban citizenship, committed to the local setting they regard as most conducive to their aspirations and attachments.

Beyond the local scale, some immigrants feel a strong provincial/regional affinity. Francophone immigrants, for instance, are overwhelmingly drawn to settle in Québec. Provincial funding support for minority religious schools has also encouraged the settlement of non-Christian immigrants in Québec. Nationally, citizenship has meant different things to different Canadians. Some have emphasized active citizen engagement in political and associational spheres, while others adopt a more passive, consumer-approach to claiming citizenship goods. Finally, at a global scale, transnationalism increasingly makes claims on the identity and behaviour of immigrants to Canada. The apparently shared currency of citizenship too, then, has turned into a highly varied set of belongings, identities, claims and responsibilities.

As the articles in this collection reveal, acknowledging multiple intersections of diversity adds nuance and depth to our understanding of immigration and citizenship. Some articles take as their starting point significant dimensions of immigrant diversity (eg. life-cycle location, sexual orientation, race, religion or region of settlement within Canada.) Others work back from specific spheres of immigrant experience (eg. labour market integration, housing access, occupational health and safety benefits coverage) to assess the impacts of diverse newcomer identity markers.

The result is a reminder of the great variations in what it means to be an ‘immigrant-citizen’ in Canada.

Several articles explore age and life-cycle dynamics of immigration. Jean Lock Kunz argues for immigrants’ integration needs to be understood through a ‘life-course lens.’ She shows how policy and program attentiveness to the different stages of immigrant integration could materially improve a newcomer’s adaptation to Canada. Reporting on their pan-Canadian study of immigrant and refugee children from close to twenty different homelands, Morton Beiser *et al* make a compelling case that the health status of young immigrants is under-researched. Among the significant determinants of newcomer youngsters’ mental health, they contend, are: age at migration, refugee status, visible minority

status and family income. Complimenting this is an article by Hieu Van Ngo and Barbara Schleifer examining the particular needs of immigrant children and youth, and the challenges posed for service agencies and government. At the other end of the age spectrum, Douglas Durst cautions that generalizations about immigrants and aging can lead us astray. Thus, he shows, the assumption that immigrants are young is erroneous, and the needs of the elderly will vary depending (among other things) on the length of their residency in Canada. Tracy Wityk and Myrta Reyes illustrate the sensitivities required for successful immigrant senior services with a case study of one agency's approach to caring for immigrant seniors.

Two articles focus on the treatment of same-sex couples in immigration law. Marika Willms examines the changes to Canadian immigration law which first permitted the legal entry of gays and lesbians into Canada, and then added same-sex couples to the family class of immigrants. Brian Ray effectively demonstrates the greater spousal immigration sponsorship rights available to gay and lesbian bi-national couples in Canada than in the United States. Both Willms and Ray contend that Canadian immigration policies have been responsive to considerations of social inclusion and the reality of family formations.

Challenging assumptions about race in Canada is the subject of two articles. Joseph Mensah convincingly shows that the Black community in Canada is extraordinarily diverse, not the homogenous presence it is often portrayed to be. And Mythili Rajiva cautions us not to think automatically of visible minorities as immigrants. Assessing the generation gap between immigrant parents and their Canadian-born children, Rajiva emphasizes the distinctive status of Canadian-born visible minority children.

Two articles address Canada's increasing religious diversity. Paul Bramadat examines the interplay of immigration, ethnicity and religious practice. He shows how our understanding of religious belief systems has not kept pace with the unprecedented patterns of religious observance now evident in Canada. Solange Lefebvre identifies a host of challenges liberal democracies face making place for religion in the public sphere. Setting boundaries of state and religion, she shows, in such realms as government, the courts, schools and health care can be problematic and paradoxical.

Two papers in this collection take the perspective of regions under-represented by immigrant settlement in Canada. Jason Azmier and Chedley Belkhodja arrive at similar conclusions for western Canada and francophone New Brunswick respectively. Both areas would benefit from more immigrant settlements, and part of the solution lies in greater local acceptance of immigrant diversity. Azmier reviews impediments to immigrant settlement in a variety of western cities, and Belkhodja perceptively shows how francophone community perceptions to immigrants differ in western and Atlantic.

Two papers explore language as a marker of identity and integration. Françoise Armand and Diane Dagenais discuss multi-lingual awareness as a public good, and the role schools play in its development. Jack Jedwab shows how ethnicity and place of residence affect minority community preservation of mother tongue among diverse groups, and their acquisition of one of Canada's official languages.

Considerable concern has recently focused on evidence of deteriorating economic conditions of immigrants in Canada. Five articles address this situation with shared concerns. Grant Schellenberg and Feng Hou carefully present the data on adverse immigrant economics, and review a range of explanations for the difficulties newcomers now face. Patrick Mackenzie and Clarence Lockhead survey the advanced human capital immigrants bring to Canada, and identifies key measures required to enhance newcomer labour market integration. J.S. Frideres emphasizes the roles discrimination and government inaction play in the economic difficulties faced by immigrants. Grace-Edward Galabuzi places the problems in a broader context of globalization, a changing labour market and the racialization of poverty in Canada. Kareem Sadiq suggests that everyday practices at the workplace create barriers to the acceptance and advancement of visible minorities.

A cluster of articles explore the links between immigrants, housing and homelessness. Michael Farrell presents insightful data on the housing conditions of immigrants in Canada. Then he explores how newcomer diversities and marginalization makes recent immigrants vulnerable to homelessness. Rick Enns shows how rising immigrant poverty rates and discrimination against visible minority immigrants prevent core housing needs being met. Importantly, Fran Klodawsky *et al.* demonstrate that paths to homelessness for immigrants and non-immigrants in Canada differ significantly. Accordingly, Klodawsky and colleagues contend, differing solutions are required to assure housing for immigrants and non-immigrants. Yet all articles agree that part of the solution to homelessness lies in renewed government commitment to social housing. In interview, Canada's Minister of Labour and Housing – the Hon. Joe Fontana – explains the renewed research and policy initiatives underway to address homelessness among newcomers. In an interview with Canada's Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, the Hon. Joe Volpe addresses the goals and administrative challenges underlying Canada's immigration system.

Relatively little academic research has been devoted to recent working class immigrants in Canada. Foreign-born professionals and entrepreneurs have garnered significantly more attention. S. Gravel *et al.* provide a welcome counterbalance, with their article on immigrant workers injured on the job. The authors convincingly demonstrate that immigrant workers fare considerably worse than non-immigrant workers after they have been hurt at work. They call on all stakeholders in the field of occupational health and safety to be more attentive to the particular needs and vulnerabilities of immigrant workers.

While remarkably wide-ranging, the essays in this collection do not cover all the important identities intersecting with immigration. Thus for instance, the dynamics of gender, (dis)ability and ethnicity require greater attention. Unfortunately, authors who had agreed to contribute articles on these topics were, in the end, unable to do so.

However literature reviews on these subjects can be found on-line at [http://canada.metropolis.net/events/Diversity/litreview\\_Index\\_e.htm](http://canada.metropolis.net/events/Diversity/litreview_Index_e.htm)

The articles assembled in this collection demonstrate that immigration researchers and policy-makers do best when they keep sight of identity intersectionalities, and the different (often unequal) ways citizens experience being Canadian.

# INTERVIEW WITH THE HONOURABLE JOE VOLPE

## Minister of Citizenship and Immigration



**In the recent past, critics of Canada’s immigration system have called into question the two most cited rationales for immigration policy in Canada: first, that immigration will address the aging of the population and, second, that economic benefits accrue from having a larger population. Are critiques of these rationales valid? Do population growth and economic benefits continue to be the primary rationales for immigration? What other rationales underpin Canada’s continued commitment to long-term large-scale immigration?**

It is correct to say that immigration will not change the age structure of the Canadian population, but immigration is key to maintaining labour force growth as Canadians age. Having a skilled labour force is a key element in Canada’s economic growth and prosperity, and immigration can help address skill shortages as they arise and allow Canadian firms to prosper. Smaller provinces are looking to immigration to supply needed labour – as seen by the interest in the provincial nominee program and by new provincial immigration strategies being announced across the country. We also need to consider what other potential benefits immigrants might bring, including the extent to which Canada’s growing diversity creates valuable networks that extend beyond Canada.

Public opinion continues to support immigration to Canada at current levels. To say that Canada’s immigration is large-scale is perhaps incorrect. Over the past decade, immigration to Canada has averaged around 0.6 to 0.7 % of the population, down from 0.9 % in the early 1990s. Many countries are looking to increase their levels of immigration – and particularly the skilled component. Australia, for example, has announced the highest level of immigration to that country in over a decade and the most highly skilled ever. So Canada is not alone in this respect.

What considerations are weighed when deciding on the number of newcomers that Canada accepts every year? Is any consideration given to potential issues that will arise from diversity within the newcomer cohort and the resources that may be needed to address them, such as language skill upgrading, or public education campaigns to ensure that the “host” society is willing to embrace the diverse newcomers?

The Immigration Levels Plan is part of the Annual Report that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is required to table in Parliament under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) every year. The Plan details by immigrant category the number of new permanent residents Canada intends to receive in the upcoming year.

A range of considerations is taken into account in setting immigration levels. These include goals such as helping to meet the labour market needs of our cities and communities, fostering family reunification, and honouring humanitarian principles of refugee protection. The interests of our provincial and territorial partners and the need to improve immigrant outcomes, for instance, through investments and collaborative initiatives in labour market language training and foreign credential recognition, are other important priorities that are taken into consideration in setting immigration levels.

The Immigration Levels Plan is approved each year by Cabinet and is managed within the announced range based on available resources.

Today there is growing interest in this area of shared jurisdiction and one of the challenges is to ensure that provinces, communities, cities, employers and others are able to play a greater role in long-term immigration planning. Ensuring that these diverse voices are heard may mean that we need to create new opportunities for collaboration on the challenges of social and economic integration.

That being said, Canada has a strong reputation with respect to integration. Viewing integration as a two-way process enables newcomers to settle, adapt and integrate into Canadian society while acknowledging the need for welcoming communities that respect diversity and are open to change. To support this approach we use a model that has four essential elements:

- 1) Canadian orientation abroad;
- 2) reception in Canada at ports of entry;
- 3) a range of settlement services and programs including language training, HOST program that pairs newcomers with an in-Canada host to support settlement and integration, resettlement assistance for government-assisted refugees; and,
- 4) ultimately the ability to apply for Canadian citizenship.

**Recognizing that multiculturalism was a policy that affected all of the elements of the Government of Canada, the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* obliges the Government of Canada to table an annual report with Parliament on how the 52 departments and agencies of government implement this act. Why is there no similar report on how these same departments and agencies work to facilitate the settlement and integration of newcomers to Canada?**

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) derives its mandate from the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) as well as the *Citizenship Act*. With respect to *collaboration between partners*, IRPA states that it should be “construed and applied in a manner that facilitates cooperation between the Government of Canada, provincial governments, foreign states, international organizations and non-governmental organizations” [IRPA 3(3) c]. There is no legislative requirement for an annual report on interdepartmental collaboration as in the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*.

Nonetheless, as outlined in CIC’s 2005-2006 Report on Plans and Priorities, the Department will continue to work closely with federal and provincial partners, municipalities, the private and voluntary sectors, and other stakeholders so that Canada continues to attract and welcome people from all over the world. CIC works in conjunction with various working groups and committees in the development of its policies and programs, such as the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group on Settlement and Integration, the Settlement and Integration Joint Policy and Program Council (JPPC) as well as an interdepartmental group of 14 federal departments and agencies working on the development and implementation of a coordinated federal approach.

CIC’s Departmental Performance Report compares the achievements of the Department against the performance expectations and commitments as set out in the Report on Plans and Priorities. In 2003-2004, CIC partnered with other government departments and stakeholders on various initiatives to enhance settlement and integration services, including the Government of Canada’s Going to Canada – Immigration Portal, Enhanced Language Training and Official Language minority communities.

Further information on CIC’s Report on Plans and Priorities for 2005-2006 as well as CIC’s Departmental Performance Report for 2003-2004 can be found on the Treasury Board Secretariat website at [www.tbs-sct.gc.ca](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca).

**The most recent budget contains sections explicitly addressing the concerns of Seniors, Aboriginal Peoples, the Disabled, and Youth, yet deals with newcomers under an “investments” category. In subsuming immigrants within another category, this structure seems to**

**suggest that the Government of Canada takes the needs of this important group of Canadians less seriously than other subsets of the Canadian population. How would you respond?**

A government should be judged on action rather than rhetoric, and Budget 2005 commits substantial new funding for initiatives to address settlement and integration issues as well as necessary improvements to delivering better service to potential newcomers to Canada.

This \$398 million infusion into the program provides ample evidence that the government is responding to the needs of new Canadians and of those who wish to make Canada their home. In particular, funding in this Budget will address such issues as foreign credential recognition, an enhanced Going to Canada immigration portal, language training, and improving labour market outcomes.

Budget 2005 clearly demonstrates the government’s commitment to investing in people, both from an economic and a social and cultural perspective. A key goal is to maximize the participation of these important contributors to our economy and to our communities. The Budget is one way of achieving this objective, but it is not the only way.

I have asked my department to take on the issue of undocumented workers. We also need to look at how we can improve processing times with a view to improving efficiency of service and delivery times. We are taking on the challenge of current inventory backlogs, reforming the temporary workers program, and better integrating foreign students. Building on the announcements in Budget 2005, we will continue to work on improving the recognition of foreign credentials for skilled workers and increased access to language training to assist immigrants in achieving their full potential as new Canadians.

These are just some of the tasks we, in cooperation with our partners and stakeholders, are taking on to improve the prospects of newcomers. It is an ambitious agenda but one which appropriately demonstrates the value that the Government places on the contributions made by immigrants who have chosen, and who continue to choose Canada as their destination of choice.

Family reunification is a perennial political hot potato, but one that has heated up of late. The primary concern appears to be that parents and grandparents will do little to either attenuate the aging of the population or to contribute actively to the economy. Is there any research evidence that either proves or disproves this widely held view? Would including immigrant seniors as an area of key concern under the newly minted Seniors’ Secretariat lead to a better understanding of the experiences of newcomer seniors and thus guide better policy development in this area?

It is correct that parents and grandparents will do little to attenuate the aging of the population, but that is not the objective of this particular program. It is part of family reunification, reflecting the importance of extended families in many cultures. I would encourage the Seniors’ Secretariat to look at the provision of services to all seniors, including immigrants. This information would be helpful to me and to other departments in formulating policies related to our respective mandates.



# INTERVIEW WITH THE HONOURABLE RAYMOND CHAN

**Minister of State (Multiculturalism)**



**Multicultural diversity in Canada is fed both by birth rates of Canadian-born minorities and by continuing large-scale immigration. Can you look ahead and project what the visible minority, religious and linguistic composition of the population is likely to be in 2017?**

Multiculturalism is a fundamental Canadian value. Canada has, to a great extent, leveraged the benefits of its demographic diversity. The great majority of Canadians support multiculturalism, which has enriched their country's social, cultural, economic and political life.

Canada continues to be increasingly diverse and government needs to ensure that policies and programs meet the needs of a diverse country. The Multiculturalism Program recently partnered with Statistics Canada to develop demographic projections of Canada's population in 2017, which will mark 150 years since confederation. The results are published in *Population Projections of Visible Minority Groups, Canada, Provinces, and Regions – 2001-2017*, available from Statistics Canada. The study is based on five scenarios presenting a range of growth rates in the population. It estimates that by 2017 Canada's visible minority population will represent 19% to 23% of the total population. In actual numbers, that means there will be between 7.0 and 9.3 million visible minorities living in Canada. In some cities, such as Toronto and Vancouver, if current trends continue, visible minorities will likely become the majority.

Canada is also changing in terms of its religions. In 2001, the percentage of people of non-Christian denominations was 6.3%. According to projections made by Statistics Canada, based on existing trends, the percentage of people of non-Christian denominations in 2017 will fall between 9.2% and 11.2% of the total population.

All this is to say that demographic diversity is a Canadian reality and it is incumbent on us to maximize its value to the benefit of all Canadians.

**In much of the discourse in other immigrant-receiving countries, religious pluralism in general, and rapidly increasing Muslim populations in particular, has become one of the most discussed aspects of larger scale immigration policy. How is the Multiculturalism Program addressing religious diversity?**

One of the underlying principles of the Multiculturalism Program is to ensure that Canadians of all faiths and backgrounds feel welcome and have an equal opportunity to participate in society. We recognize that some groups experience discrimination, including Muslims, whose numbers grew by 129% between the 1991 and 2001 Censuses, compared to a 5% growth for Roman Catholics, Canada's largest religious group.

We work with a number of government and non-governmental partners to promote respect for all Canadians regardless of religious affiliation and to gain a better understanding of religious intolerance in Canada. In fact, in 2005, our partners at Metropolis will publish a special edition of the *Journal of International Migration and Integration* that focusses on religion and migration, and I look forward to reading it. In addition, the Government of Canada has conducted public opinion surveys to understand better the attitudes of Canadians toward a variety of minority groups, including Muslims. The results from *Population Projections of Visible Minority Groups, Canada, Provinces, and Regions – 2001-2017*, a project that based on current trends Canada's non-Christian population will rise from 6.3% to between 9.2% and 11.2% in 2017.

With respect to the Muslim community, the Government of Canada is concerned about acts of religious intolerance and other forms of discrimination against Muslims just as we are about acts of intolerance and other forms of discrimination against any other religious or ethnocultural minority group. The Ethnic Diversity Survey, which was conducted in 2002, showed that 30% of Muslims said that they had experienced discrimination or unfair treatment based on their ethnocultural characteristics. This is unacceptable. The Government will continue to combat

discrimination against all identifiable groups, be they ethnocultural, visible or religious.

**Ethnicity is an exceedingly complex identity marker and, until the advent of the Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS), the Census was the only large scale survey conducted in Canada with an adequate sample size to allow for analysis of individual ethnicities. How were the data collected by the EDS used to better our understanding of ethnicity?**

The Ethnic Diversity Survey was developed by Statistics Canada in partnership with the Department of Canadian Heritage. The survey itself was conducted from April to August of 2002. Statistics Canada officially released the results in September 2003. The survey provided the Government of Canada with information to understand better the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of people in Canada and how these relate to their lives in Canada today.

The survey results have already been analyzed to examine the sense of belonging that various ethno-cultural groups have to their own ethnic group and to Canada. One finding we have noted is that, in general, ethnocultural groups with a relatively strong sense of belonging to their ethnic group tend to have a strong sense of belonging to the country. For instance, 67% of South Asians living in Canada said they have a strong sense of belonging to their ethnic or cultural group, while 88% said they had a strong sense of belonging to Canada. I believe that such research shows that maintaining one's ethnic heritage does not tend to diminish a person's attachment to Canada.

The Ethnic Diversity Survey also gave us a much better understanding of discrimination in Canada. For example, we know that 36% of visible minorities said they had experienced discrimination or unfair treatment in the previous five years based on ethno-cultural characteristics. According to the survey, 50% of Blacks in Canada have experienced discrimination. These figures reinforced the need for the Government of Canada to continue to fight racism and discrimination. This underscores the importance of our ongoing efforts to foster inclusion through initiatives such as *A Canada for All: Canada's Action Plan Against Racism*, which offers action against racism on a number of fronts and in a number of key sectors of society.

**Extensive work is being done on racial discrimination in Canada, both present and past. In the last budget, funds were announced for both *A Canada for All: Canada's Action Plan against Racism* and for commemorative and educational initiatives to highlight the contributions that ethno-cultural groups have made to Canadian society. Can you outline the main components of the Action Plan and which communities' experiences will be the focus of the commemoration and education campaigns?**

Thank you very much for the question. It gives me the opportunity to talk about two important announcements in Budget 2005 aimed at fighting racism and fostering cohesion in our society.

The first one is the announcement of \$56 million over five years for *A Canada for All: Action Plan against Racism* (Action Plan), and the second one is the announcement of

\$25 million over three years for educational and commemorative initiatives for communities that were affected by wartime measures and immigration restrictions.

I will comment first on the Action Plan: I am proud to say that it is Canada's first-ever government-wide plan to combat racism. It outlines a series of new and continuing measures that the Government of Canada has committed to in order to achieve a stronger Canada, a Canada that has a shared vision of an inclusive and cohesive society.

The Action Plan builds on the work done by the Multiculturalism Program to fight racial discrimination. It addresses gaps that have been identified in key priority areas. Its objectives are:

- a) To combat racism and strengthen social cohesion through anti-racism and anti-discrimination measures;
- b) To enhance the implementation of Canada's legislated human rights framework that provides for substantive equality; and
- c) Through the example of domestic initiatives to demonstrate leadership and co-operation in the international fight against racism.

We know we have a strong legal framework to address racism. However, this is not enough. That is why the Action Plan emphasizes the importance of building partnerships between governments and civil society. The federal commitment is clear: departments and agencies are working together to implement policies, programs and activities to make a difference in our society. Further, the Action Plan invites all Canadians to work together in six priority areas:

- a) Assist victims and groups vulnerable to racism and related forms of discrimination;
- b) Develop forward-looking approaches to promote diversity and combat racism;
- c) Strengthen the role of civil society;
- d) Strengthen regional and international cooperation;
- e) Educate children and youth on diversity and anti-racism; and
- f) Counter hate and bias.

By embracing this Action Plan, Canadians move closer to realising a shared vision for a truly inclusive society – *a Canada for all*. The Government of Canada is committed to building a society where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, and where no one is left behind.

The second budget announcement relates to the development and implementation of a program that will fund educational and commemorative initiatives. These will be aimed at highlighting the contributions to Canadian society of ethnocultural groups who were affected by wartime measures and immigration restrictions.

Through this program, we want to strengthen the future. We want Canadians to learn from the historical incidents which we are not proud of and understand the contributions made by different communities to our country. Our goal as a government is to foster cohesion, strengthen a shared identity and work together to ensure that Canadians, while learning from the past, are moving forward to build a better future for people from all backgrounds and for generations to come.

**There is considerable confusion among Canadians about the mandate of the Multiculturalism Program at Canadian Heritage and of Citizenship and Immigration (CIC). There is a perception that CIC's mandate is to facilitate the integration of newcomers into Canadian society for their first three years and thereafter Canadian Heritage and other government departments and agencies are meant to ensure their full inclusion in the social, economic, political and cultural facets of Canadian society. Presumably the much vaunted two-way-street approach of integration in Canada, where newcomers and Canadian society and institutions are all supposed to evolve, implies that these two portfolios must work hand in hand. Can you describe how they work with one another?**

Over the past 33 years of the application of the Multiculturalism Policy, multiculturalism has become a shared value in Canada, a key element of our citizenship. The Multiculturalism Program supports and promotes multiculturalism by facilitating opportunities to support economic, social, political and cultural inclusion to assist people from all backgrounds as they strive to participate and to contribute fully to Canadian society.

The Multiculturalism Program works with Citizenship and Immigration Canada and other departments, agencies and Crown corporations in developing policies and programs that reflect Canada as a pluralistic society. The Program also works with community and voluntary

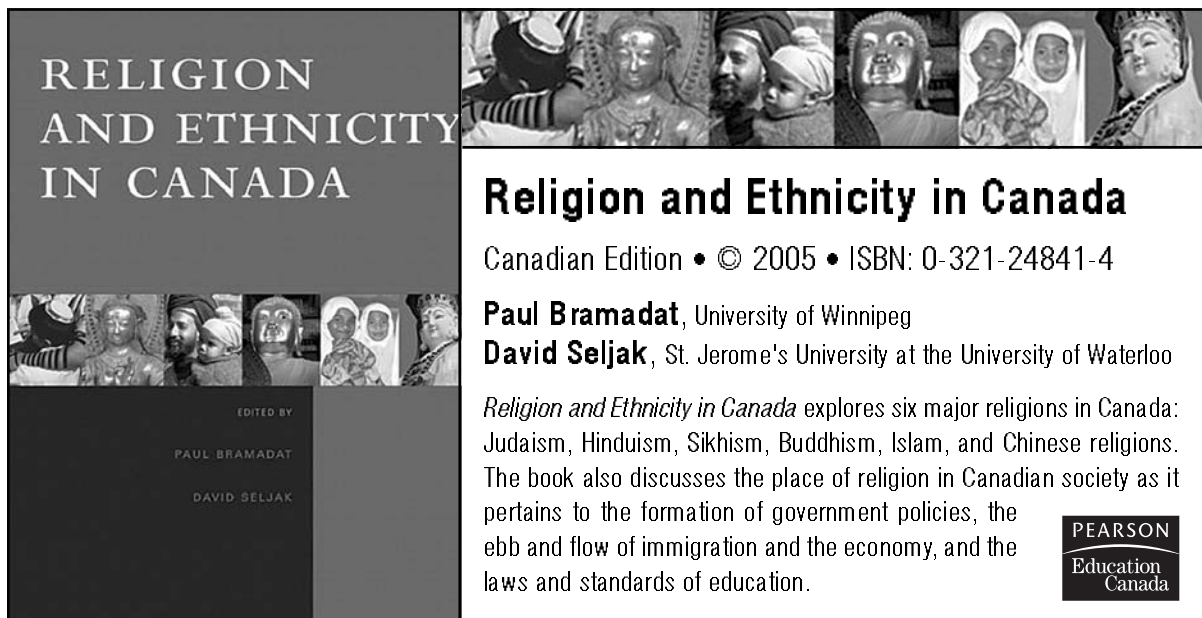
organizations to build their capacity, strengthen ethno-cultural and ethnoracial communities, and enhance cross-cultural understanding. This complements the work done by CIC and is an integral part of the integration process which continues beyond officially becoming a Canadian citizen.

More specifically, the Multiculturalism Program focusses on four mutually supporting priorities. These are:

- fostering shared citizenship;
- promoting cross-cultural understanding;
- encouraging all institutions – both in the public and the private sector – to reflect our country's diversity in their services, policies, and recruitment and promotion practices; and
- combatting racism and discrimination.

The Annual Report on the Operation of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*, tabled in Parliament by me as the Minister of State (Multiculturalism), provides an opportunity for federal departments, agencies, and Crown corporations to showcase policies, programs, services and initiatives that have furthered multiculturalism in Canada.

The Multiculturalism Program will continue to work with all government and private sector stakeholders to support efforts that reinforce fundamental Canadian values, bridge differences and facilitate the participation of all Canadians in the economic, social, political and cultural life of Canada.



**RELIGION AND ETHNICITY IN CANADA**

**Religion and Ethnicity in Canada**  
 Canadian Edition • © 2005 • ISBN: 0-321-24841-4

**Paul Bramadat**, University of Winnipeg  
**David Seljak**, St. Jerome's University at the University of Waterloo

*Religion and Ethnicity in Canada* explores six major religions in Canada: Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Islam, and Chinese religions. The book also discusses the place of religion in Canadian society as it pertains to the formation of government policies, the ebb and flow of immigration and the economy, and the laws and standards of education.

EDITED BY  
 PAUL BRAMADAT  
 DAVID SELJAK

PEARSON  
 Education  
 Canada

# INTERVIEW WITH THE HONOURABLE JOE FONTANA

## Minister of Labour and Housing



**Newcomers are one of the fastest growing segments of the homeless population in Canada. Can you describe what the National Homelessness Initiative is doing to understand this phenomenon and devise solutions?**

We are aware that some newcomers to Canada, particularly those who arrived over the last ten years, are exposed to a greater risk of becoming homeless. Our research shows that one out of three immigrants face core housing challenges in Canada.

We have been tracking and studying the newcomers with respect to their housing needs through the National Research Program (NRP) under the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI). Approximately \$7 million in funding over three years have been allocated to examine the characteristics of homelessness and its causes so that effective responses can be devised. In particular, four research projects were funded through NRP to gain a better understanding of the housing/homelessness issues that face today's immigrants and refugees.

We have also formed partnerships with other organizations such as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association and Metropolis to increase understanding of issues related to newcomers and homelessness and to facilitate the sharing of knowledge.

Recently, we have concluded national consultations on the development of a new Canadian Housing Framework. Many individuals and groups who deal with newcomers' housing and homelessness issues participated in the consultations and provided us with valuable input.

We believe that housing is a key determinant for better health and justice outcome. The projects, partnerships and consultation outcomes will help us develop effective responses at the local and national level that would ensure a seamless continuum of housing and support for all Canadians including newcomers to Canada.

**For the first time, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has announced that immigration is one of their key areas of focus for research. Can you describe some of the work that has resulted from this new focus?**

First, let me tell you about a CMHC research report identifying the housing options available to refugee claimants in the Niagara Region, their housing information needs, and how these needs might be met. The research indicated that Refugee claimants generally arrive with the least planning, financial resources, Canadian contacts and skills. They typically face more difficulties than other immigrants. Their first accommodation is in shelters while they seek affordable housing. A shortage of both shelter space and affordable rental housing was identified.

The most important housing information resources for refugees are their resettlement counsellor, shelters, hostels, multicultural centres, and school settlement counsellors. The research provided recommendations to improve the housing situation of refugees and to assist the refugee support system. CMHC presented the research results in the Regional Municipality of Niagara and is considering how it might improve the usefulness of the housing information it currently makes available. This includes (see [www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca)) *The Newcomers Guide to Canadian Housing*, providing basic, plain language, general advice to immigrants on the Canadian housing system, and *Your Guide to Renting a Home*, containing a comprehensive overview of tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities, as well as rental practices in all provinces and territories. Both these guides are also useful to immigrants' service providers, counsellors and language training personnel.

Secondly, CMHC measures the housing conditions of immigrants, using data from the Census of Canada (see *CMHC Research Highlights*, Socio-Economic Series 04-042, 2001 Census Housing Series Issue 7: Immigrant Households). While recent immigrant households reported, on average, lower ownership rates and higher incidences of *core housing need* (explained below) than non-

immigrants, the housing conditions of immigrants and non-immigrants become increasingly similar the longer an immigrant household has lived in Canada. CMHC considers a household to be in *core housing need* if it lives in less than, and cannot access, acceptable housing; i.e., housing that does not need major repair, is not overcrowded, and which costs less than 30% of the household's before-tax income.

Finally, CMHC supports Metropolis, an international forum for comparative research and public policy development about population migration, cultural diversity and the challenges of immigrant integration. In Canada, Metropolis includes research centres at five Canadian universities. Metropolis studies (see [www.canada.metropolis.net](http://www.canada.metropolis.net)) on housing and homelessness have been focussed mainly on Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver where most immigrants settle.

**There is some evidence to suggest that newcomers' choices of residential location are strongly influenced by the availability of affordable housing and services deemed to be important to them (i.e. access to public transportation, high quality schools, sites of worship etc). As a result the location of social housing and its density become critical considerations in where newcomers live, at least for their first few years in Canada as they find their feet. What does the Government of Canada do to ensure that social housing is made available in a variety of neighbourhoods and is not just concentrated in areas deemed undesirable?**

Yes, mapping of social housing projects by tenant characteristics tends to show a concentration of recent immigrants and ethnic and visible minorities in certain social and affordable housing projects. Concentration is not necessarily a negative situation, however, in that recent immigrants may choose to live close together when they first arrive in Canada for mutual support, and to enjoy common languages and cultures. In fact, many non-profit and co-operative housing projects are owned and operated by ethnic, cultural and religious groups serving newcomers.

Older public housing projects tend to have the larger concentrations of marginalized populations due to their size and exclusive targeting to low income groups. However, there was a shift to mixed income non-profit and co-operative housing in the 1970s, and a tendency to build smaller scale targeted projects when full targeting of federal subsidies for new projects was reintroduced in the mid-1980s.

Provinces are primarily responsible for the delivery of current Federal-Provincial cost-shared Affordable Housing Program and most favour smaller-scale, mixed income housing. Provinces and municipalities also determine land use and zoning policies which dictate where social and

affordable housing is developed to ensure diversity at the neighbourhood level.

**There is an increasing body of research that suggests that Canadian work experience is essential to helping newcomers get their foot in the door. What does the Labour Program do to ensure that newcomers get this first critical experience?**

As Minister of Labour and Housing responsible for the implementation of the *Employment Equity Act* and the *Canada Labour Code*, it is my goal to achieve fair and safe workplaces across Canada. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we need to see the changing face of Canada's workforce reflected in our workplaces. Canada has a diverse labour force of 16 million people with the skills to advance an increasingly knowledge-based, productive, competitive economy. Recognizing the importance of human resources, we must help workplaces obtain the participation of all Canadians. Canada cannot afford to waste or under-utilize our skilled population, especially by newcomers who may need help starting a career and integrating into the community. We must ensure that competence and qualifications are the most important criteria for hiring, retention and promotion within our workplaces.

*The Employment Equity Act* is a pillar in the Canadian model of inclusion and citizen participation. The Act applies to federally regulated private sector employers (including Crown corporations) with 100 or more employees, to the Federal Public Service and to Separate Employers. The Federal Contractors Program, which is referenced in the Act, is a separate employment equity initiative that covers provincially regulated employers employing 100 or more and that have federal contracts valued at \$200,000 or more. The Act commits employers to implement an employment equity plan that targets the removal of barriers and the accommodation of the four designated groups, women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and visible minorities. Employment equity opens the way for new Canadians to reach their full potential, an essential condition to achieving dignity, respect, both in the workplace, communities and homes. We must remove barriers to employment and advancement facing Canadians.

*The Canada Labour Code* also plays an important role in creating modern, flexible and productive workplaces within the federal government's areas of responsibility. This is achieved through a stable industrial relations climate, compliance with occupational health and safety standards as well as labour standards.

Both the Code and the *Employment Equity Act* contribute to Canada's success of achieving an inclusive labour market and caring society in which fairness and equality of opportunity are the measures of our progress.

Canada has a diverse labour force of 16 million people with the skills to advance an increasingly knowledge-based, productive, competitive economy. Recognizing the importance of human resources, we must help workplaces obtain the participation of all Canadians. Canada cannot afford to waste or under-utilize our skilled population.

My portfolio, Labour and Housing, is part of the larger Department of Human Resources and Skills Development. Other areas of the Department focus on skills development, labour market issues, immigrant integration and foreign credential recognition among others. Together, we strive to secure an adequate and highly skilled workforce for the Canada of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**In the last few months you have spoken out about the need for a comprehensive national plan that includes a housing spectrum. Can you describe how this spectrum would ensure that newcomers are able to find the affordable and appropriate housing that is necessary for their successful integration into Canadian society?**

In the 2004 Speech from the Throne, this government acknowledged that shelter is the foundation upon which healthy communities and individual dignity are built. While the majority of Canadians are well housed, I know that 1.7 million households are in core housing need. For many, a combination of housing and appropriate supports or services is required to facilitate safe, adequate and affordable housing solutions. Many newcomers are particularly vulnerable – with one out of three experiencing core housing need – finding themselves disproportionately represented within this national figure.

My vision is one where all levels of government and the private, voluntary, and non-profit sectors will work in partnership to ensure that Canada's housing continuum supports the needs of all individuals and families. One of the messages I heard while I traveled across the country in January and February is that Canadians believe the federal government has a role to play in setting national goals – where housing is seen as a pathway to social inclusion. This is why I am currently developing a partnership-driven Canadian Housing Framework, to consider all aspects of the housing and homelessness challenges facing individuals and families, ensuring a seamless continuum of support is in place across the country.

## **ACS Student Forum: Canadian Studies in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The Westin Edmonton Hotel and Conference Centre, October 29-30, 2005

This forum will give Canadian Studies students the opportunity to meet and discuss the relevance of a Canadian Studies degree with professors, civil servants, journalists and other professionals, as well as to participate in sessions on various aspects of Canadian Studies research. Students will also be invited to present research papers.

Information and a preliminary program for this youth forum are posted at

**[www.acs-aec.ca](http://www.acs-aec.ca)**

Students who wish to attend are asked to speak to their Canadian Studies Program Administrator at their university, or to contact the ACS directly at (514) 925-3097.

Any student who would like to submit a proposal for a paper presentation is asked to please send the following information by e-mail to Carla Peck, ACS Student

Representative: **[peckc@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:peckc@interchange.ubc.ca)**

- 1. Name, address, phone number and e-mail**
- 2. Name of academic institution**
- 3. A 200 word abstract describing proposed paper**



ACS • AEC  
Association for Canadian Studies • Association d'études canadiennes

**Deadline for submissions is June 30, 2005**

# NEGOTIATING THE NEXUS OF IMMIGRATION, SEXUALITY AND CITIZENSHIP

## Canadian and American Comparisons

### ABSTRACT

This article proposes an overview of the key differences, for gays and lesbians, in Canada and American immigration policy. The authors explore sexual and immigration implications in these neighbouring countries, which both have long-standing immigrant and refugee settlement traditions.

For many American gay men and lesbians, the election of George W. Bush to a second term in November 2004 put into stark relief the differences in citizenship rights that they enjoy relative to their heterosexual friends and family members. In the run-up to election day, gays and lesbians bore witness to the United States Congress' attempt to pass a constitutional amendment to deny the possibility of same-sex marriage, as well as a sweeping array of measures by state governments to repudiate any public or, in some cases, private recognition of same-sex relationships. The differences in citizenship rights between homosexual and heterosexual Americans affect many areas of daily life – from hospital visitation to pension benefits – but are especially apparent for those gay Americans who are in bi-national same-sex couple relationships. For these people, the lack of recognition by the federal government of the legitimacy of these relationships and the inability to 'legitimize' such relationships through marriage means that gay Americans cannot sponsor their partners for permanent residence in the United States. Many state and local governments in the United States have successfully passed laws that ban many forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. These laws do not, however, have any capacity to address immigration problems encountered by same-sex bi-national couples because the federal government retains sole jurisdiction in immigration policy. Family reunification is a cornerstone of contemporary American immigration policy, but sponsorship of a same-sex foreign-born partner is not an option that lesbians and gays can exercise as this provision crucially hinges on marital status.

After decades of broadly similar immigration and refugee policies between Canada and the United States, the recognition by Canada of same-sex bi-national relationships for immigration purposes highlights one of several important cleavages in social policy between Canada and the United States. It also emphasizes a significantly different understanding of the rights of citizenship and the ability of all citizens in each country, not just heterosexuals, to exercise their full rights as citizens in matters pertaining to the sponsorship of foreign nationals for immigration purposes. Given the significant differences that now exist between the two countries with regard to family reunification provisions and the recognition of same-sex relationships more generally, it is reasonable to ask if a point has been reached wherein many Americans will look to unify their families.

This short paper begins by outlining the major policy differences regarding immigration for gays and lesbians in Canada and the United States. The focus then shifts to the implications for these two neighbouring countries, each with deep histories of immigrant and refugee settlement, of adopting such different policy positions with regard to sexuality and immigration. Differences in family reunification provisions in Canadian and American immigration policy highlight important distinctions in understandings of 'family' and social citizenship rights, as well as emphasize the ways in which a state can use sexuality as a taken-for-granted way to distinguish between 'equal' citizens.

### Immigration Policy and Sponsorship of Same-Sex Partners

The Canadian situation with regard to same-sex partners and immigration could not be more different than that which presently exists in the United States.<sup>1</sup> In April 2000, the Canadian federal government passed Bill C-23 (*Benefits and Obligations Act*) that gave same-sex couples the same social and tax benefits as heterosexuals in common-law relationships. This Bill affected 68 federal

BRIAN RAY  
Department of Geography  
University of Ottawa

AUDREY KOBAYASHI  
Department of Geography  
University of Ottawa

statutes, including immigration law and regulations regarding the sponsorship of a common-law spouse for purposes of immigration. The ability of gay and lesbian Canadians to sponsor their same-sex partners was further entrenched under the family class provisions of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (Bill C-27) that was passed by parliament in 2002. The equality of same-sex relationships subsequently received further legal support in June 2003 when the Ontario Court of Appeal upheld a lower court ruling and recognized same-sex marriages. Since that time, six more Canadian provinces and one territory have legalized same-sex marriages after courts ruled that the restriction of the definition of marriage to a man and a woman is unconstitutional. The federal government has also tabled the *Civil Marriage Act* that will, if passed, extend the legal capacity to marry for civil purposes to same-sex couples across Canada.

In contrast, in the United States it is impossible for American citizens in same-sex relationships to use the family reunification provisions in current immigration law to sponsor their foreign-born partners. As the law is interpreted, any foreign national who marries or intends to marry a United States citizen or lawful permanent resident of *the opposite sex* is eligible for legal residence on the basis of marriage. There is no way for American citizens to petition for their same-sex partners to immigrate to the United States on the basis of their relationships. As a consequence, bi-national couples can legally remain together in the United States only if the foreign partner obtains a work or student visa, which is always of limited duration, or manages to convert such a temporary status into permanent residency by pursuing an elaborate and expensive labour certification process. Another option is for the foreign national to make a sexual orientation-based asylum claim by asserting past persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution in their country of origin because of their sexual orientation. This asylum option has been available to gays and lesbians since 1994, but only a small number of such asylum applications have been positively evaluated; obviously, it is only realistic for claimants from countries with particularly harsh human rights records. It has also become a more difficult option to exercise in recent years because of the filing deadline that requires that claimants apply for asylum within one year of arriving in the United States. Essentially this means that the foreign national needs to appreciate quite early in her/his stay in the United States that the government will recognize sexual orientation-based asylum claims, a fact that is not particularly well-known. The final option, and by far the most risky and

difficult over the long term, is to disappear into the “undocumented” or “illegal” population that is now estimated to be 10 million strong.<sup>2</sup>

In the United States, various types of non-discrimination policies and marriage and domestic partnership questions are regarded as states rights issues. While 25 states and the District of Columbia offer some protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, most limit that protection to public employees. Only 14 states and Washington (DC) extend the ban on employment discrimination based on sexual orientation to both the public and private sectors. Four states have whole or partially guarantees of same-sex spousal rights. No state has passed legislation that explicitly recognizes same-sex marriages, and only in Massachusetts have state courts interpreted the constitution in a manner that recognizes and legitimates same-sex marriages. In Vermont, as a consequence of court rulings that extended to same-sex couples the benefits and protections that flow from marriage under Vermont law, a parallel civil union system came into effect on July 1, 2000. Five other states and Washington (DC) have no law on the matter marriages or civil unions, and all of the rest have legislated the definition of marriage as between a man and woman, in line with the 1996 federal *Defense of Marriage Act*.

If American citizens and their foreign-national partners do marry in Massachusetts or obtain a civil union in Vermont, it does nothing to solve their immigration problem. Immigration law and policy is a federal responsibility, and the *Defense of Marriage Act* (DOMA) passed in 1996 by Congress, which defines marriages as between a man and woman, denies federal recognition of same-sex couples’ marriages even if such marriages are legally recognized by individual states. Only if DOMA were made invalid and/or the sponsorship provisions of existing immigration law changed<sup>3</sup> would it be possible for a gay or lesbian couple, married in a state that recognizes same-sex relationships, to use their marriage as a basis for immigration sponsorship.

### **Social Rights of Citizenship and a Migration North**

The inability of bi-national same-sex couples to use existing immigration law for sponsorship purposes has been a long-standing, if seldom recognized, problem for gay Americans. In the run-up to the November 2004 elections, a number of other policy debates took place in many states that directly impinge upon the social citizenship rights and material wellbeing of all gay Americans, and not just the fraction who encounter the immigration system. As a

The ability of gay and lesbian Canadians to sponsor their same-sex partners was further entrenched under the family class provisions of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (Bill C-27) that was passed by parliament in 2002.

The equality of same-sex relationships subsequently received further legal support in June 2003 when the Ontario Court of Appeal upheld a lower court ruling and recognized same-sex marriages.



consequence, many reports began to appear in the Canadian and American news media about the possibility that many Americans, who were uncomfortable with the Republican agenda set forth during the election, might choose to leave the United States for Canada and a handful of other countries. For instance, the *New York Times* on November 7 reported that: "Analysts were saying the election had been a referendum not so much on Iraq, the deficit, health care and jobs as on God, guns and gay marriage. Many Kerry voters [...] felt alienated by this new order in which divine intervention trumped rational argument...The impulse to flee to Canada was in the air, discussed in the schoolyard, at the office and on the phone with friends."<sup>4</sup> Many Americans were exasperated by various dimensions of American foreign and domestic policy that were discussed during the campaign, but lesbians and gay men directly experienced the election as a debate about their citizenship rights.

Most importantly, referenda held at the same time as the national election, which ostensibly sought to ban same-sex marriage in eleven states<sup>5</sup> through amendment of state constitutions, have been widely interpreted as constituting an all-out attack on gay rights. These referenda for the most part attempted to enshrine in state constitutions DOMA-like laws that are already in place and that already limit marriage rights to heterosexual couples. In eight of the eleven states, the measures also sought to bar any form of relationship recognition for same-sex couples and as such are an aggressive attack on social citizenship. Beyond the specification of marriage, these measures seek to prohibit a range of privileges commonly enjoyed by opposite-sex married couples, including health and insurance benefits, common property inheritance, and hospital visitation. In some states these measures also mean that *private* and *non-profit* employers will be prohibited from extending benefits to employees in same-sex relationships. The referenda passed by wide margins in every state, including Oregon (57%), a state that is usually considered to be socially liberal. Given the unwillingness of Americans to expand the definition of marriage in state law, it is unlikely that the federal government will move to address inequalities between heterosexual and homosexual couples in areas of federal jurisdiction.

The referenda results sent a strong message about the degree to which Americans interpret marriage and its privileges as a strictly heterosexual prerogative. Lost in much of the discussion are the implications of these decisions for the everyday lives of lesbians and gay men. As a lesbian resident of Oregon remarked after the voting results: "It's the weirdest thing to have politics be so incredibly personal [...] This is about the possibility that half of the state of Oregon thinks that I don't deserve to be treated equally as the majority of the people in the state. And I just can't fathom that [...]"<sup>6</sup>

Given the degree to which social and economic citizenship rights have become embroiled in the debate over definitions of marriage in the United States, it is not surprising that many other gays and lesbians have been considering much more seriously the option of moving to Canada. In regard to the question of either leaving the United States or staying on to fight for gay and lesbian equality, one reader wrote in *The Advocate*, a leading American gay and lesbian current affairs magazine with national distribution: "So [...] why not move to Canada? [...] Why not live in a country that supports and honors who you are? I can't think of a reason not to, aye."<sup>7</sup>

There are, of course, a limited number of lesbians and gays who can actually exercise this option. For those Americans involved in same-sex relationships with Canadian citizens, the ability of their Canadian partner to act as a sponsor under the family reunification provisions of the Immigration Act make emigration a real possibility. Moreover, well-educated, skilled and young (under 40), and English or French-speaking individuals have a very good chance of being admitted as permanent resident under the individual or economic class provisions of the Canadian *Immigration Act*. It is just such highly educated individuals, coming from urban American backgrounds, who are most likely to apply for permanent residence and to be accepted. But their acceptance as immigrants to Canada will not be based on their circumscribed social citizenship rights in the United States or their sexual identity; rather, it is their human capital that enables them to attain a sufficient number of points to be eligible as economic immigrants. Neither the sponsorship nor economic class options assist those lesbian and gay Americans who are not part of a bi-national relationship or do not possess sufficiently high levels of education and training to successfully obtain permanent residence status.

Judicial interpretations of rights under the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms have led to the development of an immigration policy with regard to same-sex couples that departs radically from that which exists in the United States, and offers a limited set of options to lesbian and gay men who wish to, or need to, leave the United States. Emigration to Canada for Americans, however, reveals a great deal about the limits of belonging and the practice of antigay discrimination. Given the existence of nondiscrimination laws in many states and municipalities, as well as the landmark 2003 Supreme Court decision in the *Lawrence v. Texas* case which overturned the last sodomy laws and extended the right to privacy, it is easy to imagine that antigay discrimination is a thing of the past in the United States. It is also somewhat easier to argue that lesbians and gays no longer experience discrimination and therefore efforts to extend rights protection, including marriage, is really only an attack on the

Given the degree to which social and economic citizenship rights have become embroiled in the debate over definitions of marriage in the United States, it is not surprising that many other gays and lesbians have been considering much more seriously the option of moving to Canada.

normative character of heterosexual marriage and/or an attempt to create “special rights” for a minority. As George Chauncey has argued, “Erasing the history of gay political disfranchisement makes it easier to vilify gay people as a powerful, conspiratorial class whose struggle for full equality threatens the American dream instead of fulfilling it.”<sup>8</sup> The issue of bi-national couples and immigration sponsorship, however, strongly demonstrates the limits of equality, as well as the state’s enthusiasm for discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Coupled with the recent referenda on marriage and same-sex rights, an immigration policy firmly linked to heterosexual marital status lays bare the real social and economic limits of citizenship for gay Americans. Beyond formal rights of citizenship lie those of social and cultural inclusion, and the need or desire for full rights and protection in law may well encourage many Americans – gay and straight – who *can* move to look north for a new home.

---

#### Notes

- 1 See “Canadian Immigration Law and Same-Sex Partners” article in this edition for a detailed description of the evolution of federal immigration policy regarding the recognition of same-sex relationships.
- 2 Passel, J., R. Capps & M. Fix. *Undocumented Immigrants: Facts and Figures*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2004.
- 3 *The Permanent Partners Immigration Act* (H.R.: 690) was introduced in the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress and sought to modify the *Immigration and Nationality Act* to provide same-sex partners of American citizens all the immigration rights that legal spouses currently enjoy. The bill did not enjoy broad enough support in the House of Representatives or the Senate to reach a vote.
- 4 “*Anemona Hartocollis*. Becoming The Land Of the Flee?” *New York Times* (Late Edition - East Coast). Nov 7, 2004. p. CY.1
- 5 Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Utah and Oregon.
- 6 “Constitutional Bans on Same-Sex Marriage Gain Widespread Support in 10 States.” *New York Times* (Late Edition - East Coast). Nov 3, 2004. p. 9
- 7 “Moving to Canada – Letters.” *The Advocate*, November 8, 2004.
- 8 Chauncey, George. *Why Marriage? The history shaping today’s debate over gay equality*. New York: Basic Books, p. 12, 2004.

---

#### Authors

Brian Ray is a social geographer who specializes in immigrant integration questions in North American and European cities. Beyond the fields of immigration and cultural diversity, Brian’s research also examines geographies of gender and sexuality in relation to social justice, as well as the socio-cultural meaning of neighborhood spaces for marginalized groups.

Dr. Audrey Kobayashi is the Director of the Institute of Women’s Studies and a full professor at Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. She teaches courses in racism and gender and is well known for her publications on issues of human rights, immigration, gender, racism, and on the history of Japanese Canadians. She is a National Director of the National Association of Japanese Canadians, a member of the team that negotiated Japanese Canadian redress, and a member of the Advisory Committee of the Japanese Canadian National Museum and Archives. ([www.janm.org](http://www.janm.org))

# CANADIAN IMMIGRATION LAW & SAME-SEX PARTNERS

## ABSTRACT

Social equity is at the very heart of policy makers' preoccupations, including those at Citizenship and Immigration Canada. This is reflected in the evolution of the definition of family members in the family class. Today, it includes common law or same-sex partners. This article traces the evolution of public policies in this area since 1990.

One of the primary goals of Canadian immigration is, and has historically been, to see that families are reunited in Canada. Over the years, though Canadian immigration law and policy has undergone considerable transformation, this commitment has remained firm. Both previous and current legislation allows Canadian citizens and permanent residents the ability to sponsor members of their family as immigrants to Canada. Exactly who is considered "family," and by that same virtue who could be sponsored as part of the family class, has however been subject to change in an attempt to keep pace with social realities.

Canadian society is one renowned for its diversity – it is a country filled with people who possess a multiplicity of identities, attachments and cultural investments. But to make effective policy in this environment is to do more than recognize the Canadian population as diverse, it is to appreciate and account for the intersecting and plural identities present. It is to understand that both Canadian and immigrant families do not always conform to a particular model. Immigration policy makers, as a necessity, must be progressive in their approach and reflect these societal changes in their decision making. Such has been the approach to modernizing the Canadian immigration policy as it relates to the family class, to the inclusion of considerations relating to sexual orientation and the social reality that family relationships necessarily include same-sex couples.

## IMMIGRATION POLICY EVOLUTION

Before 1976 homosexuals were among the list of inadmissible classes to Canada, a comment on the prevalent public attitudes of the time. With the passing of a new *Immigration Act* in 1977, this provision was repealed, permitting lesbians and gays legal access to the country. Though they could now enter Canada, this was only possible if they applied to immigrate as independent immigrants. It remained that only heterosexual Canadians could sponsor their partners in the family class. This group retained a strict membership, one which confined a sponsor's "spouse" to being "the party of the opposite sex to whom that person is joined in marriage." Notably absent were provisions for same-sex partners, in both the definition of sponsor and of marriage.

The coming into force in 1985 of section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (the equality rights provision) considerably influenced legislative reform in this area. Section 15 has also been critical in the measured development, since the early 1990s, of provincial and federal legislation to expand statutory entitlements of opposite sex conjugal couples to same-sex couples.<sup>1</sup>

Aware that same-sex couples were an increasing Canadian social reality, but also mindful of active Charter challenges and with concern over the susceptibility of their own legislation to be similarly challenged, the then-named Department of Employment and Immigration began processing immigration applications from common-law and same-sex partners. Initially this practice was facilitated using Regulation 2.1, which allowed exemptions from any regulation to facilitate admission to Canada where the Minister felt there were humanitarian or compassionate reasons to do so. Later, in June 1994, the processing of same-sex partner applications was further operationalized with instructions sent to missions overseas requesting visa officers facilitate the processing of these cases by way of a new public policy. At the time, while involvement in a same-sex or common-law relationship in itself was not a barrier to immigration status, under the Act there was no provision for including same sex or common-law partners as part of the family class. Officers were therefore instructed to process these cases as "independent" (economic) applications and to rely on general legislative and regulatory provisions which allowed them to use discretion in approving applications where points awarded under the selection grid did not necessarily reflect the potential for successful establishment. Additionally, if the applicant did not qualify as a skilled worker, officers were advised

**MARIKA WILLMS**  
Marika Willms is a student in cooperative education at Simon Fraser University.  
She is a coop student at Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

that they could waive certain selection criteria for “humanitarian and compassionate” (H & C) reasons, provided the applicant was a partner in a bona fide relationship and was not otherwise inadmissible.

While it was made to work operationally and many couples took advantage of the policy, realistically it was not a sustainable processing option. Not only was the H & C evaluation process lengthy and complex, the policy equally drew criticism from the public, media and advocacy groups who charged it as being too subjective, inconsistent and wanting of transparency.

In 1997 CIC received a report from the Immigration Legislative Review Advisory Group (LRAG) entitled *Not Just Numbers: A Canadian Framework for Future Immigration*. Among other issues they identified, the LRAg expressly noted that the membership of the family class was in desperate need of modification. They proposed a re-definition of the term “spouse,” which would now refer to “a partner through a marriage legal in the jurisdiction in which it occurred, or a partner in an intimate relationship, including cohabitation of at least one year in duration.”<sup>2</sup> This definition, they felt, acknowledged certain existing realities that legislation neglected – notably, an increasing predominance of common-law partnerships, both opposite and same-sex, that had similar elements to a marriage, save for the presence of a legally recognized union. Also, poignantly, the report noted that “what is also new is the emerging conviction of more and more Canadians that to deny these realities is inconsistent with...values of fair play, consistency and equality of treatment.”<sup>3</sup>

Taking into account these recommendations and more importantly, the social environment of the late 1990s, in 1998 the Department published its own report in response to that penned by the LRAg. *Building on a Strong Foundation of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* addressed the need to provide fair treatment to common-law and same-sex couples, cognizant of the fact that “[r]efusing permanent residence does not simply deny a benefit to the common-law spouse or same-sex partner, but may effectively deny Canadians the right to live with their life partners and withhold from them an important factor in their social and economic self-sufficiency and integration.”<sup>4</sup> In 1999, then Minister Lucienne Robillard took the departmental commitment a step further, announcing publicly that changes to the immigration law were under consideration and would include lesbian and gay partners.

In 1999 the Supreme Court tried the case of *M v. H*, the first high court ruling to allow a section 15 Charter challenge to the opposite-sex definition of “spouse.” This case and other successful court challenges, both federally and provincially,

prompted the Government of Canada to negotiate and pass the *Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act* in 2000. The purpose of this omnibus piece of legislation was to ensure that common-law couples (both of the same and opposite-sex) were treated equally under federal law. Though not especially verbose (the 68 affected statutes aside, the Act itself was only a paragraph in length) the *Modernization Act* made one thing clear: the government cannot limit benefits or obligations by discrimination on the basis of common-law relationships.

But the *Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act* did something else as well – it provided updated definitions for “spouse” and “common-law” that Citizenship and Immigration Canada would itself ultimately adopt. “Spouse” was defined to refer to married couples only and the newly introduced term “common law-partner” was defined to include people in common-law relationships, both of the same and opposite sex. The legislation, however, was conscious to make a clear distinction between married and unmarried relationships. The definition of marriage – “the lawful union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others” – was left untouched.

Conspicuously absent from the list of affected legislation was the *Immigration Act*. For the fact that immigration law in Canada for the past 25 years had been left essentially unchanged, a serious overhaul of its legislation was already being planned by the Department, with the spirit of equality enshrined in the *Modernization Act* in mind. Having dealt with common-law and same-sex partners as a matter of public policy since 1994, CIC knew that their revised act would necessarily incorporate provisions for making the admission process for same-sex and common-law partners more formal.

In a discussion document generated by the Department, a series of amendments that would ultimately be reflected in a new, modernized immigration act were proposed.<sup>5</sup> This document was in turn shared publicly in order to solicit feedback from key stakeholders. Among the list of propositions (the majority of which were later adopted) was the recommendation to

modernize the family class to ensure consistency with the recently passed *Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act*. What this meant was amending the definitions of family class and dependent to include what was now the standard federal definition of common-law partner – a person who has been cohabitating in a conjugal relationship with another person for the period of at least one year. This included both same and opposite-sex couples. Of all written submissions received from the public on this proposition, there were very few objections to the proposed

A conjugal partner is described in section 2 of the IRP Regulations (2002) as “in relation to a sponsor, a foreign national residing outside of Canada who is in a conjugal relationship with the sponsor and has been in that relationship for a period of at least one year.” Evaluation guidelines for these relationships draw on the generally accepted characteristics of a conjugal relationship as set out in the *M v. H* decision.

recognition of common-law and same-sex relationships in the immigration legislation.

### **THE IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT (2001)**

Bill C-11, *An Act respecting immigration to Canada and the granting of refugee protection to persons who are displaced or in danger*, was introduced in the House of Commons in February 2001. Though the proposed Bill suggested a number of changes, it retained a commitment to the principle of family reunification. The Regulatory Impact Analysis Statement (RIAS) that accompanied the proposed Regulations stated that the purpose of new family class provisions was to ensure that:

- the process and criteria by which members of the family class are selected are clear and transparent; this includes the requirements and obligations of sponsors;
- current social realities are taken into account in the definition of family class membership; and
- legislation is consistent with other legislation or principles to which Canada is committed.

To achieve the goals for the family class identified in the RIAS, among other changes, the new legislation at once expanded and redefined membership in the family class to include common-law partners:

12.(1) A foreign national may be selected as a member of the family class on the basis of their relationship as the spouse, common-law partner, child, parent or other prescribed family member of a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.

To ensure consistency with other legislation, the Department chose to adopt the definition for “common-law partner” as set out in the *Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act*. This is to say that a common-law partner is “an individual who is cohabitating with the person in a conjugal relationship, having so cohabited for a period of at least one year.” But this definition, specifically the cohabitation requirement, was problematic for many groups – among them the Canadian Bar Association, the Lesbians and Gays Immigrant Taskforce (LEGIT) and Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere (EGALE). These organizations and others making representations contended that for many, in particular same-sex couples, cohabitation was not possible for numerous reasons. First, the “one-year rule” between a sponsor in Canada and his/her partner who lives abroad may be difficult to achieve given admission restrictions. Or additionally, cohabitation might not be feasible for fear of persecution due to cultural or religious factors. These

considerations aside, the definition was also vulnerable to legal challenge because cohabitation was not a requirement for couples who married – an option that at the time was not yet available to same-sex partners.

As a result of public consultations and the input received from the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, the Department made the decision to amend the proposed Regulations and add a further member to the family class – the “conjugal partner.”

A conjugal partner is described in section 2 of the *IRP Regulations* (2002) as “in relation to a sponsor, a foreign national residing outside of Canada who is in a conjugal relationship with the sponsor and has been in that relationship for a period of at least one year.” Evaluation guidelines

for these relationships draw on the generally accepted characteristics of a conjugal relationship as set out in the *M v. H* decision. These include shared shelter, sexual and personal behaviour, services, social activities, economic support and children, as well as the societal perception of the couple. This permits the sponsorship of a partner – either of opposite sex or same-sex – who are in exceptional circumstances beyond their control that prevent them from qualifying as common-law partners or spouses.

*The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) and accompanying *Regulations* officially came into effect in June 2002. Common-law partners were formally removed from the category of persons who can obtain permanent resident status under public policy considerations and were regularized as members of the family class. With the addition of the conjugal partner category, Canadian immigration legislation now recognized three types of relationships: spousal, common-law and conjugal. The reaction of the media and the public to the new act and regulations was almost wholly positive – an important shift in Canadian immigration policy had occurred.

### **BILL C-38: THE CIVIL MARRIAGE ACT**

Since “current social realities” are by nature transient, an Act that is a mere three years young can for some already feel dated. One very current social reality that *IRPA* does not explicitly address is same-sex marriage.

In December 2004, the Supreme Court of Canada rendered an opinion on the same-sex marriage reference, ruling that the federal government can change the definition of marriage to include same-sex couples (the ruling does not answer the question of whether such a change is required by the *Charter*). Subsequently, in February 2005, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada Irwin Cotler introduced the *Civil Marriage Act* (Bill C-38). Bill C-38 (which was at the Second Reading stage in the House of Commons when this article went to print) seeks to extend

With the addition of the conjugal partner category, Canadian immigration legislation now recognized three types of relationships: spousal, common-law and conjugal. The reaction of the media and the public to the new act and regulations was almost wholly positive – an important shift in Canadian immigration policy had occurred.

the legal capacity for civil marriage to same-sex couples so that marriage would now be preserved in federal law as “the lawful union of two *persons* to the exclusion of all others.”

At the time *IRPA* and the *Regulations* were drafted it was not anticipated that marriage would so quickly become an option for gays and lesbians. Today, legislators in Ontario, British Columbia, Québec, Yukon, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan have enacted a number of legislative measures that allow same-sex partners to enter into civil unions. To account for these rapid changes, CIC has introduced an interim policy on same-sex marriage. In mid-2004 the Department provided immigration officers with instructions to recognize same-sex marriages performed in Canada, allowing those civil marriages between a foreign national and their Canadian citizen or permanent resident same-sex partner to be considered valid for immigration purposes in the context of the family class.<sup>6</sup>

There are, however, certain cases where this policy does not apply; for this reason, many advocacy groups, though they concede the policy is a “step in the right direction,” feel it does not go far enough. Section 2 of the *Regulations* state that “in respect of a marriage that took place outside of Canada, means a marriage that is valid both under the laws of the jurisdiction where it took place and under Canadian law.” Therefore, until a decision has been rendered by the federal government on the validity of civil marriages between same-sex partners that took place in a foreign jurisdiction or between two foreign nationals in Canada, these couples cannot be considered under this policy. The debate around Bill C-38 is very active, both in the House of Commons and across Canada, and the Department follows these discussions closely. When a federal decision is rendered on Bill C-38, the Department will revisit its interim same-sex marriage policy. That said, a resolution by the government on the issue will not be a conclusion in itself with respect to how the issue will play out in an immigration context.

## CONCLUSION

This latest interim policy follows a series of events that mark the historical evolution of Canadian immigration law as it relates to same-sex couples. The past two decades have been very active: from the removal of gays and lesbians from the list of inadmissible classes, to a forward-thinking public policy on the admission of same-sex and common-law partners, to the expansion of the family class codified in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* and *Regulations*.

Though the shape and progression of future Canadian immigration policy remains to be seen, it will undoubtedly bear witness to the existing Canadian social realities of the time. Persons who gain admission, permanent residency and, ultimately, Canadian citizenship will continue to be a reflection on those who are Canadians already – a heterogeneous and diverse group by international reputation. In the spirit of our nation’s commitments to inclusiveness, pluralism and diversity, Citizenship and Immigration Canada’s policies will follow suit. Though our legislation cannot conceivably be fully “ahead of the curve,” Citizenship and Immigration Canada has proved to be increasingly responsive and in tune to the real and evolving shape of Canada’s families and in future hopes to only better this reputation.

## Notes

- 1 Of note is the case *Miron v. Trudel* (1995), which ruled that discrimination on marital basis violates section 15 of the Charter. This is to say, that married persons and unmarried persons who are in a relationship akin to marriage should be treated equally under the law.
- 2 Immigration Legislative Review, *Not Just Numbers: A Canadian Framework for Future Immigration*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997.
- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 Department of Citizenship and Immigration, *Building on a Strong Foundation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: New Directions for immigration and Refugee Policy and Legislation*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1998.
- 5 Selection Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, *Family Issues: Proposed Directives for Regulations Supporting Bill C-31, The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, 2000.
- 6 Marriage certificates issued by provincial authorities in Ontario (on or after 10 June 2003), British Columbia (on or after 8 July 2003), Québec (on or after 19 March 2004), Yukon (on or after 14 July 2004), Manitoba (on or after 16 September 2004) and Saskatchewan (on or after 5 November 2004) are all considered to be legally valid documents in support of a permanent residence application. Online: Citizenship and Immigration Canada <http://www.cic.gc.ca>.

# THE NEW CANADIAN CHILDREN AND YOUTH STUDY

## Research to Fill a Gap in Canada's Children's Agenda

### ABSTRACT

One in every five children living in Canada was either born somewhere else or born into immigrant and refugee families, and Canada expects a lot from them. The literature about immigrant and refugee children is riddled with paradoxes, inconsistent results and unanswered questions. Longitudinal research, employing sufficiently large samples of children in differing situations, living in different regions of the country, and using culturally and situation-sensitive measures is badly needed. The NCCYS is one attempt to address this need.

Rarely has so much return been expected from so little investment. One in every five children living in Canada was either born somewhere else or born into immigrant and refugee families, and Canada expects a lot from them. On the one hand, we expect their achievements to help justify our relatively large immigration rates. On the other hand, we act as if this will happen even though we choose to largely ignore their health, development, and adaptation. Take, for example, Statistics Canada's National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth (NLSCY). On a simple probability basis, the NLSCY sample of more than 23,000 should include about 4,600 immigrant and refugee children. However, a single study – not even one of the scope and quality of the NLSCY – can accomplish everything. For various reasons, immigrant and refugee households were under-sampled: instead of the expected number, the NLSCY sample contains only 358 immigrant and refugee children.

### Health Research to enrich theory, to enlighten policy, and to direct practice

The NLSCY is only one of several national health studies to neglect immigrants and refugees. Including immigrants and refugees in national studies is neither easy nor inexpensive. Identifying newcomer households from which to draw samples is daunting, particularly because immigrants tend to be highly mobile people. Aside from sampling problems, the cost of translating questionnaires into heritage languages, and the effort required to recruit and train bilingual interviewers are far from trivial.

If it were true that whatever applies to the population as a whole applies equally well to immigrants and refugees, the dictates of efficiency and economy might justify leaving newcomers out of national studies. However, what applies to the majority often does not apply to minorities. For example, poverty is among the most potent threats to children's mental health. Although immigrant families are almost three times more likely than non-immigrant families to live below the poverty line, immigrant children as a whole are nevertheless in better mental health and have fewer behavioural problems than their native-born counterparts. Does the answer to this apparent paradox lie in an exceptional resiliency among immigrant and refugee children, or does the strength of immigrant family life somehow protect children? And, if so, what are the roots of such resiliency, and the nature of immigrant family strengths?

At first blush, the findings support the popular view of children as adaptable creatures. The apparent ease with which immigrant and refugee youngsters learn new languages, their almost legendary scholastic achievements, and their apparent quickness to take on the dress and behaviour patterns of their adopted countries, are all consistent with a rosy stereotype of resilience. Many immigrant and refugee children do integrate well. However, some have a lot of trouble learning a majority culture language, some have difficulties in school, and rapid integration – not infrequently resulting in familial role reversal, intergenerational conflict, and identity conflicts during adolescence – can be a decidedly mixed advantage.

The findings do not justify complacency. Although immigrant children as a whole may have a mental health advantage, this may not apply to all newcomers. There is, for example, good reason to hypothesize that the pre-migration trauma suffered by refugee children and the discrimination directed towards visible minority children create mental health risk. The NLSCY's restricted sample makes it impossible to separate immigrants from refugees, or to examine the effects of discrimination on mental health.

**MORTON BEISER**  
University of Toronto  
**ROBERT ARMSTRONG**  
University of British Columbia

**LINDA OGILVIE**  
University of Alberta  
**JACQUELINE OXMAN-MARTINEZ**  
Université de Montréal

**JOANNA ANNEKE RUMMENS**  
University of Toronto

Research about immigrant and refugee children is important, not just to answer interesting questions, and not even just to contribute to theory. As children mature, their respective biological endowments become increasingly less important predictors of development, while psychosocial factors become correspondingly more important. In other words, with the passage of time, a society's attitudes and actions become increasingly important in shaping the development of its children. Canada's societal institutions have been too slow to respond to the need to create structures, systems and services to support the development of newcomer children. Care-givers and policy makers need information about the health of immigrants and refugees, how this compares with majority-culture children, and about how health patterns evolve over time. They also need data about health determinants, some of which may be similar to those in the majority culture population, others of which may be unique. Finally, there is a need to examine the match between health needs and the use of services, and to understand the successes and failures of various approaches to providing care.

#### **A Focus on the Health of Immigrant and Refugee Children**

To help address such questions, investigators associated with four Metropolis centres of excellence on immigration research initiated the New Canadian Children and Youth Study (NCCYS) in 2001. Building on the NLSCY's invaluable data about (mainly) native-born children, the NCCYS focuses on the health and development of approximately 4,500 immigrant and refugee youngsters living in six Canadian cities, and makes comparisons between immigrants and the native-born. Like the NLSCY, the NCCYS interviews children and their families every two years, thereby making it possible to study children's development over time. The immigrant and refugee communities making up the NCCYS sample include mainland Chinese, Hong Kong Chinese, Filipino, Haitian, Ethiopian, Somali, Jamaican, Serbian, Vietnamese, Lebanese, Central American (Salvadorian, Guatemalan, Nicaraguan) and Colombian, Kurdish, Iranian, Punjabi, Tamil, and Afghani.

Start-up funding from the federal departments of Health, Canadian Heritage, and Citizenship and Immigration, from the Metropolis centres, from the FQRSC in Québec, and AHFMR in Alberta facilitated the creation of a large interdisciplinary team of epidemiologists, sociologists, specialists in child development, health services researchers, psychologists, mental health experts, anthropologists, educators, and academics from the clinical disciplines of nursing, paediatrics, psychiatry, social work, as well as partnerships between the investigative team and local immigrant communities. Community advisory councils whose membership included representatives from immigrant organizations and immigrant-serving agencies, as well as representatives of multiple levels of government, worked with the investigative

teams in Montréal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver: the university/community partnerships helped develop the NCCYS conceptual framework, identify specific immigrant and settlement stresses and protective factors, create strategies to inform and engage communities, and recruit and train interviewers. With this structure in place, the team carried out pilot tests to examine the applicability of NLSCY instruments, refined its concepts and measures for use with ethno-culturally diverse populations, and developed additional measures to capture the dynamics of the resettlement experience. The NCCYS has now received funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to support the first two of the planned biennial surveys. The first wave of interviewing has been completed.

The apparent ease with which immigrant and refugee youngsters learn new languages, their almost legendary scholastic achievements, and their apparent quickness to take on the dress and behaviour patterns of their adopted countries, are all consistent with a rosy stereotype of resilience.

#### **What do we know already?**

Researchers in Canada and elsewhere have not completely neglected immigrant and refugee children. However, the value of the information already available is compromised by the sometimes confusing and often contradictory nature of the findings. According to some reports, immigrant children have more illness, mental distress, developmental problems and behaviour disorders than their native-born counterparts. Researchers tend to attribute such findings to personal vulnerability based either on biological predisposition or on early developmental problems, or to exposure to threatening environments. Other findings, however, demonstrating no difference between the health of newcomer and native-born children – or even a health advantage for immigrants – contradict the idea that predisposition and/or living in stress-filled environments inevitably jeopardize the well-being of immigrants and refugees.

It does not necessarily follow that researchers are a confused lot, or that some do good studies and others do bad ones.

Lack of sufficiently comprehensive theory is the crux of the problem. Paradigms attributing cause solely to predisposition or to environmental stress are too simplistic. Although migration and resettlement probably affect development, contingencies such as host country selection policies, immigrant versus refugee status, age at migration, gender, family characteristics, visible versus non-visible minority status, personal ethnic identification, social support, the availability of a like-ethnic community, and receiving society attitudes and resettlement practices determine whether immigration is followed by stress-induced maladaptive outcomes, or by well-being, positive self-regard, and achievement.

According to the NCCYS guiding framework, immigrant and refugee children's well-being and accomplishments result from a dynamic process, the components of which include individual characteristics, pre- and post-migration stressors, and the individual and social resources children can draw upon to cope with them.



Age at arrival in a resettlement country is a particularly interesting characteristic. According to the literature, age ten may be a critical cut-point: children who come to Canada before the age of 10 seem more likely than older children to integrate successfully, and to eventually identify themselves as mainstream Canadians, rather than foreigners or minorities.

Immigrants and refugees have vastly different experiences prior to coming to Canada. Catastrophic stresses, including human-initiated and natural disasters, have mental health repercussions. Refugee children, many of whom witnessed violence in their homelands, are at high risk for developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Although reported rates for PTSD are startling – some as high as 50% – they raise a provocative question for future research. Assuming that all refugee children have been exposed to horror, why are the rates for PTSD always less than 100%?

What happens to people after they come to Canada is at least as important for their well-being as what happened to them before getting here. The research literature implicates acculturation and discrimination as major mental health stressors.

When cultural groups come into contact, they interact, and each takes on some of the characteristics of the other. Social scientists refer to this process as acculturation. Most research focuses on the effect of the dominant acculturating force – in this case Canadian society – on the less dominant – in this case, the immigrant communities. As a result of acculturation, families may switch from good diets to junk foods, and children may be exposed to viruses and bacteria that are common in Canada, but for which they did not develop immunities while growing up in their home countries. Some immigrant communities tend to avoid the health care system and to be dilatory about immunizations, both of which could increase the risk of illness. Intriguing research suggests that the more highly acculturated immigrant children become, the greater the probability that they will use illegal drugs. One possible explanation is that traditional methods for regulating the behaviour of youth break down under the acculturating pressure of the receiving society.

Apart from the family, school is the most potent influence on children's development. UK studies suggest that Asian immigrant children have higher educational and vocational aspirations than British-born children, and US studies point to the successful realization of their aspirations. However, success tends to be uneven. The reading skills of high-achieving Southeast Asian students generally lag behind their accomplishments in less language dependent topics, such as mathematics. The apparent facility immigrant children display in acquiring a new language can mislead adults into thinking that children are more fluent than they actually are. In contrast with the generally optimistic literature about immigrant children's school accomplishments, some recent Canadian studies paint a more troubling picture of high rates of school dropout, and compromised post-school success.

Discrimination is assumed to be one of the causes of poor educational performance, low occupational aspiration, and compromised health. Despite wide-spread acceptance of the premise, the fact is that discrimination and its effects on adaptation have rarely been subjected to scientific study. According to the Ethnic Diversity Survey conducted by Statistics Canada and Canadian Heritage, only one in ten of all Canadian residents 15 years of age and older had personally encountered discrimination. By comparison, one in five members of visible minority groups reported at least one experience with discrimination because of ethnicity, culture, skin colour, language, accent or religion. The highest rates of all – one in three – were reported by Africans and Afro-Caribbeans. Visible minority status was not the only basis for discrimination: recently arrived, non-visible minority group immigrants were twice as likely to have experienced discrimination as longer-stay, or second-generation immigrants.

Pre- and post-migration stressors jeopardize well-being, but, when confronted by challenge, human beings are not passive. To cope with adversity, they turn inward to call upon personal resources like self-esteem, and outward to call on family, neighbourhood and community.

Research shows that children who are secure about their ethnic identity and are at the same time comfortable with a larger Canadian identity are the most likely to have high self-esteem. There is some evidence that schools, society's major institution for socializing children aside from the family, may force youngsters into making uncomfortable choices between the old and the new, rather than supporting their efforts to integrate the demands of heritage and mainstream identification. Ethnocultural identity is important not only because of its impact on individual well-being, but because it affects social cohesion in culturally diverse societies like Canada. Studies suggest that the more comfortable adolescents feel about their ethnic identity, the more

they are able to empathize with peers whose ethnic backgrounds differ from their own, the more likely they are to initiate interethnic contact, and the greater their academic achievement.

Regardless of ethnic background, immigrant parents have high aspirations for their children. However, lack of familiarity with the school system, inability to understand information provided by the schools and preoccupation with making a living impede parents' ability to help children realize these ambitions. Neighbourhoods affect children's health and well-being. Children in poor neighbourhoods tend to attend schools with limited funding, have access to few cultural resources, and are at high risk of dropping out of school.

According to the NCCYS guiding framework, immigrant and refugee children's well-being and accomplishments result from a dynamic process, the components of which include individual characteristics, pre- and post-migration stressors, and the individual and social resources children can draw upon to cope with them.

## Summing Up

The literature about immigrant and refugee children is riddled with paradoxes, inconsistent results and unanswered questions. Longitudinal research, employing sufficiently large samples of children in differing situations, living in different regions of the country, and using culturally and situation-sensitive measures is badly needed. The NCCYS is one attempt to address this need.

Canada expects newcomers to contribute to the national good. Left to themselves, many immigrants and refugees will fulfil this expectation. Programs responsive to the needs and aspirations of newcomers will, however, help those destined for success achieve their goals faster and with less pain. Sound resettlement policy will also help others who, without assistance, might flounder.

In his novel, *A Bend in the River*, V.S. Naipaul writes, "We make ourselves according to the vision we have of our possibilities." Canada is committed to a National Children's Agenda that will provide equitable access to whatever it takes to ensure that tomorrow's citizens are healthy, strong, and able to realize their potential to contribute to the common good. In this spirit, Canada cannot go on ignoring the children of its newest settlers. It must, instead, help them create a vision as unblinkered as possible by trauma and hurt, and as open as possible to the potential contributions they and their parents can make to this country.

## Selected References

- Beiser, M., F. Hou, L. Hyman, M. Tousignant. "Poverty and Mental Health Among Immigrant and Non-immigrant Children." *American Journal of Public Health* 92(2) (2002): 220-227.
- Canadian Task Force on Mental Health Issues Affecting Immigrants and Refugees. *After the door has been opened* (Cat. No. Ci96-38/1988E). Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services, 1988.
- Dion, K.K. & K.L. Dion. "Immigrant Perspectives and Adaptations: Gender and Cultural Adaptation in Immigrant Families." *Journal of Social Issues* 57(3) (2001): 511-521.
- Fuligni, A.J. "The academic achievement of adolescents from immigrant families: The roles of family background, attitudes, and behavior." *Child Development* 68 (1997): 351-363.
- GINORIO, A.B. & J. GRIGNON. "The transition to and from high school of ethnic minority students" (p. 151-173). In G. Campbell Jr., R. Denes, & C. Morrison (Eds.), *Access Denied: Race, Ethnicity and the Scientific Enterprise*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Harker, K. Immigrant Generation, Assimilation, and Adolescent Psychological Well-Being. *Social Forces* 79 (3) (2001): 969-1004.
- Khanlou, N. & M. Hajdukowski-Ahmed. "Adolescent self-concept and mental health promotion in a cross-cultural context" (chapter 11). In M. Denton, M. Hajdukowski-Ahmed, M. O'Connor & I. Zeytinogly (Eds.), *Women's Voices in Health Promotion*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1999, p. 138-151.
- Kobayashi, A., E. Moore & M. Rosenberg. *Healthy Immigrant Children: A Demographic Analysis*. Ottawa: Human Resources Development Canada: Applied Research Branch, 1998.
- Lee, S.J. "Behind the model-minority stereotype: voices of high and low-achieving Asian American students." *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 25(1994): 413-429.
- Liebkind, K. "Self-reported ethnic identity, depression and anxiety among young Vietnamese refugees and their parents." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 6(1993): 25-39.

- Mirsky, J. "Psychological distress among immigrant adolescents: Culture-specific factors in the case of immigrants from the former Soviet Union." *International J of Psychology* 32(4) (1997): 221-230.
- Phinney, J.S. "Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults: review of research." *Psychological Bulletin* 108 (1990): 499-514.
- Rousseau, C., A. Drapeau, & E. Corin, E. "The influence of culture and context on the pre- and post-migration experience of school-aged refugees from Central American and Southeast Asia in Canada." *Social Science and Medicine* 44(8) (1997): 1115-1127.
- Rumbaut, R.G., & K. Ima. *The adaptation of Southeast Asian refugee youth: A comparative study*. Washington, DC: US Office of Refugee Resettlement, 1988.
- Rummens, J.A. "Overlapping and Intersecting Identities." *Canadian Diversity/Diversité Canadienne* (2004, Winter): 5-9.
- Rummens, J.A., & R. Seat. *Assessing the Impact of the Kosovo Conflict on the Mental Health and Well Being of Newcomer Serbian Children and Youth in the Greater Toronto Area: Research Report*. CERIS Working Paper #25 (2003, May): 56.
- Rutter, M. "Resilience in the face of adversity: Protective factors and resistance to psychiatric disorder." *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 147 (1985): 598-611.
- Statistics Canada. *Ethnic Diversity Survey: portrait of a multicultural society*. Ottawa: Housing, Family and Social Statistics, Ministry of Industry, 2003.
- To, T., A. Guttman P.T. Dick, J.D. Rosenfield, P.C. Parkin, H. Cao, T.N. Vydykhan, M. Tassoudji, J.K. Harris. "What factors are associated with poor developmental attainment in young Canadian children?" *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 95(4) (2004): 258-263.

## Authors

Morton Beiser, MD, FRCP, CM, is Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto, Senior Scientist and Founding Director of the Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement, Toronto; and National Scientific Coordinator, Reducing Health Disparities Initiative, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Dr. Beiser is Principal Investigator (PI) for the New Canadian Children and Youth Study (NCCYS).

Robert Armstrong, MD, FRCP, is Associate Professor of Pediatrics in the Division of Developmental Paediatrics at the University of British Columbia and a faculty member in the Centre for Community Child Health Research in the B.C. Research Institute for Children's and Women's Health. He is Head of the Department of Pediatrics at UBC and Chief of Pediatric Medicine at BC Children's Hospital and BC Women's Hospital within the Provincial Health Services Authority. Dr. Armstrong is an NCCYS co-PI.

Linda Ogilvie RN, PhD, is Professor of Nursing in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Alberta, Health Domain Leader of the Prairie Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration (PCERII), and Director of a CIDA-funded program for nurse training in Ghana. Dr. Ogilvie is an NCCYS co-PI.

Jacqueline Oxman-Martinez, PhD (Sociology), is Visiting Researcher at the Centre for Research on Violence against Women and an Associate Professor, both at the Université de Montréal. She has been the Health Domain Leader for the Immigration et Métropoles (IM), the Montréal Centre for Inter-University Research on Immigration and Integration in Urban Dynamics. Dr. Oxman-Martinez is an NCCYS co-PI.

Joanna Anneke Rummens, PhD (Anthropology) is a Health Systems Research Scientist with the Community Health Systems Resource Group at the Hospital for Sick Children, and Assistant Professor in Psychiatry with the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto. She has been the Academic Coordinator of CERIS and is currently chair-elect of the Toronto Centre's management board. Dr. Rummens is an NCCYS co-PI.

# BRIDGING THE GENERATION GAP

## Exploring the Differences between Immigrant Parents and their Canadian-Born Children

### ABSTRACT

In the following paper, I discuss the importance of recognizing generation as a key differentiating factor in visible minority experiences of integration in Canadian society. The bulk of both academic and non-academic research has focused on the immigrant experience and the difficulties of acculturation, particularly for immigrants who have been racialized (seen as racially different from the dominant white population or even immigrants of European extraction). For second-generation minorities (the children of immigrants, those who were born and/or arrived in Canada before adolescence), the problems of fitting in are quite different. They do not have the same concerns of acculturation, yet despite their often mainstream appearance and behaviour, they still have to struggle with racism and exclusion, particularly in childhood and adolescence. This article argues that the experience of *growing up* different is what distinguishes first and second-generation experiences with belonging. Therefore, a great deal more attention needs to be paid to how the concept of generation radically affects visible minority negotiations with Canadian society.

People who aren't of color...don't understand the duality of my life...why I have to lie to my parents about where I'm going...sometimes I'd cry myself to sleep at night because...my boyfriend wouldn't understand the pressures that I go through as a Korean daughter...growing up, my God, I can remember days...when the frustration was just so much that I didn't want to go home...when school was done, I'd hang out...by myself, not socializing with anybody. It can be really detrimental because you don't feel you belong anywhere.<sup>1</sup>

There is often a tendency in both academic and non-academic contexts, to assume that being a visible minority automatically implies that one is an immigrant. Scholars, researchers and mainstream media attempt to address questions around racism, belonging and being Canadian with the underlying assumption that the communities and individuals about whom they are speaking are purely immigrant; that is, they have spent a significant chunk of their formative years in another country and have moved to Canada as adults. In such a scenario, the issues revolve around acculturation and the sometimes bumpy road to acquiring citizenship: language and job training; cultural alienation, and both systemic and everyday discrimination on the basis of differences in dress, accent, skin colour, and other cultural markers. While the harsh realities of immigrant life should not be underestimated, it is also problematic to assume that all visible minorities experience specifically immigrant problems. Such an assumption perpetuates the idea that visible minority communities will always be immigrants and, therefore, outsiders to the Canadian nation, regardless of how many years they have spent in Canada. Furthermore, what is consistently overlooked in this scenario is the presence of non-immigrants who are at the same time visible minorities. Their experiences of alienation, racism and belonging are vastly different from those of their immigrant parents, but are no less significant in terms of how we continue to construct our ideas of who is and is not a “real” Canadian.<sup>2</sup>

In the following paper, I argue that the issue of generation must be taken up in a more sustained manner by both scholars and non-academics alike. Research on race and racism in Canada needs to be more attentive to the experiences of second generation visible minority children, youth and adults. It is also of vital importance for educators and government initiatives to recognize that generation is a distinguishing factor in people's experiences of belonging and exclusion. Using the available literature in this area in conjunction with my own fieldwork,<sup>3</sup> I will focus on three main points: 1) generation as a crucial factor in the kinds of problems encountered by visible minorities 2) the unpacking of generation and its relationship to development and identity and 3) the problems faced by second generation subjects, i.e. dealing with racism during formative years of identity construction, and negotiating the demands of mainstream peer culture that are often in direct opposition to the cultural norms of family and community.

**MYTHILI RAIIVA**  
Mythili Raiiva recently completed a PhD in Sociology at Carleton University. She is currently teaching and doing post-doctoral research on amalgamation in cities and its impact on diversity.

## Generation as a Key Concept

A great deal of research on visible minorities in Canada continues to reference a purely immigrant context. Both scholarly and non-scholarly work uses language that implicitly constructs the typical visible minority individual as someone who has recently emigrated from another country. The problems that such individuals and groups encounter are then addressed as problems of acculturation: language and job training; 'Canadianizing' their educational credentials; learning the cultural norms of Canadian society; and dealing with both everyday and systemic racism because of their perceived differences from the white mainstream population. There is no discounting the realities of immigration and the struggles of communities to make homes in a strange and often hostile society. However, it is problematic to assume that visible minorities are always immigrants. This assumption only serves to reify the dominant perception of racialized, ethnicized communities as eternal immigrants. In this scenario, if you are a visible minority, you will be always a permanent outsider to the Canadian nation. For example, certain groups have been in Canada for over three or four generations and are still referred to as immigrant communities.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, it is not a suitable framework for understanding identity that is raced and ethnicized without being immigrant. If we continue to assume that racism in Canadian society is always related to the problem of "newcomers," then we are effectively ignoring the presence and experiences of many people who were born and have grown up in Canada and yet continue to struggle with issues of racism and exclusion. In place of language difficulties, foreign credentials and cultural alienation, second generation subjects have to struggle with a discourse of national belonging that is flexible enough to exclude them even when they talk, act and live 'like everyone else.'

How are these two experiences distinct? This is a crucial element of race and identity, but it has not been a major part of the research on specific visible minority communities. A great deal of the Canadian research has, until recently, overlooked generation and specifically youth. Most of this research has been primarily concerned with understanding the adult immigrant experience or, occasionally, the non-adult in the context of family. This research has not explored the question of youth and the specificities of this subject position in terms of the multiple spaces that youth occupy (school, peer groups, family, community etc.). However, this is slowly changing, as Canadian researchers are now offering compelling accounts of the key differences between immigrants and their children and point to the importance of theorizing these differences (see, for example, Rajiva, 1996; Aujla, 2000; Handa, 2003; Rajiva, 2004).

## Growing Up Different: the Challenges of Becoming Someone and Belonging Somewhere

Age and generation structure belonging are significant in very different ways for immigrants and their second-generation children in countries such as Britain, the U.S. and Canada. The obvious explanation is that the former arrive in a context of difference, whereas the latter grow up in a context of difference. But

on the face of it, this should mean that second generation ethnics find belonging a much easier task. According to American scholars, Min and Kim, this group is less likely to face the same systemic barriers that their immigrant parents faced (Min and Kim, 2000: 754). Changing historical contexts coupled with a stronger comfort level *vis-à-vis* the dominant culture mean that young minorities have an easier time succeeding on the job market and integrating socially into mainstream western culture (754). Yet Min and Kim also point out that in spite of the fact that immigrant professionals have more disadvantages in the labour market, and more unpleasant job experiences than their western-born counterparts (754), the latter have higher levels of insecurity and self-doubt (750-755). Their identities are seemingly more fragile and more open to confusion. Below are two first-hand accounts of growing up as minorities in Canada that point to the difficulties that second generation subjects encounter, difficulties that are considerably different from those faced by their immigrant parents, and yet are in some ways more existentially painful:

In place of language difficulties, foreign credentials and cultural alienation, second-generation subjects have to struggle with a discourse of national belonging that is flexible enough to exclude them even when they talk, act and 'live like everyone else.'

I know people who were born here and somehow we always feel we are strangers because we're visible minorities, so at first sight, people will always see you as coming from somewhere else. In many cases you still have to prove yourself.<sup>5</sup>

During my adolescent years, it hindered my development as an individual because everyone kept hounding me about the fact that I was different, that I looked different (not that I sounded different) and it led to feelings of inferiority; difference became something negative. It happened all the time when I was younger and as I was growing up.<sup>6</sup>

As these two excerpts illustrate, generation is one of the key factors that affects *identity* in the case of minority children and youth. What becomes apparent in these and other similar accounts is that unlike immigrants who have previous identities to draw upon (outside their subsequent experiences of immigrant non-belonging within a western nation), second generation subjects who develop in contexts of otherness have never been anything other than visible minorities. They do not have the same desire to belong that many second generation children experience. For this group, growing up different at a time in their lives when belonging is so important has been the biggest challenge. A sense of belonging with one's peers is crucial in childhood and adolescence; it is what allows subjects to build a positive sense of identity. If, during such developmentally significant periods of identity work, subjects consistently encounter exclusion, the question arises as to how this affects their overall sense of self (Rajiva, 2004). Researchers in this area are still not attentive enough to the developmental implications of second generation experiences with becoming different.

## Inter-generational Conflicts

One major concern is that second-generation subjects have to negotiate a specific set of struggles around belonging

that arise from the difficulties of being “in-between” two cultural identities and experiences. This means that they are neither part of their parents’ past cultural landscapes, nor are they completely part of the ‘Canadian’ mainstream. One of the main problems encountered within immigrant families is this tension between maintaining ‘homeland’ values and cultural practices and the realities of raising children who are part of mainstream Canadian peer culture. Although some immigrants opt to place their children in special, cultural (or religious) schools, for most immigrants this is not a viable option. The end result is that second-generation children grow up being exposed to the norms of Canadian society. This becomes a serious problem, particularly at adolescence, this since many immigrant communities have beliefs that are radically opposed to certain Canadian adolescent practices. Western adolescence has certain assumptions underlying it, as a period of discovery, identity building and rebellion against the family and sometimes school structures. In many communities, certain practices that Canadian society takes somewhat for granted – i.e. dating, drinking, drugs, parties, pre-marital sex, dances, certain types of clothes – are frowned upon and sometimes actively prohibited:

My main memories of adolescence...Studying or fighting with my parents about socializing (Were your parents strict?) yes very strict. Very strict. Absolutely. Um so um, I had the earliest curfew of all my friends, I had to, they had to know exactly where I was at all moments outside the house, no not outside the house, but outside of school hours...it was sort of a constant battle to try to um, sort of break away from that. Mostly unsuccessful, and um (What about things like dating?) dating was um, no, absolutely not. I mean that was absolutely not a, it wasn't even something you talked about, at home...All my friends were mainly, like every day friends, girls, and dating was like, it wasn't even an issue, it was like no. (so just understood) understood, absolutely understood.<sup>7</sup>

As the above account indicates, this is particularly salient for girls, who have to struggle with what feminist scholars describe as the gendered nature of national identity (see, for example, Valverde, 1992; Stasiulis and Yuval Davis, 1995; Khan, 1998). According to Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989), women in most countries are consistently expected to be “bearers of culture”: that is, reproduce the traditions, cultural symbols and norms of that particular group. This is particularly the case with communities living in the shadow of a dominant national identity that excludes them on the basis of perceived racial difference. Girls are expected to maintain cultural practices that are sometimes no longer relevant in the homeland countries, and are certainly not widely accepted in Canadian society. This includes concerns with dress and behaviour;<sup>8</sup> peer socializing (at night, at parties and school dances); growing independence at adolescence (which is often not part of immigrant communities’ understandings of adolescence); and perhaps most importantly, interacting with members of the opposite sex, and having romantic relationships with boys who are not part of the community. Although cases such as the recent Atwal murder are rare and extreme, these tragedies are a poignant reminder of the intergenerational difficulties that communities face: for many immigrants, the behaviour of

their daughters is tied directly to the community’s sense of identity, dignity and difference from white Canadian society.<sup>9</sup>

### Racism and Belonging

While the focus in the literature is often on the inter-generational tensions between immigrant parents and Canadian-born children, part of this tension is also related to the latter’s experience of racism and discrimination in larger society. As previously mentioned, adult immigrants’ identities are generally shaped by the homeland contexts in which they grew up. Second-generation subjects growing up in countries such as Canada have to wrestle with being seen as ‘racially’ different in a national context, where Canadianness is automatically conflated with Whiteness. Their respective struggles with belonging in Canadian society are perhaps what constitute the most important difference between the two generations. Despite shared experiences of racism and exclusion, the responses of the two groups differ significantly, mainly because first-generation minorities have less at stake in terms of belonging to Canadian society.

Authors such as Okano (1993), Rezai-Rashti (1994), Aujla (2000) and others have discussed the shame and embarrassment that minority children feel growing up, about their immigrant families and cultural backgrounds. According to some scholars, while immigrants often experience more overt racism than their Canadian-born and/or raised children, they also have a stronger source of self-esteem to draw upon (see, for example, Bagley, 1987; Ou and McAdoo, 1993). In contrast, second-generation subjects, from a very young age, are aware that they are ‘different.’ They are, thus, in greater danger of developing a negative self-identity because they realize that no matter how much they try to belong, they will always be perceived to a lesser or greater extent, as foreigners or, following Aujla (2000), ‘strangers in their own land’:

I said earlier that in a way I think I will be always be a stranger to this society until the day people meet me and don't feel like they have to ask me where I'm from anymore. The day I won't have to prove myself constantly.<sup>10</sup>

Just in terms of like feeling ashamed and I guess what you were saying, like about trying to blend in and not be seen as Indian, I remember when like sometimes at school, people would make comments about Indians, not to me, but about Indians, in front of me, and when I heard those things, it used to make me feel so awful inside. So awful. And like that incident with my mom when she was dressed in a Sari, like I was so, I don't know, I just didn't want to be associated with it. It's that whole thing that you talk about, being seen as different.<sup>11</sup>

The above accounts illustrate the profound effects of racism on second-generation identities and on the negative ways in which subjects often end up relating to their families and communities. These stories also point to a fundamental difference between immigrant and second-generation struggles to belong: immigrants may actually have a much harder time economically and socially in terms of fitting in and building a life, but second generation subjects may be more affected at the level of positive identity and self-esteem because, unlike

their parents, they have no previous memories of belonging upon which to draw.

## Conclusion

The above discussion highlighted the importance of generation as a key concept in the study of visible minority communities. My main argument was that, for the most part, both the academic and non-academic literature has tended to focus on specifically immigrant issues: language and job training; learning new cultural norms; dealing with alienation and family upheavals; and handling racism and discrimination in Canadian society. There is no gainsaying the importance of this work in terms of offering us a deeper understanding of the immigrant experience. Nevertheless, in much of this literature, there is still an implicit sense that visible minorities are always immigrants, facing specifically immigrant problems. Until recently, most of the literature on race in Canada has neglected the experiences of non-immigrant minorities from ethnicized backgrounds: in other words, the second-generation children of immigrants, those who were born and/or raised in Canada, and have had their main experiences of socialization in Canadian society.

For the second generation, belonging is not an issue of language or job training, foreign credentials, unfamiliarity with Canadian cultural norms, or a longing for a past 'homeland.' Instead, they face the difficult task of growing up different: trying to belong to a national identity that continues to see them as not Canadian; dealing with experiences of systemic and overt racism that are based solely on perceived racial difference rather than on cultural strangeness; and finally, struggling to balance the often competing demands of peer culture with the cultural expectations of immigrant families and communities. These problems are widespread across different ethnicized communities; however, we are only now slowly beginning to explore the specificities of experience in the Chinese, Korean, Somali, South Asian and other communities. Scholars such as Bagley, McAdoo, Handa and others have drawn our attention to the noticeable differences between immigrants and their children in terms of integration in Canadian society, but a great deal still remains to be known about the experiences and identities of second-generation children and in particular, the strategies they use to negotiate belonging in their extremely complex spaces of existence.

## References

- Anthias, Floya & Nira Yuval-Davis. "Introduction," in Floya ANTHIAS and Nira YUVAL-DAVIS (Eds). *Woman-Nation-State*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.
- Aujla, Angela. 2000. "Others in their own land: Second-Generation South Asian Canadian women, racism, and the persistence of colonial discourse," *Canadian Woman Studies* 20 (2000): 41-47.
- Bagley, Christopher. 1987. "The Adaptation of Asian Children of Immigrant Parents: British Models and their Application to Canadian Policy" in Milton ISRAEL (Ed.). *The South Asian Diaspora in Canada: Six Essays*. Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1987.
- Handa, Amita. 2003. *Of Silk Saris and Mini-Skirts: South Asian Girls Walk the Tightrope of Culture*. Toronto: Women's Press, 2003.
- Khan, Shahnaz. "Muslim Women: Negotiations in the Third Space." *Signs* 23(2) (1998): 463-493.
- McAdoo, Harriet & Young-Shi Ou. "Socialization of Chinese American Children." In Harriet Piper McAdoo (Ed.). *Family Ethnicity: Strength in Diversity*. London: Sage Publications, 1993.
- Min, Pyong Gap and Rose Kim. "Formation of ethnic and racial identities: Narratives by young Asian-American professionals." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23 (2000): 735-760.
- Nayar, Kamala Elizabeth. *The Sikh Diaspora in Vancouver: Three Generations Amid Tradition, Modernity, and Multiculturalism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.
- Okano, Haruko. 1993. "Spring is Here, Mama", in Arun Mukherjee (Ed.), *Sharing Our Experiences* Ottawa: Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 78-81.
- Rajiva, Mythili. 2004. *Racing Through Adolescence: Becoming and Belonging in the Narratives of Second Generation South Asian Girls*. Doctoral Dissertation.
- Rajiva, Mythili. 1996. *Identity and Politics: Second Generation Ethnic Minority Women in Canada*. Master's Thesis.
- Rezai-Rashti, Goli. 1994. "The Dilemma of Working with Minority Female Students in Canadian High Schools," *Canadian Woman Studies* 14(2) (1994): 76-82.
- Stasiulis, Daiva & Nira Yuval-Davis. "Introduction: Beyond dichotomies –gender, race, ethnicity and class in settler societies." In Daiva Stasiulis & Nira Yuval-Davis (Eds.), *Unsettling Settler Societies: Articulations of Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class*. London: Sage Publications, 1995, 1-38.
- Valverde, Mariana. "When the mother of the race is free: Race, reproduction and sexuality in first wave feminism." In Franca Iacovetta & Mariana Valverde (Eds.), *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History*, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press), 1992, 3-21.

## Notes

- 1 Respondent N, in Mythili Rajiva. *Identity and Politics: Second Generation Ethnic Women in Canada*. Master's Thesis, 1996, 122.
- 2 Throughout the paper, I will refer to Canadian as distinct from ethnicized and racialized communities in order to drive home the point that there is still a dominant understanding of Canadian as white and western.
- 3 For further details concerning methodology, please see Mythili Rajiva. *Identity and Politics: Second Generation Ethnic Women in Canada*. Master's Thesis. Also see Mythili Rajiva. 2004. *Racing Through Adolescence: Becoming and Belonging in the Narratives of Second Generation South Asian Girls*. Doctoral Dissertation, 1996.
- 4 For example, South Asians have been in parts of Canada since the early 1900s, and yet they are commonly assumed to be a "new community" in both the literature as well as mainstream perceptions. See, for example, Kamala Elizabeth Nayar. *The Sikh Diaspora in Vancouver: Three Generations amid Tradition, Modernity and Multiculturalism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.
- 5 Respondent E, in Mythili Rajiva. *Identity and Politics: Second Generation Ethnic Women in Canada*. Master's Thesis, 1996, 122.
- 6 Respondent N, in Mythili Rajiva. *Identity and Politics: Second Generation Ethnic Women in Canada*. Master's Thesis, 1996.
- 7 Anita, 34, interview participant in Mythili Rajiva. *Racing Through Adolescence: Becoming and Belonging in the Narratives of Second Generation South Asian Girls*. Doctoral Dissertation, 2004.
- 8 The specifics of this depend largely on the particular community. For example, certain communities are less concerned with dress, and more with behaviour and the maintenance of certain cultural norms.
- 9 In 2003, 17 year old Amandeep Atwal, a Sikh girl in British Columbia, was killed by her father, after he discovered that she had a white boyfriend and she was planning to move in with him.
- 10 Respondent O, in Mythili Rajiva. *Identity and Politics: Second Generation Ethnic Women in Canada*. Master's Thesis, 1996, 122.
- 11 Rose, 33, interview participant in Mythili Rajiva. *Racing Through Adolescence: Becoming and Belonging in the Narratives of Second Generation South Asian Girls*. Doctoral Dissertation, 2004, 384.

# IMMIGRANT CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN FOCUS

## ABSTRACT

Immigrant children and youth have the potential to contribute to a prosperous future for Canada on the globalized world stage. Unfortunately, the disparity between the complex linguistic, acculturative, psychological and economic needs of immigrant children and youth and a persistent lack of responsive, coordinated services and support in Canadian institutions and service organizations has threatened to jeopardize the realization of the full potential – and the future socioeconomic contribution – of young immigrants. This article elaborates on the interlinked and complex needs of immigrant children and youth in the social services, health, education and justice arenas, and on the home, school and community environments in which these needs and issues arise. It discusses challenges in services for immigrant children and youth, and outlines opportunities for policy and service development.

Immigrant children and youth have established a strong presence in Canadian society. The foreign-born population in Canada is 18.4% of the total population, its highest level in 70 years (Statistics Canada, 2003). A significant number of children and youth were born outside of Canada. Of the 1.8 million immigrants who arrived during the 1990s, 309,700, or 17%, were school-aged children and youth between 5 and 16 (Statistics Canada, 2003). Furthermore, many Canadian-born children are raised in first-generation immigrant households, contributing to the 10.5% of the population with home languages other than English or French (Statistics Canada, 2002).

Myriad success stories illustrate how adaptable immigrant children and youth can be and how well they integrate into Canadian society. Their stories of resilience and triumph offer glimpses of the positive role they will play in the future socioeconomic well-being of our nation. Still, a significant number of immigrant children and youth are not faring well. They are experiencing complex linguistic, acculturative, psychological and economic difficulties. Their challenges call for policy makers, NGOs and researchers to understand their unique issues better, and develop responsive policies and services both to address their needs and to maximize their potential and contribution.

This article draws upon two multistakeholder participatory action research initiatives in Calgary, namely *Conversations for Change – An Overview of Services for Immigrant Children and Youth in Calgary and Immigrant Children in Focus: A Map of Needs Strategies and Resources* (see Hurlock, McCullagh & Schissel, 2004; Ngo, 2004). It outlines the unique needs of immigrant children and youth in the social services, health, education and justice arenas, elaborates on the challenges in services for immigrant children and youth, and suggests opportunities for policy and service development for all service providers and jurisdictions.

## Issues Facing Immigrant Children and Youth

Immigrant children and youth face diverse linguistic, acculturative, psychological and socioeconomic challenges in their daily lives. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate their interlinked and complex needs with respect to social services, health, education and justice, and the contexts in which these needs and issues arise, namely the home environment, the school environment and the community environment.

### Social Service Arena

In their cultural adjustment, immigrant children and youth often experience cognitive and emotional changes due to cultural shock, unfamiliarity with new cultural norms and practices, and grief at leaving behind familiar language, culture and community. Many struggle to achieve a positive cultural identity as they deal with community values that may conflict with those at home. Their development of cultural identity may be further complicated by internalized racism, resulting from exposure to pervasive negative stereotypes of ethnic minorities.

With respect to social support, many children and youth experience family separation, difficulties in forming cross-ethnic friendships, over-reliance on support from peers with similar cultural

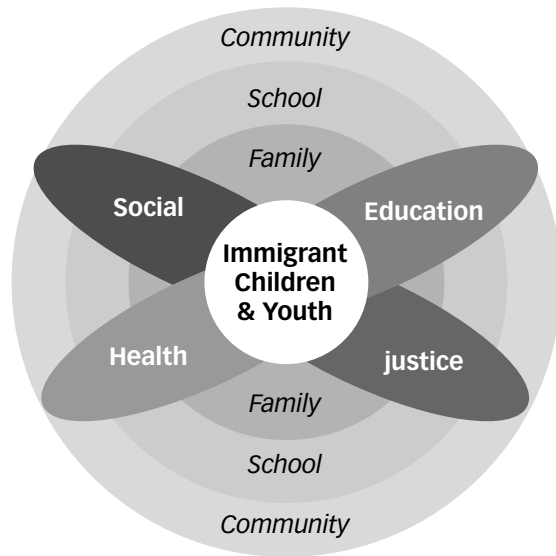
### HIEU VAN NGO

Hieu Van Ngo is the coordinator of the Coalition for Equal Access to Education, and a PhD student at the Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary.

### BARBARA SCHLEIFER

Barbara Schleifer is an associate in Community Investment and Partnership with United Way of Calgary and Area. She chairs Calgary's Immigrant Children and Youth Steering Committee, and is former co-chair of the Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary. She holds a Masters Degree in Environmental Studies.

**FIGURE 1**  
**An interactive model of needs**  
**of immigrant children and youth**



backgrounds, alienation and isolation, and limited access to positive role models and mentors. Older children, in particular, often find it difficult to form friendships since they arrive at an age when their peers already have well-established social networks.

In their transition into adulthood, immigrant youth have the highest unemployment rate in Canada, at 20% for those aged 15 to 24, compared to the national rate of 8% (Statistics Canada, 2001). Those with sporadic education, poor literacy skills and limited English often struggle to make a smooth transition into the labour market.

Conflicting expectations of gender roles with respect to rights, privileges and responsibilities create stress for children and youth. In some immigrant families, girls have more household responsibilities. They also experience more restrictions, parental control and supervision than their Canadian-born counterparts do, particularly with respect to dating and relationships with peers.

Another subgroup, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) immigrant youth, is a vulnerable population with high rates of suicide, attempted suicide, depression, violence, victimization, substance abuse and HIV-associated risky behaviour. The intersection of race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation often compromises their healthy development and well-being. These young people face tremendous individual, family and societal barriers in coming to terms with their own identity and being accepted and appreciated by others. They often face fear, internalized homophobia, rejection and ostracism by family and community members, social stigma, harassment and gay-bashing.

#### Health Arena

Immigrant children and youth who are raised in families with disadvantaged socioeconomic status are at risk of malnutrition. They may experience low birth weight, obesity, and adopt unhealthy eating habits.

Many children and youth have migrated from developing countries that have high exposure to communicable diseases, including HIV infection, tuberculosis, acute respiratory infections, intestinal parasites, measles, hepatitis B, diarrheal disease, cholera, and schistosomiasis (Cookson, Waldman, Gushulak, MacPherson, Burkle, Paquet, Kliever & Walker, 1998). In terms of sexual and reproductive health, immigrant children and youth may come from countries with strong sexuality taboos, high incidences of sexually transmitted infections, and cultural practices such as female genital mutilation. In Canada, they may experience confusion about sexual biology and sexual health issues, as a result of the conflicting messages from a sexualized popular culture and media, and lack of access to reproductive health and sex education.

With respect to chronic conditions, children and youth of certain ethnic groups are at higher risks for blood-related diseases, such as sickle cell anaemia and thalassemia. Some have been exposed to environmental toxins in their home countries. Others are vulnerable to respiratory conditions, particularly asthma, due to sudden climate changes, poor housing conditions and exposure to tobacco smoke at home.

Children and youth from refugee backgrounds are vulnerable to mental, emotional and behavioural disorders. Those who were subjected to persecution, war, violence, loss of family members and trauma in their home countries or during migration are more likely to experience post-traumatic stress syndrome. Racism and discrimination in Canada have also contributed to poor mental health for many visible minorities.

#### Education Arena

In a new school environment, immigrant children have to understand school routines, rights and responsibilities and social customs, and they and their parents need to learn how to access support services. Linguistic and cultural barriers, socioeconomic status, patterns of acculturation and other individual issues can make it difficult to identify and assess the educational and social needs of immigrant children and youth.

In major urban school boards, between 20% to 50% of the students are of an English as a Second Language (ESL) background (Dawson, 1998, Dempster & Albert, 1998; McInnes, 1993). These students have either arrived from non-English speaking countries, or were born in Canada in immigrant families who do not speak English at home. They require between 2 and 5 years of explicit English language instruction to develop basic communication skills and between 5 and 7 years to develop academic language proficiency (Cummins, 1994; Collier, 1989). ESL learners require both structured language instruction from qualified ESL teachers in an ESL instructional setting, and explicit language support for content classes. Many continue to need ESL support well into their post-secondary years.

The first language spoken by ESL learners plays a dynamic role in facilitating understanding of culture, bridging intergenerational gaps with parents and developing healthy cultural identity. It can serve as a springboard for cognitive development in the English language. Unfortunately, many immigrant children and youth do not have access to opportunities to learn and practice their heritage languages.



**TABLE 1**  
**Summary of major issues facing immigrant children and youth**

<b>INDIVIDUAL ISSUES</b>	<b>SOCIAL SERVICES</b>	<b>HEALTH</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>JUSTICE</b>
	Cultural adjustment Social support and belonging Cultural identity Sexual identity Gender roles Internalized racism Employment	Nutrition Communicable diseases Sexual and reproductive health Chronic health conditions Mental health problems Pre-migration and migration trauma	Unfamiliarity with schooling in Canada Appropriate assessments ESL instruction Support in content classrooms Support for students with special needs Support for heritage languages	Transitions Criminal gangs and violence Substance abuse Prostitution Issues in youth justice process
<b>HOME ENVIRONMENT</b>	Basic needs Employment Language and adult literacy Family literacy Social networks and support Incongruent rates of acculturation Family violence Civic participation			
<b>SCHOOL COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT</b>	Access to systemic, culturally competent support Parental involvement Belonging and participation in school activities Interaction with peers and school staff Racism and discrimination			
<b>COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT</b>	Belonging and community participation Racism and discrimination Socioeconomic conditions Negative influences			

The practice of age-appropriate placement in Canada can leave immigrant children and youth at a loss in their classes. Those with sporadic education and limited literacy skills require concrete literacy and academic support to achieve a level of academic success equivalent to that of their Canadian-born English-speaking counterparts of the same age. On the other hand, children and youth who are inappropriately placed in classrooms with children several years younger also may as a consequence experience socio-psychological difficulties.

Unique linguistic and sociocultural challenges, compounded by the lack of responsive support in the education system, have limited the academic success of immigrant children and youth. Those of an ESL background are two or more years behind their native English-speaking counterparts by the time they reach sixth grade (Cummins, 1981). The dropout rates among ESL learners are significantly high, between 61% and 74% (Alberta Education, 1992; Gunderson, 2004; Watt & Roessingh, 1994, 2001). Communication skills and GPAs of university students who are sons and daughters of immigrants, independent of length of time in Canada, are not as high as those of native-born English-speaking Canadians (Grayson, 2004).

#### Justice Arena

Traumatic migration experience, poverty, limited English, intergenerational and family conflicts, social isolation, lack of a

sense of belonging, and discrimination make immigrant children and youth vulnerable to victimization and recruitment by organized crime groups. In major cities, immigrant youth are reported to be involved in criminal gangs and violent activities, trafficking and use of drugs, and prostitution.

When immigrant youth are in conflict with the law, they experience a wide range of issues in their contact with police and youth justice court procedures. These include distrust and fear of authority figures, limited knowledge about the Canadian justice system, lack of understanding of their constitutional rights, problems understanding and providing accurate information during investigation and court proceedings due to limited English, and cultural misinterpretation in communication. When sentenced to extrajudicial measures and sanctions, custodial sentences or community sentencing, immigrant youth may have limited access to meaningful community services and culturally responsive rehabilitative, counselling, and educational services. Many have difficulty understanding the conditions of probation.

#### Home, School and Community Environments

Home, school and community environments influence the wellbeing and success of immigrant children and youth. A significant number of immigrant children and youth are growing up in households impacted by a range of

socioeconomic issues such as culture and language barriers, unemployment or underemployment, social isolation, illiteracy, discrimination and limited civic participation. With a poverty rate of 30% for immigrants living in cities (Lee, 2000), immigrant households struggle to meet basic needs, such as food, housing, clothing, child care and transportation.

In school, immigrant children and youth may not have access to culturally competent support. The lack of system leadership and limited participation of immigrant parents in school activities have left decisions regarding language instruction and services for immigrant children and youth at the discretion and political will of individual school administrators. Consequently, school services for immigrant children and youth have been provided on an ad-hoc basis and given low priority. Notably, many immigrant children and youth with limited English have received minimal, if any, direct language instruction. Without adequate support, immigrant children and youth are substantially less likely to participate in school activities. They may also struggle to connect to their peers and school personnel.

At the community level, a combination of the lack of culturally inclusive programs and limited awareness of community resources and services has resulted in low levels of participation of immigrant children and youth in community activities and services. Individual, institutional and cultural racism and discrimination have denied many immigrant children and youth a sense of belonging and driven them into social isolation and alienation. Concentrations of immigrant families in neighbourhoods with low socioeconomic status further hinder immigrant young people from accessing a wide range of community resources and opportunities. Immigrant children and youth living in impoverished areas are also more likely to be exposed to negative influences, such as aggressive recruitment by criminal groups.

### **Challenges in Services for Immigrant Children and Youth**

Several emerging service issues have had impact on the access of immigrant children and youth to resources and services. Service providers are challenged by the lack of coordination and comprehensiveness of support. Existing services often do not provide longitudinal support due to a lack of accessible and sustainable funding.

Even when there are services available, service providers frequently do not know where to refer immigrant children and youth. This is partly because their needs are so complex and they are uncertain whether the existing services are equipped to handle their issues. Some service providers have struggled to understand the needs of immigrant children and youth, and connect to these young people. Many are doubtful whether their services are inclusive and accessible to immigrant

children and youth. They struggle with the basic challenge of limited availability of translation and interpretation services. All of these issues speak to the need for cultural competency in all services related to health, education, justice, and social services. Service providers face challenges in integrating cultural diversity in all aspects of their work, including policy and service development, communication, resource allocation, hiring and professional development.

Funding competition in the age of scarce resources and a fear of sharing information and knowledge have impeded partnerships. Service providers have yet to fully explore and capitalize on partnership opportunities among schools, family resource centres, mainstream organizations, immigrant serving agencies and ethnocultural groups. There is a need for joint advocacy efforts to address systemic factors that impact immigrant children and youth and their families, such as poverty, language, health, education and employment.

### **Recommendations**

The future of immigrant children and youth will affect the future of Canada: it has to be everyone's business. There are opportunities for policy makers, NGOs and researchers to work collaboratively to ensure availability of quality services for immigrant children and youth. Nationally, the federal government must champion a national strategy that focuses on the education, resettlement and integration of immigrant children and youth. This strategy should involve all federal departments, including Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Health Canada, Industry Canada, Canadian Heritage, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Justice Canada, and Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (National Crime Prevention Strategy), to develop department-specific actions and inter-departmental initiatives to support school- and community-based programs that address identified needs of immigrant children and youth in the social service, health, education and justice arenas. Some of the areas of priority are research on

immigrant children and youth, English language instruction, reception and orientation services, cross-cultural and trauma counselling, child/youth and family literacy, multicultural liaison, prevention of and intervention in crime, vocational training for youth with low literacy skills or sporadic education, the role of heritage languages, parental participation, cultural competency training, school and community inclusion, and poverty. The federal government needs to work with the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada to replicate or expand the bilateral agreement that provides federal funding for teaching children official languages, and to establish national benchmarks and standards for identification, assessment, curriculum, instruction and tracking of progress of immigrant children and youth with ESL needs.

At the provincial level, ministries of education need to ensure ESL curricula for all levels. They need to establish

Of the 1.8 million immigrants who arrived during the 1990s, 309,700, or 17%, were school-aged children and youth between 5 and 16 (Statistics Canada, 2003). Furthermore, many Canadian-born children are raised in first-generation immigrant households, contributing to the 10.5% of the population with home languages other than English or French.

research-based funding formulas with built-in accountability measures, and remove unjustifiable funding restrictions, such as fiscally-driven three or five year funding caps. Due to the extraordinary circumstances of many learners from refugee backgrounds, ministries may consider extending the age cap to accommodate learners with delayed or disrupted schooling. Ministries of education can also play a leadership role in ensuring that pre-service training in education and other professional fields integrates cultural competency in all courses. Other provincial departments related to health, social services and justice need to develop strategies to support school- and community-based initiatives to address needs of immigrant children and youth.

At the municipal level, service providers in the health, education, social services and justice sectors need to work in partnership to plan and implement inter-sectoral and system-wide coordination of services for immigrant children and youth. They further have to develop and integrate cultural competency in all practices. Community groups and schools need to work with parents of immigrant children and youth to help them develop the competency to advocate on behalf of their children and influence decisions regarding the availability and quality of services for them. Since children and youth spend a great deal of their time at school, service providers and community groups can strengthen relationships with schools to further promote the educational, social and cultural development of immigrant children and youth. Leadership in schools and school boards can also play an important role in the development of policies, regulations and programs that address pedagogically sound instruction, equitable resource allocation, staff development, accountability measures and tracking of students' progress.

## Conclusion

In light of a declining birthrate, an aging population, the imminent retirement of the baby boomer generation and Canada's low ranking (15<sup>th</sup> place) among the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries in research and development, immigrant children and youth could play an important role both in addressing Canada's new challenges and in ensuring that its future is prosperous (Greenspon, 2001; Roessingh, 2001). It is crucial that Canadian institutions develop policies and services to promote the academic success and socioeconomic well-being of immigrant children and youth. More importantly, they cannot risk being part of the development of a subculture of defeat and marginalization, in which children and youth with ESL needs, denied their right to language instruction and support services, face life-long underutilization of human potential.

## Acknowledgements

*The Conversation for Change: An Overview of Services for Immigrant Children and Youth in Calgary* initiative was commissioned by the City of Calgary (Family and Community Support Services), United Way of Calgary and Area, Canadian Heritage, Alberta Learning, and Alberta Community Development, Human Rights and Citizenship. The *Immigrant Children in Focus* project was funded by Alberta Community Development, Human Rights and Citizenship and Canadian Heritage. We wish to thank Amal Umar and Beth Chatten for their valuable comments.

## References

- Alberta Education. *Review of transcripts of selected immigrant students who received ESL funding*. Edmonton: Author, 1992.
- Collier, V. "How long? A synthesis of research on academic achievement in a second language." *TESOL Quarterly* 23 (1989): 509-531.
- Cookson, S., R. Waldman, B. Gushulak, D. MacPherson, F. Burkle, C. Paquet, E. Kliever & P. Walker. Immigrant and Refugee Health. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 4(3) (1998): 427-29.
- Cummins, J. "Age on arrival and immigrant second language learning in Canada: A reassessment." *Applied Linguistics*, 2 (1981): 132-149.
- Cummins, J. "The acquisition of English as a second language." In K. Spangenberg-Urbschat & R. Pritchard (Eds.), *Kids come in all languages*. Newark: International Reading Association, 1994, 36-62.
- Dawson, C. "Administrators warned to keep track of ESL results." *Calgary Herald*, January 7, 1998, B2.
- Dempster, L. & Albert, S. "Calgary a leader in ethnic minorities." *Calgary Herald*, February 18, 1998, A1-2.
- Grayson, J.P. ESL, *Ethno-racial origin, and academic achievement of university students*. Unpublished manuscript, 2004.
- Greenspon, E. Time for the Next Challenge. *Globe and Mail*, May 19, 2001.
- Gunderson, L. "The language, literacy, achievement, and social consequences of English-only programs for immigrant students." In J. Hoffman (Ed.) *The 53<sup>rd</sup> annual yearbook of the national reading conference*. Milwaukee: National Reading Conference, 2004, 1-27.
- Herlock, D., K. McCullagh & C. Schissel. *Conversation for change: An overview of services for immigrant children and youth in Calgary*. Calgary: Multifunder group, 2004.
- Lee, K.K. *Urban poverty in Canada: A statistical profile*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 2000.
- McInnes, C. "First you have to learn English." *Globe and Mail*, May 3, 1993, A1.
- Ngo, H. *Immigrant children in focus: A map of needs, strategies and resources*. Calgary: Coalition for Equal Access to Education, 2004.
- Roessingh, H. "Alberta's Advantage: Excellence, the New Economy and ESL." *Calgary Diversity Institute Newsletter*, Fall 2001, 1-2.
- Statistics Canada. *Immigrants in Canada*. Ottawa: Ministry of Industry. Catalogue No. 85F0033MIE, 2001.
- Statistics Canada. *Profile of languages in Canada: English, French and many others*. Ottawa: Industry Canada. Catalogue Number 96F0030XIE2001005, 2002.
- Statistics Canada. *Canada's ethnocultural portrait: The changing mosaic*. Ottawa: Industry Canada. Catalogue Number 96F0030XIE2001008, 2003.
- Watt, D. & H. Roessingh. "Some you win, most you lose: Tracking ESL dropout in high school (1998-1993)." *English Quarterly* 26(3) (1994): 5-7.
- Watt, D & H. Roessingh. The dynamics of ESL drop-out: Plus Ça change... *Canadian Modern Language Review* 58(2) (2001): 203-223.

## Endnote

- 1 The two documents, *Conversation for change: An overview of services for immigrant children and youth in Calgary* and *Immigrant children in focus: A map of needs, strategies and resources*, are the culmination of extensive work among stakeholders across all sectors. With this research in hand and a strong commitment of all those involved to continue to work together, the City of Calgary has a good start on ensuring that immigrant children and youth get the best possible start. The documents are available at [www.calgaryunitedway.org/research\\_reports.htm](http://www.calgaryunitedway.org/research_reports.htm) and [www.eslaction.com](http://www.eslaction.com).

# MORE SNOW ON THE ROOF

## Canada's Immigrant Seniors

### ABSTRACT

In Canada, two interesting demographic tendencies can currently be observed: the population is growing and is aging, while the population is rising, largely due to immigration. These combined tendencies have created a new group of elderly immigrants, which seems to have gone unnoticed. This is a new challenge that our country must now face. The author of this article suggests that it is necessary to undertake additional research on the needs (physiological, economic, and social) of immigrant elders. It is also necessary to better inform them of the programs and services available to them. The author would like to see more ethnocultural minority seniors participate in this decision process on the questions that touch them the most.

In the late nineteenth century, Chancellor Otto von Bismark of Germany learned that the life expectancy of men was 65 years so he responded by implementing the first institutional support for retirement. Little did he know that his actions would ripple throughout the Western World and eventually expand around the globe: he had inadvertently established age 65 as the standard for retirement, a norm that has become widely accepted as “senior” citizenship.

In Canada, two interesting demographic trends have been underway: an aging population and a population growth based upon immigration. These patterns combine to form a new group of aging immigrants that seems to have evaded notice.

When von Bismark implemented his 65 benchmark, persons aged 65 and over were effectively nearing the end of their lives. However, in the following hundred years, life expectancy grew and yet, “old age” is still considered as a single stage of life. A retired individual is “a retired senior” regardless of whether he is 65 or 95 years of age: this represents a 30 year span. It is like comparing a 5 year-old to a 35 year-old or a 20 year-old to a 50 year-old. Suzman and Riley (1985) offer three stages of persons over 65: the **young-old** (65 to 75/80), the **old-old** (75/80 to 90) and the **very-old** (over 85/90).

The physical and mental changes during the last thirty years of life are more dramatic than at any other period, except perhaps in the first 5 years. The three groups differ in important and significant ways but they all experience loss. They experience financial loss (income, savings, health costs), physical loss (strength, hearing, sight, mobility), emotional loss (family, friends, death, isolation, loneliness) and mental (memory, cognitive, emotional control). The young-old often remain active and enjoy full and rewarding roles and activities. For some, this stage can be extremely expressive and creative. They are more like “middle-aged,” but with more time! The old-old experience increasing loss but can enjoy fulfilling lives with environmental and social supports. The very old are often physically and mentally impaired and need extensive support at times from formal institutions (Schaie & Willis, 1998). They are sometimes referred to as the “frail elderly.”

The study of immigrants is complex and becomes even more confusing when considering aging. For example, researchers often aggregate refugees and immigrants and ignore the different classes of both immigrants (Family, Economic, Other) and refugees (Assisted, Sponsored, Asylum). Often those persons under economic classes immigrated when they were young or young adults. For example, the universities and health care fields have recruited individuals who have diverse backgrounds. Many of the individuals hired in the expansion of the universities in the 1970s have reached or are nearing retirement and entering the “Seniors” group. They have raised their families and Canada is now “home” even though they may have thought about returning when they first arrived. They are staying and making an impact in our communities. Their situations can be very different than those of the recent elderly, who require different policies and programs. Under the family class, immediate family have sponsored their parents and/or grandparents. Many from regions such as Asia do not speak English or French and are socially and economically dependent upon their children. They can be very isolated. These individuals will be older and have different social and health needs than business immigrants in the economic class. With increasing aging of immigrants, Canada is facing an increase in the old-old immigrant group from two sources. Many immigrants and refugees

aged in Canada, while others immigrated as a “senior,” having lived most of their aging years in their country of origin.

For example, one can imagine the differences between two senior immigrants/refugees from Hong Kong. The Governor General of Canada, the Right Honorable Adrienne Clarkson, immigrated as a refugee child during the Second World War. She grew up in Canada and evolved in Canadian society her entire life. She is very different from a “granny” who immigrated under the family reunification program at the age of 70. It is important that researchers, policy analysts and programmers do not aggregate these differences and make false assumptions and generalizations.

Gerontological research on minority groups has generally applied three conceptual frameworks: *multiple jeopardy*, *leveling*, and the *live course perspective* (Novak, 1997). In multiple jeopardy, researchers use variables such as age, sex, income, education, disability, and ethnicity to classify individuals. Broadly speaking, each of these variables can be compared to the dominant group and since older immigrants or visible minorities have poorer health and lower incomes than the dominant group, they experience the multiple “jeopardy” of their “status.” Not all immigrants are “visible minorities” and many of the elderly immigrants can be considered as part of the dominant society. In addition, because women live longer, the percentage of women increases over time. So the “jeopardy” of age, sex, visible minority, ethnicity, language, health, income, have a compounding effect that disadvantages the individual. However, if a cross-section of the sample is studied, it neglects the change over time that this particular group experiences. If the group starts out poor in both wealth and health, then the group will remain so later in life. If multiple jeopardy affects only the lower class visible minorities, then it is only social class rather than ethnic status that creates this multiple jeopardy (Novak, 1997).

Other research has suggested that there is a “leveling” and converging of indicators as people age. The disparity in the quality of life indicators between ethnic seniors and the dominant group diminishes as they age because of such

variables as strong family connections and supports. If middle-aged, ethnic minority individuals have a low income, their income changes little as they move into retirement and from employment income onto income support programs (Novak, 1997).

However, both the multiple jeopardy and leveling approaches miss the diversity within minority groups, they also miss the effects of earlier life. For example, refugees and immigrants from the People’s Republic of China and Hong Kong come from very different cultures, yet are frequently clustered together for statistical purposes. Recent immigrants and long-term immigrants have different experiences and may not be comparable but are nevertheless listed as “Chinese.” In addition, some refugees who have come from Central and South America have experienced trauma and torture. These and other trauma will influence them in subtle but important ways, limiting the value of simple comparisons. The life experiences and subjective qualitative perspectives are major influences of integration, life satisfaction, mental health and emotional stability (Novak, 1997). Hence, the life course perspective offers a valuable framework in completing research on aging immigrants and refugees. Often trauma that occurred decades ago resurfaces in frail elderly suffering from cognitive dysfunctions or emotional problems.

Both the multiple jeopardy and leveling approaches miss the diversity within minority groups, they also miss the effects of life prior to immigration to Canada.

#### Current Situation in Canada

According to the 2001 Census, 5.1% of the Canadian population is deemed “old” and 12.2% as “Senior” (65 years and older), up from 9.1% in 1981. Like most developed countries, Canada is experiencing an aging population due to an increasing life expectancy and a declining birth rate.

The seniors’ population is expected to continue to grow and Statistics Canada projects the percentage of seniors to be 23% of all Canadians by 2041. The greatest growth will be in the old-old and very-old ranges. The senior population is predominantly female with 57% of the over 64 age group women. The percentage increases to 60% for the old-old (75-84 years of age) and 70% for the very-old (over 85).

**Table 1: Senior Immigrants and Place of Birth (Percentage of Group)**

		65-74 years	75 and over	Seniors - 65 and over
Seniors Total	Canadian Population	7.1	5.1	12.2
Total	Immigrant	11.1	7.8	18.9
Total	Europe	17.3	13.4	30.7
Total	Central and South America	4.6	2.1	6.7
-	- Caribbean	7.0	3.4	11.4
Total	Africa	5.5	2.5	8.0
Total	Asia	6.5	3.4	9.7
	- Eastern Asia	8.2	4.8	13.0
	- South-East Asia	5.1	2.8	7.9
	- South Asia	5.2	3.3	8.5

**Table 2: Senior Immigrants and Place of Birth** (Percentage of Canadian Seniors)

		65-74 years	75 and over	Seniors - 65 and over
Seniors	Canadian Population	58.1	41.9	100.0
Total	Non-Immigrant	71.2	71.7	71.4
Total	Immigrant	28.6	28.0	28.4
		<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Total	Europe	18.8	20.2	19.4
Total	Central and South America	0.7	0.4	0.6
	– Caribbean	1.0	0.7	0.8
Total	Africa	0.7	0.5	0.6
Total	Asia	6.1	4.5	5.4
	– Eastern Asia	2.9	2.3	2.6
	– South East Asia	1.1	0.9	1.0
	– South Asia	1.5	0.9	1.2

Table 1 presents the percentage of senior immigrants by place of birth in two age categories (65-74 and 75 and over years of age). Almost 19% of the immigrant population in Canada is over 65, which is much higher than the national average of 12.2%. And almost 31% of the immigrants from Europe are over 65 years of age. The European immigrants are an aging population. The senior population from Eastern Asia (mostly Hong Kong, China, Taiwan) is 13% of total immigrants from this region. Caribbean immigrants are also older than other immigrant groups and near the national average at 11.7%. The assumption that “immigrants” are young is not supported. Canada has larger numbers of immigrants from diverse backgrounds. The senior population is mirroring the Canadian mosaic. By percentage, the youngest group is from Central and South America (6.7%). Not surprisingly the African and South East Asia groups (Thailand, Laos, Vietnam) are still fairly young, at about 8.0% each. However since many East Asians came to Canada as refugees during the Vietnam civil war, their senior population is expected to grow.

Table 2, *Senior Immigrants and Place of Birth*, “re-jigs” the numbers to show percentages from place of birth in the total population of the Canadian seniors population. Some interesting patterns emerge. Of the total senior population, 28.4% are immigrants (up from 16.9% in 1981) and 19.4% of all seniors are from Europe. However, immigration patterns from Asia show, in fact, that 5.4% (one in twenty) seniors in Canada are Asian and 4.4% are South Asian! These Asian seniors are concentrated in the major cities but are present throughout Canada. Overall, 7.2% of the senior’s population is a visible minority (up from 6% in 1996).

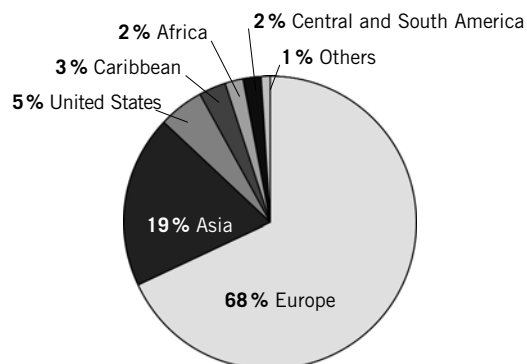
The Chart below, *Percentages of Immigrant Seniors by Continent*, shows that 68% of all Immigrant Seniors are originally from Europe and that 19% (one in five) come from Asia. The face of immigrant seniors is changing.

The Canadian government provides two major income security programs for seniors that many immigrants can access. If they have been in Canada for 10 years, all

immigrant seniors (over 65 years of age) are eligible for the Old Age Security program that provides a modest pension. If the senior immigrated at aged 62 then they could be eligible for benefits at age 72, regardless of whether or not they have ever been employed in Canada. If the senior has a low income, he/she may be eligible for other benefits as early as age 60, providing he/she met the 10-year requirement.

Canada has international social security agreements with many countries to help people qualify for benefits from either country. An agreement may allow periods of contribution to the other country’s social security system (or, in some cases, periods of residence abroad) to be added to periods of contribution to the Canada Pension Plan in order to meet minimum qualifying conditions. For example, these agreements would allow a citizen of Germany to access the Canada Pension Plan, including retirement, disability and survivor benefits in Canada. These agreements have been signed with developed countries that have existing income programs for seniors; although it is rare that individuals have

**Chart 1: Percentages of Immigrant Seniors by Continent**



immigrated specifically to “retire,” it does happen. It may seem strange, but for some, the opportunity of living near adult children in their children’s new country is definitely attractive.

For those seniors who immigrated late in life, they may find that they are exclusively financially dependent upon their sponsoring family.

### Issues and Developing Needs

As the demographics shift there is a need to better understand and appreciate the diversity among the senior population. In recent years, there has been significant change since Driedger and Chappell published *Aging and Ethnicity: Toward an Interface* (1987). Efforts to improve understanding should be developed throughout society, in all sectors. There is a need for further research and implications for policies and programs. The Prairie Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration, a Canadian Metropolis Site, recognized the paucity of research in this field and funded a Social Domain exploratory study. The study is holistic in the sense that it considers the senior immigrant as a total person with social, economic, physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Using both quantitative and qualitative data, it examined social and cultural factors, family and inter-personal relationships and living arrangements and conditions. The dissemination of the findings is in process and preliminary results are integrated in this article.

Ethnic seniors must have decision-making powers regarding issues that affect them and need to be involved and represented at all level of organizations, government departments, and communities. As active participants, they will have a voice in policy, social, and program developments (CPHA, 1988).

Immigrant seniors offer a potential resource to Canadian society and methods should be developed to encourage volunteer service in agencies that provide services to ethnic groups. Sometimes volunteer service is “foreign” to some groups and efforts to develop volunteerism may be necessary.

Information regarding services and programs must be accessible to ethnic seniors. Language barriers in the service agencies must be improved through the use of interpreters, translation of materials, and employment of multilingual staff. Language barriers have made services inaccessible by ethnic seniors and as a result, they do not receive the assistance or the information they need or are entitled to receive.

Changes need to be made in major health and social services agencies such to better serve ethnic seniors (Olson, 2001). Some of the service agencies do not meet their needs and are not culturally sensitive (Gelfand, 2003). Ironically, in most health and social agencies, the employees are ethnically diverse from the custodial and support through to the professional staff. Some suggestions for change include having service providers re-evaluate their facility’s services. For example, one of the major issues for ethnic seniors is the inappropriate diet in long-term care facilities. Since many of these elderly are frail and immigrated under the family class, which means that they have had little time to adjust to Western life and foods. They often enter long-term care in poor health and their final years are disappointing.

At times, there is a need for specialized services for special needs groups such as mental health, dementia, and end-of-life care (Butler, Lewis and Sunderland, 1998; Fisher, Ross and MacLean, 2000). Research on mental health and ethnic seniors is lacking, especially on those seniors who have suffered through past violence and trauma and who feel the effects late in life.

There have been changing values in filial responsibility and more immigrant seniors wish to, and are living, independently. To achieve independent living, many need economic security and access to support services. They may need services such as Home Care, Meals On Wheels and day care/respite that are culturally appropriate.

Overall, the ethno-cultural seniors need to be recognized and valued for their diversity, have more decision-making powers regarding polices, economics, health and social issues that affect them, and gain better knowledge about the services and programs that are available to them. All of us are aging and as our hair turns white, we are experiencing “more snow on the roof.” Our diverse multicultural nation is facing new challenges with our aging population, making Canada an exciting place to live.

### References

- Butler, Robert N., Myrna I. Lewis & Trey Sunderland. *Aging and Mental Health: Positive Psychosocial and Biomedical Approaches*. Needham Heights: Allyn and Bacon, 1998.
- Canada, 2005. <http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/popula.htm#imm>  
<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/standard/themes/>
- CPHA (Canadian Public Health Association). (1988). *Ethnicity and Aging Report: A National Workshop on Ethnicity and Aging 21-24 February 1988*. Ottawa: Ministry of State.
- Driedger, Leo & Neena Chappell. *Aging and Ethnicity: Toward an Interface*. Toronto: Butterworths, 1987.
- Gelfand, Donald E. *Aging and Ethnicity: Knowledge and Services*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York: Springer Publishing Company, Inc., 2003.
- Fisher, Rory, Margaret M. ROSS & Michael J. MacLean. *A Guide to End-of-Life Care for Seniors*. University of Toronto: National Advisory Committee, 2000.
- Novak, Mark. *Issues in Aging: An Introduction to Gerontology*. New York: Addison-Wesley Publishers Inc., 1997.
- Olson, Laura Katz, Ed. *Age Through Ethnic Lenses: Caring for the Elderly in a Multicultural Society*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001.
- Schaie, K. Warner & Sherry L. Willis. *Adult Development and Aging*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 1996.
- Suzman, R. & M.W. Riley. “Introducing the ‘oldest old.’” *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly: Health and Society*, 63(1985): 177-185.

# SENIORS AND IMMIGRATION

## Services and Issues

### ABSTRACT

The Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) is a non-profit organization that strives to effectively respond to the needs and preoccupations of immigrant seniors. In this article, the authors describe the barriers that this specific population faces – especially linguistic barriers – and the activities undertaken by CCIS to facilitate reciprocal integration. In our opinion, we need to pursue research on immigrant elders to further support the work of service providers.

Calgary is the fourth highest destination for immigrants and refugees in all of Canada and 20.9% of Calgarians are born outside of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2001). About one-third (31% of individuals aged 45-64 and 37% of individuals 65+) of seniors living in Calgary immigrated to Canada from another country (Statistics Canada, 2001). Most of these immigrant seniors (54%) arrived in Canada when they were between 20 and 39 years of age and grew to be seniors in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2001). As individuals, including seniors, continue to immigrate to Canada, and as our population ages, the number of immigrant seniors in Canada and Calgary will continue to grow. We must respond to these demographics and welcome and effectively serve immigrant seniors.

The Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) is one agency that is striving to effectively respond to the needs and concerns of immigrant seniors, and is also supporting other agencies to do the same. CCIS is a non-profit volunteer organization which provides settlement and integration services to all immigrants and refugees in Southern Alberta. With dedication and determination, we work in partnership with the community to help immigrants and refugees settle and become contributing members of Canadian Society.

As part of its mandate, CCIS initiated its Immigrant Seniors Services (ISS) 8 years ago to promote reciprocal integration and access to community services for immigrant seniors. The ISS is funded by the City of Calgary - Family and Community Support Services. CCIS has been providing community leadership in the field of immigrant seniors services through special programs and initiatives, including community development. ISS provides:

- needs assessments;
- case management;
- notary services;
- form completion;
- language services;
- preventive educational workshops for immigrant seniors;
- facilitates reciprocal integration activities and events;
- volunteer services;
- cultural competency enhancement assessment, training, and support;
- identification of immigrant seniors needs through focus groups; and
- voicing immigrant seniors needs and concerns in committees.

Immigrant seniors are at high risk throughout the settlement/immigration process. Through its work with immigrant seniors, ISS has noted some prominent challenges and barriers that this population faces, including:

- culture shock – they have lived in another culture and surroundings for so long that the changes demanded by their new environment may be particularly confusing;
- communication – language, cultural, and informational barriers are common;
- family support – they depend heavily on others, especially younger relatives, for financial, social, and psychological support;
- social support – loss of friends and difficulty making new ones; social support groups and recreational activities may be unfamiliar and are not always culturally appropriate;



- Family changes – family and intergenerational relations are usually stressed due to changes in structure of the family and traditional roles;
- Financial challenges – many are financially disadvantaged because they are under the 10-year family sponsorship agreement that prevents access to many resources; and
- Community resources – immigrant seniors are limited in terms of knowledge of community resources and systems

The above circumstances lead to isolation and alienation of the immigrant senior. Further research is needed to strengthen this information and to enhance understanding and strategies related to the above challenges.

Both seniors and service providers state that language is a major barrier to effective services. In Calgary, nearly 6,000 (7%) individuals aged 65 and over speak neither English nor French (Statistics Canada, 2001). Language barriers decrease immigrant seniors' awareness of services and their ability to understand and benefit from services if they are able to access them. CCIS' Immigrant Seniors Needs Advisory Committee and Seniors Needs Assessment Project state that language barriers prevent them from fully accessing services available for seniors. Women may face even greater language barriers because they have fewer chances to learn English and may not be able to read in their first language. There is a need for English as a Second Language programs specifically for seniors (Calgary Immigrant Seniors Services Society, 1992). Most ESL classes are based on topics that are more appropriate for younger individuals, such as employment. Many immigrant seniors have difficulty attending ESL classes because they are taking care of their grandchildren and/or have difficulty getting transportation to the class. At CCIS, the Seniors Literacy Project facilitates the opportunity for immigrant seniors to access one-on-one English tutoring that is appropriate to their needs with another senior.

When discussing how to enhance their services for immigrant seniors, service providers insist that little can be done without interpretation and translation. At an ISS presentation on immigrant seniors, 100% of Outreach Workers seniors identified a need for assistance with finding accessible and free/low-cost interpretation. There is some interpretation available for service providers working with seniors; however, most seniors and non-profit agencies cannot afford the cost. Free interpretation is available, but only for health related concerns referred through a hospital. There is a need for more affordable and accessible interpretation services for immigrant seniors and those that provide

services to them. ISS is beginning to develop strategies to assist seniors' service providers in accessing such interpretation.

Through ongoing focus groups held with CCIS' Immigrant Seniors Needs Advisory Committee and the Seniors Needs Assessment Project in 2004, immigrant seniors also frequently identified the following needs: language, housing, health/medical, safety, financial/pension, education, elder abuse, and recreation and leisure activities.

ISS promotes reciprocal integration. In order for immigrant seniors to integrate into Canadian society, immigrant seniors, mainstream seniors, and service providers must make an effort to learn about each other and interact with each other. It is not up to just one of these groups to completely change themselves to adapt to the others' needs. When each side makes an effort, all individuals involved feel respected, appreciated, and welcome. Full integration takes place only when everyone remains open, respectful, flexible, and works together to make society better for all.

ISS works with mainstream seniors' centres and clubs and ethnocultural seniors and seniors groups to facilitate reciprocal integration events for seniors. This gives seniors the chance to learn about each other and interact in a friendly, social, informal environment. One example is the Multicultural Fiesta, held every year in partnership with the Golden Age Club, a seniors' centre. ISS volunteers contact and invite individuals within their communities to this event. Immigrant and mainstream seniors come together and enjoy cultural performances and various potluck dishes. Participants report feeling more open to and comfortable with seniors of other cultural backgrounds.

Another focus of ISS is diversity enhancement. Effectively serving immigrant seniors can seem difficult and overwhelming. Diversity Services help services to analyze their systemic barriers, enhance what is already in place, and develop strategies to make their organizations more accessible and inclusive for immigrant seniors.

Everyone has made some efforts, and we assist groups to build and expand on these strengths, not create something new, add more work, or completely change their group. ISS provides individualized training in a variety of areas to mainstream senior services to enhance their knowledge and skills relating to serving immigrant seniors. To facilitate reciprocal integration, there are three target groups for this process: Seniors' Centres' Board Members, Outreach workers/service providers, and senior members of Seniors' Centres or Clubs.

CCIS researches the needs and issues of immigrant seniors, including the Seniors Needs Assessment Project, undertaken by the agency in 2004, a report of which will be

There is some interpretation available for service providers working with seniors; however, most seniors and non-profit agencies cannot afford the cost. Free interpretation is available, but only for health related concerns referred through a hospital. There is a need for more affordable and accessible interpretation services for immigrant seniors and those that provide services to them.

made available to the public in early 2005. It is anticipated that the data collected in this project will be of great benefit to the immigrant seniors and service providers of the Calgary community. To further support the work of service providers, more research with immigrant seniors needs to be done. We cannot serve immigrant seniors without first knowing immigrant seniors. Demographics are available on immigrants and seniors, but it is challenging to find current data on immigrant seniors, especially on immigrant seniors and age, gender, income, ability to speak English and/or French, and cultural background and/or country of origin. Service providers are often willing to serve immigrant seniors, but then face the barrier of not knowing how to do so. Best practices of outreaching and effectively serving immigrant seniors (beyond interpretation and translation) are needed to encourage and guide seniors' services. A greater understanding of how immigrant seniors make a positive contribution could make immigrant seniors feel more valued and welcome, and could enhance society's understanding of and openness to this population.

Canada's demographics are changing, and service providers are striving to respond effectively to the needs and concerns of diverse groups, including immigrant seniors. However, they could benefit from additional funding and support as they continue to enhance their knowledge and services. There is a need to recognize the value of immigrant seniors and their contributions, and to increase funding and programs available to serve them across Canada. Calgary Catholic Immigration Society and its Immigrant Seniors Services will continue to listen to, voice, and serve the needs of immigrant seniors and encourage and support seniors' services to do the same.

---

For more information, please contact Diane Fisher, Manager of Community Development and Integration Services Division at (403) 290-5751 or [dfisher@ccis-calgary.ab.ca](mailto:dfisher@ccis-calgary.ab.ca).



## Diversité canadienne / Canadian Diversity

The Association for Canadian Studies produced a special issue of Canadian Diversity/Diversité canadienne (Vol. 3:1, Winter 2004) on the subject of Intersections of Diversity. It was guest edited by Anneke Rummens (University of Toronto) and includes seventeen articles by researchers, policy makers and non-governmental organizations. These explore the implications of intersections using practical examples and discuss how a failure to think through or consider the consequences of intersections leads to inequitable policy and program outcomes. To order a copy of the magazine, please contact either the Association for Canadian Studies ([Allison.Anderson@acs-aec.ca](mailto:Allison.Anderson@acs-aec.ca)) or the Metropolis Project ([francois.bertrand@cic.gc.ca](mailto:francois.bertrand@cic.gc.ca)).

# APPLYING A LIFE-COURSE LENS

## to Immigrant Integration

### ABSTRACT

Can the life-course approach be applied to immigrant integration? The answer to this question is affirmative, for two reasons. First, because immigration is an important and often perturbing experience that has an effect on the most important life trajectories. Second, because integration is a dynamic process that plays on the interactions between immigrant and the host society, both at the local and national levels. The author maintains that a dynamic analysis is necessary for this type of study.

Life-course is likely the second most popular sociological concept, after social capital, exported to the policy and research community. Broadly referred to as the social processes that extend over one's life span, the life-course has several properties. First, it is a dynamic process, consisting of many overlapping trajectories over an individual's course of life. The key trajectories are family and household formation, formal learning, paid employment, and community participation.<sup>2</sup> Second, each of the trajectories is marked by a series of transitions, some of which are often age-graded and socially regulated, such as the age to drive, to vote, to work and to retire, and so on. These transitions present opportunities and challenges to the individual. Third, along the various trajectories, each individual accumulates resources through his/her interaction with the society in which he/she lives. These resources appreciate or depreciate over life, affecting the person's ability to respond to changes brought about by significant transitions such as from school to work, being in between employments, marriage, or childbirth.

The life-course approach marks a departure from current thinking on social policy, which is based mostly on aggregate point-in-time statistics. It allows for analyses beyond simply categorizing people in different stages of life, such as being poor or unemployed, to examining the dynamics of changes between stages of life and the associated factors.<sup>1</sup> Such analyses are possible due to the availability of longitudinal data in recent years. For example, longitudinal data shows that being in low-income circumstances is a transitory state for most, except for individuals and groups with certain social and demographic attributes who are more vulnerable to low-income for several consecutive years.<sup>ii</sup> In addition to transitions, the life-course approach centers on the individual, particularly the two-way flow of resources between the individual and social institutions.

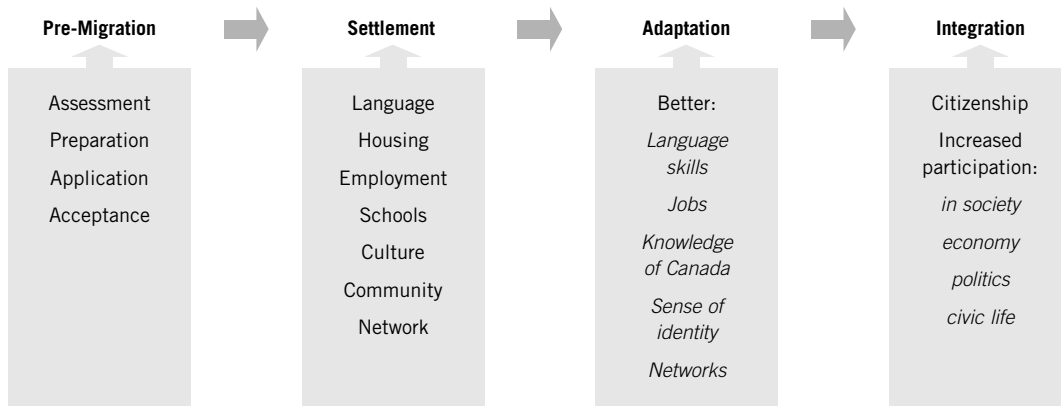
In Europe, the life-course approach has been applied to issues such as poverty and exclusion. It has been argued that each individual is endowed with a set of resources, such as human capital acquired through education and life experiences, income and assets, support from government and community organizations, as well as social relations through family and friends. Along the course of life, these resources become 'buffers' when a person faces setbacks, including family breakdown, health problems, and employment disruptions. Changes in policies and the social and economic conditions inevitably affect the amount and type of resources one is able to accumulate. If these buffers are not strong enough to overcome life's calamities, then the person risks being at the margin of society.<sup>iii</sup>

Can the life-course approach be applied in the context of immigrant integration? The answer is affirmative, for two reasons. First, immigration is a significant and often disruptive transition in life, affecting major life-course trajectories. Second, integration is a dynamic process involving the interactions between immigrants and the receiving society at a local and national level. Immigrants are a diverse group in terms of age, gender, family status, category of admission, and socio-economic status. These attributes have implications for how well individuals fare in society.<sup>iv</sup>

### Immigration Experience in the Life-Course

Transplanting from one society to another is a long-term process that begins prior to migration and continues beyond the initial settlement stage.<sup>v</sup> Immigrant integration is a challenging and two-way process. It requires effort on the part of immigrants as well as the receiving society, including

**Figure 1 – Life-Course Transition of an Adult Immigrant**



Adapted from Frank and Kunz (2004)

governments, communities, the private sector, family and friends. ('Integration' here refers to the full participation of immigrants in the receiving society. It does not imply that immigrants are to be 'assimilated' into the mainstream society.)

Over the past decade, academics as well as researchers in government departments and agencies have generated an impressive amount of evidence on the social and economic integration of immigrants in Canada.<sup>3</sup> By now, most people are familiar with the immigrant story. On average, immigrants have higher education levels than the Canadian-born, but their credentials seem to be depreciated in the Canadian labour market.<sup>vi</sup> Recent immigrants make up one of the five groups most at risk of persistent low income.<sup>vii</sup> <sup>4</sup> Moreover, immigrants often need additional language training to fully participate in their new communities, given that many come from countries whose official language is neither English nor French.

In light of these findings, researchers and policy practitioners are asking the following questions: What responsibilities do Canadian institutions have with respect to the economic well-being of newcomers? What are the responsibilities of newcomers vis-à-vis the labour market and integration in general?<sup>5</sup> To address these questions, one must first appreciate what it is like to start life anew in a country that is often culturally and socially different from one's own.

**The Story of Tang**

The following chart illustrates the transition of Tang, a hypothetical male in his late 30s, who came to Canada.<sup>viii</sup> <sup>6</sup> Tang was a doctor of Chinese medicine. He was invited by his friend and former colleague to work in his thriving Chinese medicine store and clinic in Toronto. His friend knew that Tang was proficient in English and that Tang was a good acupuncturist. After a self-assessment on the selection grid, Tang decided to apply to immigrate to Canada under the skilled worker category. While waiting for the application to be processed, he learned about the culture and customs of Canada, especially in Toronto. He continued to improve his English by taking night classes. In his communications with his former colleague, he found websites and addresses of settlement organizations in Canada, and started contacting some of them for information on living in Canada. After two

years, his application was successful. With some of his savings and his anticipation, Tang boarded a plane for Toronto.

Such a move came with a cost. Tang declined an offer of promotion and resigned from his job at home. He left behind his wife and five-year-old son, as well as relatives and friends.

Upon arrival, his friend picked him up at the airport. Tang rented an apartment with the help of his friend, who also introduced him to other people in the Chinese community. Life was difficult at first. He was not able to practice as a licensed professional. Following Canadian news and entertainment required much effort. He worked in his friend's store and clinic during the day and took language classes in the evening. With the help of a settlement agency, he started to approach the appropriate licensing bodies to get his credentials recognized. To meet people outside the Chinese community, Tang participated in the Host program offered by another settlement organization, which paired him with a Canadian volunteer.

After a few years, Tang became a licensed homeopathic doctor and acupuncturist. His language skills improved. After saving enough for a down payment, he opened his own practice. Networks were formed among people in the Chinese community and beyond. Tang developed a greater understanding of Canadian society, its rules, laws, values, and institutions. He applied to become a Canadian citizen. In the meantime, he sponsored his wife and son to immigrate to Canada.

The story also suggests that newcomers and the receiving society both bear responsibility for immigrant integration. In addition, it illustrates the flow of resources between Tang and the receiving society, including governments, the market, and community organizations. Tang brought his skills, knowledge and ambition with him to his adopted country. The Canadian Government granted him permanent resident status, allowing him to work and live in the country indefinitely. Licensing bodies permitted him to practice his profession, and Tang paid the association fees. The market provided Tang with the opportunity to make a living, and Tang filled the need for alternative health care. Further, Tang paid taxes, purchased goods and services. The community offered a safe, healthy and welcoming environment, and Tang reciprocated by volunteering.

Obviously, this is the ‘ideal type’ of immigration process. There are many other alternative paths and endings. Take a different scenario, for example. Prior to immigration, the information Tang acquired on credential recognition and job opportunities in Canada was not very useful. He socialized primarily with his own ethnic community. He would have liked to meet people outside his own ethnic community, but was not comfortable with speaking English. Occasionally, he attended social events outside his own community, but was left out of the conversation because he could not understand the cultural references that were common to Canadians, nor did anyone bother to explain these cultural references to him. He lived in an over-crowded apartment with several other migrants. In addition to working at his friend’s store, he took on two other part-time jobs to make ends meet. Consequently, he was not able to attend language classes. The licensing process overwhelmed him and the counseling he received from service agencies was not very helpful. In the meantime, his former boss was asking him to go back. Eventually, Tang returned home.

### Implications for Research and Policy

What does a life-course approach mean for research and policy on immigrant integration? First, it requires longitudinal data. Much of our knowledge to date on the topic derives from cross-sectional surveys. They show how immigrants compare to the Canadian-born at one point in time, taking into account a certain set of attributes, such as gender, age, education, and so on. Monitoring a cohort of immigrants over time, one would be able to see factors that contribute to changes in the labour market and other outcomes. Longitudinal data also enables researchers to map out pathways to integration, identifying transition points where individuals are vulnerable to exclusion, and the resources useful for preventing such exclusion. Second, with an understanding of these transitions and resources, proactive measures could be developed to facilitate the transitions. As shown earlier, integration begins before migration. Language training, credential assessment, and cultural orientation could be offered overseas to potential applicants so that they can be on their feet soon when they come to Canada. This does not simply mean giving out an information flyer. Rather, it takes the collaborative efforts of governments and stakeholders to deliver appropriate, effective, and systematic programs. Third, while settlement agencies have the specific mandate to assist newcomers in the years immediately following arrival, the full inclusion of immigrants requires the efforts of all sectors of society. In addition to language training and credential recognition, the success of immigrant integration depends on a society that values equity, diversity, and progress.

In conclusion, the life-course approach is about focusing on dynamics rather than the static. It is about building resources and capabilities. There has been awareness among researchers and policy practitioners of the need and the utility of dynamic analyses. One example is the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC), which monitors a sample of newcomers from six months to four years after arrival. Collaborative efforts are underway to improve the labour market integration of immigrants. TRIEC, the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, brings

together stakeholders representing employers, labour, occupational regulatory bodies, post-secondary institutions, assessment service providers, community organizations, and all three orders of government. Its objective is to build bridges between immigrants and the local labour market, by preparing skilled immigrants for the labour market on the one hand, and equipping stakeholders and governments to better appreciate the values of newcomers on the other.<sup>7</sup> Finally, there are no magic ingredients to create instant ‘ideal immigrants.’ As a Chinese would say: you cannot eat a hot bun in a hurry. Life-course is about time.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The views expressed here are those of the author and not of the Policy Research Initiative.
- <sup>2</sup> For a full discussion on the life-course framework, please refer to the discussion paper by the Policy Research Initiative, *A Life-Course Approach to Social Policy Analysis: A Proposed Framework*, August 2004.
- <sup>3</sup> Readers should refer to the web sites of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Statistics Canada, and the Metropolis Project for literature on immigration and integration.
- <sup>4</sup> The other four at-risk groups are older unattached individuals, the disabled, lone parents, and Aboriginals living off-reserve.
- <sup>5</sup> Adapted from the discussion questions at the Metropolis Interdepartmental Committee, February 16, 2005.
- <sup>6</sup> According to Citizenship and Immigration’s annual immigration overview, Facts and Figures, men are more likely than women to be principal applicants.
- <sup>7</sup> Information is available at [www.triec.ca](http://www.triec.ca)

### References

- <sup>i</sup> Giddens, Anthony. *The Third Way and Its Critics*. Policy Press, 2000.
- <sup>ii</sup> Frank, Jeff & Jean Lock KUNZ. “New Approaches for Addressing Poverty and Exclusion.” Presentation at the Policy Research Initiative Conference, “Exploring New Approaches to Social Policy.” Ottawa, December 13-15, 2004.
- <sup>iii</sup> Room, Graham. “Trajectories of Social Exclusion,” *Breadline Europe: The Measurement of Poverty*. D. GORDON & P. TOWNSEND, eds. The Policy Press, 2000, 407-439.
- <sup>iv</sup> Kunz, Jean Lock. “Labour Market Integration of Immigrants and Racial Minorities: Identities that Count.” *Canadian Diversity* 3(1) (2004): 31-33.
- <sup>v</sup> Frank, Jeff & Jean Lock Kunz. “New Approaches for Addressing Poverty and Exclusion.” Presentation at the Policy Research Initiative Conference, “Exploring New Approaches to Social Policy.” Ottawa, December 13-15, 2004.
- <sup>vi</sup> Alboim, Naomi, Ross Finnie & Ronald Meng. “The Discounting of Immigrants’ Skills in Canada: Evidence and Policy Recommendations.” *IRPP, Choices*: 11(2) (2005), [www.irpp.org](http://www.irpp.org)
- <sup>vii</sup> Hatfield, Michael. “Vulnerability to Persistent Low Income.” *Horizons* 7(2) (2004): 19-23.
- <sup>viii</sup> Frank, Jeff & Jean Lock Kunz. “New Approaches for Addressing Poverty and Exclusion.” Presentation at the Policy Research Initiative Conference, “Exploring New Approaches to Social Policy.” Ottawa, December 13-15, 2004.

# ELDERLY IMMIGRANTS IN CANADA

## Income Sources and Self-Sufficiency (SUMMARY)

### ABSTRACT

In Canada, there is a high prevalence of elderly immigrants among the low-income population. Do these elderly immigrants arrive in Canada with few resources, or do they become poor after their arrival? This article is a summary of a longer research paper on the elderly immigrant population and sources of income. It provides an overview of the main findings and raises questions needful of future investigation.

In previous analyses of the immigrant population, elderly immigrants arose as a group with a high prevalence of low income individuals. It remained unclear whether these immigrants landed in Canada in an older age group or whether they arrived at a younger age and became part of the elderly group years later. The methodology used in this paper will allow this question to be addressed. Throughout this analysis the elderly population is defined as those aged 60 years or older in a given tax year. The elderly immigrant population is divided into three groups: long-term elders who landed in Canada aged 40-49 years, short-term elders who landed aged 50-59 years, and immediate elders who landed aged 60 years or older.

Using data from the longitudinal Immigrant Database (IMDB) this paper builds on two aspects of previous research in this area.<sup>1</sup> First, this paper investigates the demographic characteristics of the three groups of elderly in an attempt to highlight differences that may affect income. The second part of this analysis takes a more in-depth look at the income sources of elderly immigrants in Canada. Generally speaking, individuals with low income are often less self-sufficient and, as a result, may rely more heavily on social transfers. Labour market and retirement income are further disaggregated here to allow for a detailed analysis of reliance on specific income sources, with particular attention given to reliance on social transfers.

### Data & Definitions

There are two general types of income investigated in this analysis. The first is referred to as market income, which represents income available to the working age population. Market income includes income from employment earnings, self-employment earnings, investment, employment insurance, and provincial supplements which include social assistance.<sup>2</sup>

The second income type is referred to as retirement income, which represents income available exclusively to the elderly. Retirement income includes income from C/QPP,<sup>3</sup> OAS,<sup>4</sup> the GIS/Allowance,<sup>5</sup> RRSPs, and private pension plans.<sup>6</sup>

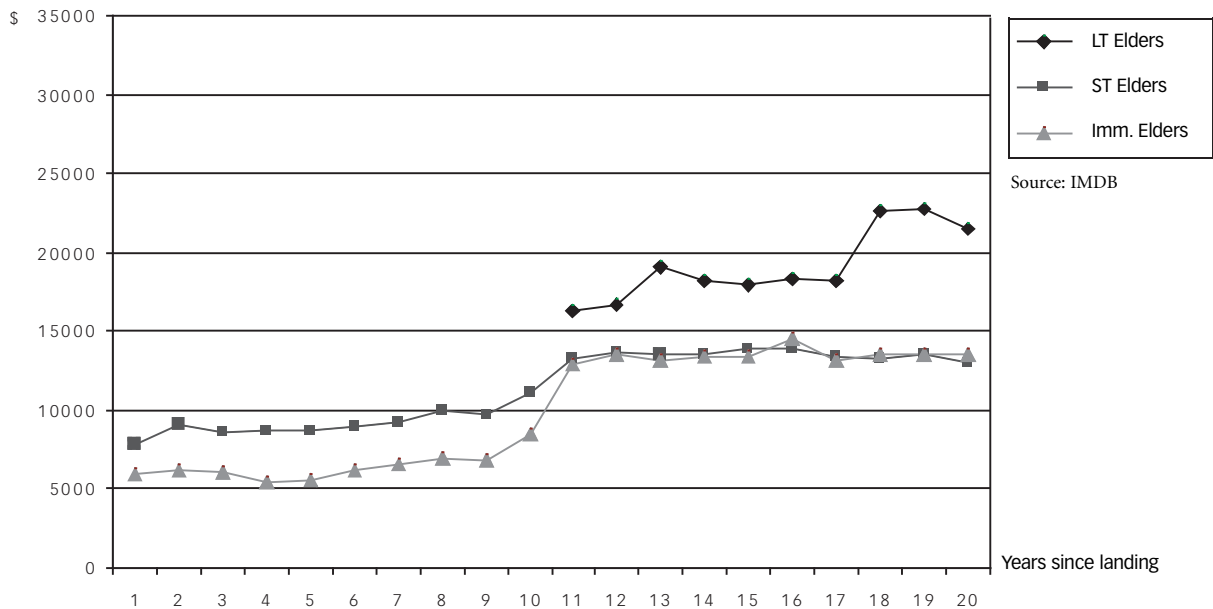
The population investigated in this paper is taken from the IMDB.<sup>7</sup> The IMDB combines administrative records on immigration with taxation information to form a comprehensive source of data on the labour market experiences of the landed immigrant population. Currently, the IMDB covers the period 1980-2000, providing data on approximately 2.5 million immigrants in Canada. To be captured in this sample an individual must have filed a tax return at least once during the period 1980-2000. As noted earlier, for this paper, the elderly population is defined as immigrant taxfilers aged 60 years or older in a given tax year. As mentioned earlier, the elderly population is divided into three groups: long-term elders who landed in Canada aged 40-49 years, short-term elders who landed aged 50-59 years, and immediate elders who landed aged 60 years or older.

### Summary of Major Findings

Parents and Grandparents account for the largest share of the short-term and immediate elderly populations.

In tax year 2000 Parents and Grandparents accounted for 20% of the long-term elderly population. Skilled Principal Applicants accounted for a slightly higher share equal to approximately 27% and Refugees represented 17%.

**Figure 1: Average Real Annual Income for Elderly Immigrants in Tax Year 2000, by Elderly Subgroup**



For the elderly populations who were older at time of landing the share of Skilled Principal Applicants and Refugees is markedly lower while the share of Parents and Grandparents is higher. Parents and Grandparents accounted for over 60% of the short-term elderly population and 79% of the immediate elderly population.

There is a negative relationship between educational attainment and age at landing.

On average, 61% of long-term elders had less than a high school education (0-12 years of schooling) at the time of landing. For short-term and immediate elders the shares were 74 and 79%, respectively.

On the other end of the spectrum, an average of 13% of long-term elders held a university degree. For short-term and immediate elders the shares were 9.8% and 8.4%, respectively.

Age at landing affects income later in life.

Figure 1 displays the average annual income for each elderly group in tax year 2000. There is evidence of a negative relationship between age at landing and annual income.

**Long-term elders** reported the highest annual incomes of all three elderly groups. Not unrelated to this, long-term elders had the highest incidence of private market income and the lowest incidence of public market income throughout the entire observation period. Elderly immigrants in this group also had the lowest incidence of income from non-contributory retirement sources.

**Short-term elders** and immediate elders had very similar income situations, especially following the 10-year mark; however, an age at landing effect was still apparent. Short-term elders had a higher incidence of employment earnings and a lower incidence of provincial supplements prior to the 10-year mark. They also reported a higher annual income than immediate elders in the first 10 years after landing. At the 10-year mark both groups began a noticeable transition

from market income to retirement income. Incidence of private market income fell while the incidence of non-contributory retirement income rose dramatically. Although this transition to retirement income occurred for both groups, it was more gradual for short-term elders.

Immigrant category affects income later in life.

Figure 2 presents, for tax year 2000, the annual income reported by elderly immigrants in different categories at 5, 11, and 20 years after landing. It is clear that differences in annual income exist for elders in various immigrant categories. Note that Figure 3 groups all elderly immigrants within an immigrant category together. It does not disaggregate these populations by age at landing.

**Skilled Principal Applicants (SPAs)** relied more heavily on private market income throughout the first twenty years after landing. They had the highest incidence of employment earnings and an incidence of provincial supplements that was well below the overall average. SPAs reported the highest annual income and were less reliant on income from non-contributory retirement sources.

**Skilled Spouses and Dependents (SSDs)** also had a higher than average incidence of employment earnings and a very low incidence of provincial supplements throughout the period. However, the average employment earnings reported were not as high as those observed for SPAs. SSDs also had a lower annual income but it was still higher than the average for all elderly immigrants. With respect to retirement income, elders in this category had the lowest incidence of OAS and the second lowest incidence of GIS/Allowance.

**Other Economic (OE)** immigrants, similar to the skilled economic categories, had a higher incidence of private market income and a lower incidence of provincial supplements than was observed on average. However, elders in this category did not appear to rely as much on employment earnings. Instead, Other Economic immigrants had the

second highest incidence of investment income. They also reported annual income comparable to that of SSDs. Elderly immigrants in this category had a higher incidence of OAS than those in the skilled economic categories but it remained lower than the overall average. Although the incidence of OAS was higher, this was not the case for GIS/Allowance. Other Economic immigrants had the lowest incidence of GIS/Allowance of all immigrant categories.

**Parents and Grandparents (PGPs)** had a relatively low incidence of employment earnings and of investment income and high incidence of provincial supplements, especially following the 10-year mark. Elderly immigrants in this category also reported the second lowest annual income of all categories prior to the 10-year mark and the lowest annual income following the 10-year mark. PGPs also had the highest incidence of OAS and GIS/Allowance following the 10-year mark.

**Other Family** immigrants had a slightly higher incidence of employment earnings and of investment income than was seen for all elderly. They also had a below average incidence of provincial supplements. The employment earnings reported by the elderly in this category were comparable to that of Other Economic Immigrants; however, the annual income reported was higher. In fact, the annual income reported by elders in this category was the third highest of all categories. Other Family immigrants appeared to draw additional income from private pensions. They had the second highest incidence of income from this source. With respect to non-contributory retirement income, Other Family immigrants had below average incidence of OAS and GIS/Allowance.

**Refugees** had on average a very low incidence of employment earnings and the lowest incidence of investment income. They also had the highest incidence of provincial supplements. Elderly refugees had the lowest

incidence of private pension income and reported the second lowest annual income. Although the incidence of OAS was slightly below average for elderly Refugees, the incidence of GIS/Allowance was the second highest of all categories.

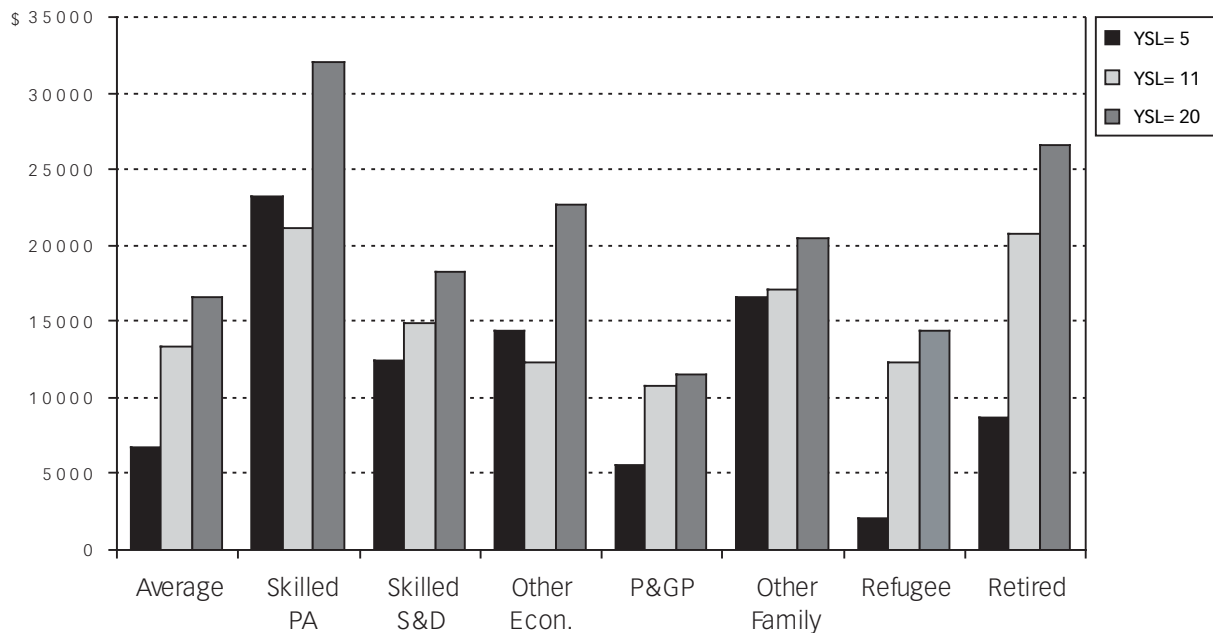
**Retired** immigrants, not surprisingly, had the lowest incidence of employment earnings and the highest incidence of investment income. These immigrants had the highest incidence of income from private pensions as well and the lowest incidence of provincial supplements. The annual income reported by Retired immigrants was second only to SPAs. Even with a relatively high annual income, Retired immigrants had the second highest incidence of OAS. However, the incidence of GIS/Allowance for these immigrants was well below average.

Working beyond age 60 leads to higher annual incomes and less social transfers in later years.

Skilled Principal Applicants, for example, had the highest incidence of employment earnings and reported the highest average employment earnings of all immigrant categories. Nearly half of all Skilled Principal Applicants over the age of 60 continued to report employment earnings 20 years after landing and this share was even higher for long-term elders in this category.

The strong labour market activity seen for SPAs after reaching 60 years of age had obvious impacts on annual income and on the incidence of non-contributory retirement income for elders in this category. Elderly immigrants in this category had the highest annual income of all immigrant categories, reporting annual incomes well above the average throughout the entire period. Given their relatively high annual incomes it was not surprising that elderly SPAs had a lower incidence of OAS and GIS/Allowance than the other immigrant categories.

**Figure 2: Average Real Annual Income for Elderly Immigrants in Tax Year 2000, by Immigrant Category**





Weak labour market involvement leads to lower annual income and more social transfers later in life.

Parents and Grandparents, for example, had the lowest incidence of employment earnings after the 10-year mark and reported the lowest employment earnings of all immigrant categories. Ten years after landing only 10% of elderly Parents and Grandparents reported employment earnings and this share continued to fall as years since landing increased.

Elderly Parents and Grandparents also reported the lowest annual income of all immigrant categories from the tenth year forward. The weaker labour market attachment resulted in a lower annual income and a much higher incidence of income from non-contributory retirement sources. As the incidence of employment earnings fell to 10% at the 10-year mark, the share of Parents and Grandparents reporting income from OAS and GIS/Allowance increased dramatically.

A longer period of labour market activity also affects contributory retirement income.

Skilled Principal Applicants in the long-term elderly group had a lower than average incidence of C/QPP benefits. The lower incidence and average amounts of C/QPP were the result of long-term elders working past the age of 60 and deferring C/QPP benefits. However, it is expected that as late entrants, with more credits, enter into the plan the incidence and average benefits will increase. In fact, the positive relationship between average benefits and years since landing provides some evidence of this already occurring by the 20-year mark.

Jump in annual income seen at the 10-year mark for short-term and immediate elderly.

One explanation for the sudden increase in income seen at the 10-year mark is related to the category composition of these elderly subgroups. Recall that Parents and Grandparents make up 60% and 79% of the short-term and immediate elderly groups, respectively. The jump in income at the 10-year mark coincides with a dramatic spike in the incidence of OAS, GIS/Allowance, and Provincial Supplements for Parents and Grandparents. It appears that the amount of social transfers that became available to elderly Parents and Grandparents who have been in Canada for at least ten years is great enough to compensate for the decrease in private market income and still increase average annual income for all short-term and immediate elders.

Strategies for sustaining income levels after reaching age 60.

It is clear that most elderly immigrants report income from more than one source at any given point in time. It also appears that for some immigrant categories certain sources of retirement income begin to replace employment income once an immigrant has satisfied the age and/or residency requirements necessary to become eligible for

non-contributory retirement income. Further investigation is required to distinguish between primary, complementary, and supplementary sources of income. Simply adding up the average amounts of income from all available sources will not provide an accurate measure of annual income. There are several combinations of income sources available to elderly immigrants and these combinations are expected to change from one individual to the next and over time. Additional research is required to understand the various income strategies employed by elderly immigrants to sustain their income levels through retirement.

How are Canadian-born elders faring?

It would be useful to investigate the income situations of Canadian-born individuals 60 years of age or older. Such an analysis would allow for a comparison of the elderly who were born in Canada and those who immigrated to Canada. The Canadian-born elderly would have a larger window for potential labour market activity than those immigrants who arrived in Canada at age 40 or older. The vast majority of Canadian-born elders would also have satisfied all eligibility requirements for non-contributory retirement income upon reaching the age of 65. It is of interest to see how these differences affect average incomes and the income strategies employed through retirement by Canadian-born elders as compared to their foreign-born counterparts.

Does family income matter?

Investigating the income situations of the families and/or households to which elderly immigrants belong would also be valuable. The income strategies of elderly immigrants are expected to be different for individuals with different family or household situations. An elderly immigrant living alone, for example, may

bear more of the cost of living than an elder who lives with his or her children.

Does sponsorship matter?

Many of the elderly immigrants in this analysis landed in Canada as sponsored Parents and Grandparents. The sponsor assumes financial responsibility for the sponsored immigrant for the time period specified in the sponsorship agreement and access to certain retirement benefits is affected by the sponsorship status. Investigating the income situations of sponsors and observing how it affects sponsored elderly immigrants would be a useful step in this research.

## References

- Dempsey, C. "Elderly Immigrants in Canada: Income Sources and Composition." *Horizons*, Policy Research Initiative 2(7) (2004). [http://policyresearch.gc.ca/page.asp?pagenm=v7n2\\_art\\_10](http://policyresearch.gc.ca/page.asp?pagenm=v7n2_art_10)
- Government of Canada. *Canadian Pension Plan: Retirement Pension*. Social Development Canada, Ottawa. Cat. No. SD12-1/1-2004E, 2004. [www.sdc.gc.ca/en/isp/pub/factsheets/retire.pdf](http://www.sdc.gc.ca/en/isp/pub/factsheets/retire.pdf).

It would be useful to investigate the income situations of Canadian-born individuals 60 years of age or older. Such an analysis would allow for a comparison of the elderly who were born in Canada and those who immigrated to Canada.

Government of Canada. *Guaranteed Income Supplement*. Social Development Canada, Ottawa, 2004. [www.sdc.gc.ca/en/isp/pub/oas/gismain.shtml](http://www.sdc.gc.ca/en/isp/pub/oas/gismain.shtml).

Government of Canada. *Old Age Security Act* (R.S. 1985, c. 0-9). Department of Justice Canada, Ottawa, 2004. <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/O-9/index.html>. Updated to August 31, 2004.

Government of Canada. *Old Age Security Regulations* (C.R.C., c.1246). Department of Justice Canada, Ottawa, 2004. <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/O-9/C.R.C.-c.1246/index.html>. Updated to August 31, 2004.

Government of Canada. *Overview of the Old Age Security Program*. Social Development Canada, Ottawa, 2004. [www.sdc.gc.ca/asp/gateway.asp?hr=/en/isp/oas/oasoverview.shtml&hs=ozsGovernment of Canada. How to Apply for the Old Age Security Pension, Allowance and Allowance for the Survivor](http://www.sdc.gc.ca/asp/gateway.asp?hr=/en/isp/oas/oasoverview.shtml&hs=ozsGovernment%20of%20Canada.How%20to%20Apply%20for%20the%20Old%20Age%20Security%20Pension,%20Allowance%20and%20Allowance%20for%20the%20Survivor). Human Resource and Development Canada, Ottawa, 2003. Information Sheet ISP-3000. <http://www.retireware.com/pdf/isp3503e.pdf>

## Notes

1 Dempsey, C. "Elderly Immigrants in Canada: Income Sources and Composition." *Horizons, Policy Research Initiative 2(7)* (2004) [http://policyresearch.gc.ca/page.asp?pagenm=v7n2\\_art\\_10](http://policyresearch.gc.ca/page.asp?pagenm=v7n2_art_10)

2 Income from social assistance is reported on the Provincial Supplement line of the tax form. The total of this line may include other provincial supplements and, as a result, social assistance income cannot be separated out. An example of such a supplement is income from the Guaranteed Annual Income System available to residents of Ontario.

3 C/QPP is a contributory pension that is related to an individual's lifetime earnings. Although there are no special provisions for immigrants, their benefits will be directly related to the length of time they have worked in Canada. To qualify, an individual must have made a minimum of one valid contribution to the Plan and be at least 65 years of age. It is possible to qualify for a reduced pension between the ages of 60-64 if a person stops working or earns less than the current monthly maximum C/QPP payment.

4 OAS is a non-contributory pension that is related to an individual's years of residence in Canada. It is available to Canadian citizens, permanent residents (landed immigrants), and individuals with a Minister's permit who are 65 years of age or older and have a minimum of 10 years of residence in Canada after reaching age 18. A full OAS pension is only available to those who have lived in Canada for 40 years or longer after reaching the age 18. A person who cannot meet the requirements for the full OAS pension may qualify for a partial pension. A partial pension is earned at the rate of 1/40th of the full monthly pension for each year an individual has lived in Canada after reaching 18. Although citizenship and/or legal residency status is a requirement for OAS eligibility, in some instances time spent in Canada on a temporary basis prior to landing can factor into an applicant's residence history. As a result, an immigrant with less than ten years since landing can potentially be eligible for partial OAS benefits. For further details see Human Resource and Development Canada's information sheet, "How to Apply for the Old Age Security Pension, Allowance and Allowance for the Survivor," available at <http://www.retireware.com/pdf/isp3503e.pdf>

5 GIS is another non-contributory pension and is available to residents of Canada who receive a full or partial OAS pension. GIS benefits may begin in the same month as OAS benefits. To qualify for GIS a person must be in receipt of an OAS pension and have an annual income not exceeding a specified amount. Sponsored immigrants from countries with which Canada has agreements are not eligible for GIS during their sponsorship period (up to a maximum of 10 years) unless they have resided in Canada for an aggregate of ten years after reaching 18 years of age. The Allowance is a non-contributory pension available to the spouse, common-law partner, or survivor of a pensioner receiving OAS and/or GIS. Canadian citizens or permanent residents between the ages of 60 and 64 who have lived in Canada for at least 10 years are eligible to receive the Allowance. To qualify, the combined annual income of the couple, or the annual income of the survivor must not exceed the specified limits. Allowance stops when the recipient reaches age 65 and becomes eligible for OAS. Sponsored immigrants wishing to apply for the Allowance face the same eligibility requirements as those applying for GIS.

6 In addition to these retirement sources, the Guaranteed Annual Income System (GAINS) is available to residents of Ontario 65 years of age or older. More information on GAINS can be found on the Ontario Ministry of Finance's website <http://www.trd.fin.gov.on.ca>. Similar programs may also exist in other provinces.

7 The IMDB is managed by Statistics Canada on behalf of a Federal-Provincial Consortium led by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

# THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF RECENT IMMIGRANTS TO CANADA

## ABSTRACT

In the 1990s, the composition of immigrants admitted to Canada changed, as there was an increase in the number of immigrants admitted in the economic class. Furthermore, as the selection priorities evolved, the number of immigrants with a university degree considerably increased. Yet despite this increase, successive cohorts of newcomers have had difficulties integrating into the workplace. This article provides an overview of the main indicators of this question.

The 1990s witnessed significant changes in immigration to Canada. Between 1991 and 2000, 2.2 million immigrants were admitted to Canada – the highest intake in any decade over the past 100 years. A high-level of immigration was maintained during the recession in the early 1990s, with slow recovery in subsequent years. Furthermore, the decade saw a shift in the composition of immigrants admitted to the country, with a greater share entering under the “economic” admission class. And because of changes in selection priorities, the share of immigrants who had a university degree increased significantly as well. Yet in spite of the rise in educational attainment, successive cohorts of new arrivals have experienced difficulties in the labour market. This article provides a brief overview of key indicators on this issue.

## Employment and earnings

Success in the labour market is a key ingredient for financial well-being. The conventional wisdom has traditionally been that new immigrants experience difficulties getting established in the workforce when they first arrive in their host country, but overcome these difficulties and obtain earnings comparable to those of domestic-born workers as time passes. But while this was the case for immigrants who arrived in Canada prior to the early 1980s, more recent arrivals have not fared as well.

This is evident when entry into the labour market is considered. In 1981, immigrants who had been in Canada for five years or less were slightly more likely than Canadian-born individuals to be in the workforce (see Table 1). Furthermore, they were just as likely to be employed full-time, full-year. Since then, the employment rate has fallen among immigrant cohorts (Reitz, 2001). In 2001, immigrants who had been in Canada five years or less had a lower employment rate than the Canadian-born population, with a particularly large gap emerging between immigrant and Canadian-born women. Furthermore, the decline in the employment rate was not confined to immigrants who had just arrived in Canada, but was also evident among those who had resided here for up to 15 years.

Among those immigrants who entered the workforce, earnings trajectories have deteriorated as well. In the initial years after arrival, immigrants have long had earnings below those of their Canadian-born counterparts, with the size of this ‘earnings gap’ narrowing as time passes (see Chart 1). However, through the 1980s and 1990s the size of the initial earnings gap increased considerably, raising questions about whether immigrants would ever ‘catch up’ to their Canadian-born counterparts. For example, immigrant men who arrived between 1975 and 1979 had initial earnings that were 83% of those of their Canadian-born counterparts, with this earnings gap narrowing to about 90% after 11 to 15 years (Frenette and Morissette, 2003). In contrast, immigrant men who arrived between 1985 and 1989 had initial earnings that were 66% of those of their Canadian-born counterparts, with the gap narrowing to 78% after 11 to 15 years in Canada. More recent immigrant cohorts have experienced even larger earnings gaps upon arrival, and although they have been catching up to Canadian-born workers at quite a rapid rate, they have had a lot of ground to make up.

Researchers point to four related factors underlying the deteriorating labour market outcomes of immigrants (Picot, 2004). First, the shift in source countries of immigration from Europe and the United States to other regions may underlie recent trends (Aydemir and Skuterud, 2004; Bloom, Grenier and Gunderson, 1995; Picot and Hou, 2003). Immigrants from countries other than the

**Table 1 – Employment Rate and Proportion of Full-time Full-year Workers**  
by immigration status, population ages 25-54

	Men			Women		
	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001
<b>% with any employment</b>						
Non-immigrants	9	8	8	5	7	7
Immigrants	9	7	7	6	6	5
≤ 5 years*	9	8	8	6	6	6
6-10 years	9	8	8	6	7	7
11-15 years	9	8	8	6	7	7
16-20 years	9	8	8	6	7	7
<b>% employed full-time full-year</b>						
Non-immigrant	3	3	3	1	2	2
Immigrants	3	3	2	1	2	1
≤ 5 years	3	3	3	2	2	2
6-10 years	3	3	3	2	2	2
11-15 years	3	3	3	2	2	2
16-20 years	3	3	3	2	2	2

Data source: the 1981, 1991 and 2001 Census. \* Those who arrived in the census year and the year prior to the census year were excluded

United States and Europe may have lower earnings because they have less transferable skills and credentials, due to potential difficulties related to language, culture, education quality, networks, and possibly discrimination (Bloom, Grenier and Gunderson, 1995; Sweetman, 2003).

Second, studies report that declining returns to foreign experience and foreign education are among the most important factors associated with declining earnings among immigrants. Declining returns to foreign experience has not been evident among immigrants from Europe and the United States, but rather have been concentrated among immigrants from other countries (Aydemir and Skuterud, 2004; Green and Worswick, 2004).

Third, new entrants to the Canadian labour market have experienced deteriorating employment outcomes through the 1980s and 1990s. Recent immigrants are part of this pool of new entrants, along with young people and other individuals returning to work. Green and Worswick (2004) find that the broader deterioration in outcomes for new entrants accounts for over one-third of the total decline in immigrant earnings upon entry between the early 1980s and the late 1990s.

Finally, the economic prospects for immigrants may have been adversely affected by the dramatic increase in the number of Canadian-born individuals with high levels of education. Between 1980 and 2000, the number of women in

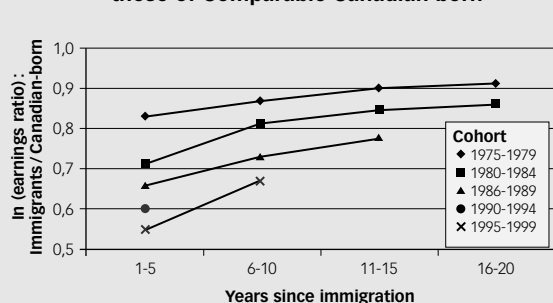
the labour force with a university degree quadrupled, and the number of men with a degree more than doubled. Furthermore, there was not a general shortage of highly educated workers over this period, with the exception of a few specific occupations (Gingras and Roy, 2000). Reitz (2001) argues that, in spite of the rising educational levels of immigrants, their *relative* economic advantage has declined. In short, highly educated immigrants must compete in the labour force with a growing number of highly educated Canadian-born individuals. In such a competitive market, even marginal differences in educational quality, language and communication skills, or cultural norms could have an impact on employment outcomes.

### Low Income and Income Distribution

Given that earnings represent the major source of income for most families, it is not surprising to find that declining employment rates and earnings are reflected in rising rates of low-income among immigrants (Picot, 2004). Among immigrants in Canada for ten years or less, the share in low-income increased from 23 to 35% between 1980 and 2000 (Heisz and McLeod, 2004). This upward trend was widespread, occurring among immigrants from all age groups, family types, levels of education, and reported language abilities (Picot and Hou, 2003). And in spite of the purported opportunities created by the “knowledge based economy,” having a university degree did not protect recent immigrants from increased likelihood of being in low-income, regardless of their field of study. Indeed, the largest difference in low-income rates between the Canadian-born and recent immigrants was among university graduates, particularly those with engineering and applied science degrees. In terms of source regions, the rise in low-income was most pronounced among recent immigrants from Africa, Asia and Southern Europe (Picot and Hou, 2003).

The vast majority of immigrants arriving in Canada settle in large urban centres, with about three-quarters of them settling in Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver (Schellenberg, 2004). In these centres, recent immigrants account for a significant portion of the low-income

**Chart 1 – Earnings of Immigrants Compared to those of Comparable Canadian-born**



population. In Toronto and Vancouver, recent immigrants accounted for 17% of the total population in 2001, but for about 32% of the low-income population (Heisz and McLeod, 2004). In Montréal, they accounted for 6% of the total population, but for 14% of the low-income population. Recent studies have also documented the upward pressure that rising rates of low-income among recent immigrants have had on low-income rates overall, and the increasing extent to which 'low-income neighbourhoods' are comprised of recent immigrants (Heisz and McLeod, 2004; Picot and Hou, 2003).

A broader perspective on the financial well-being of immigrants is gained by considering their distribution across income quintiles. To construct income quintiles, all Canadian families with a head aged 25 to 54 were ranked from lowest to highest on the basis of their total income and subsequently sorted into five groups – those in the bottom 20% of the income distribution, those in the top 20% of the distribution, and those in the three groups in between. In 1980, 18% of recent immigrant families were in the bottom income quintile and 16% were in the top quintile. In short, they were under-represented at the bottom and top of the income distribution and instead were concentrated in the middle (see Chart 2a). By 1990 and 2000, recent immigrant families were increasingly concentrated in the bottom two quintiles and increasingly under-represented at the top. A

similar pattern was evident among immigrant families who had been in Canada for 11 to 19 years (see Chart 2b). However, while these charts show a marked deterioration in the relative financial position of immigrants, they also show that many have been successful in reaching the middle or even the top of the income distribution in Canada.

### Wealth Accumulation

Financial well-being can be measured not only in terms of earnings and income during a specific year, but also in terms of the assets or wealth held by individuals and families. Home ownership is an important consideration in this respect. Haan (2005) reports that homeownership rates have declined among successive cohorts of immigrants in Canada's seven largest urban areas. However, there are considerable differences in ownership rates among immigrants from different source countries and among those residing in different urban areas. In terms of access to housing, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation reports that recent immigrants are among the most vulnerable groups to be in 'core housing need,' defined as their inability to access accommodation that is affordable, in good repair, and with enough bedrooms for the size and composition of household members (Engeland et al., 2005). As with other measures, the likelihood of being in 'core housing need' declines the longer that immigrants have been in Canada.

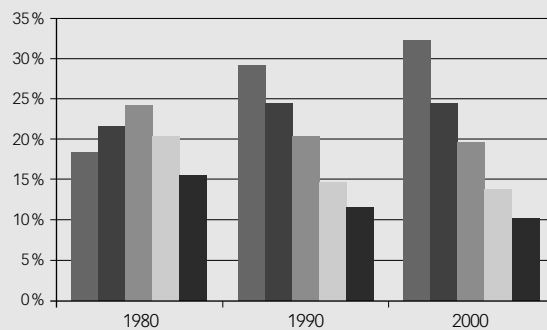
Considering assets more broadly, differences have widened between Canadian-born and immigrant families. The average wealth of Canadian-born families increased 37% between 1984 and 1999, but decreased 16% among immigrant families who had been living in Canada for less than 10 years (Morissette, Zhang and Drolet, 2002). Furthermore, the declining earnings of recent immigrants accounts for some of the overall increase in income and wealth inequality evident in Canada through the 1980s and 1990s (Moore and Pacey, 2003; Morissette, Zhang and Drolet, 2002).

### Concluding Remarks

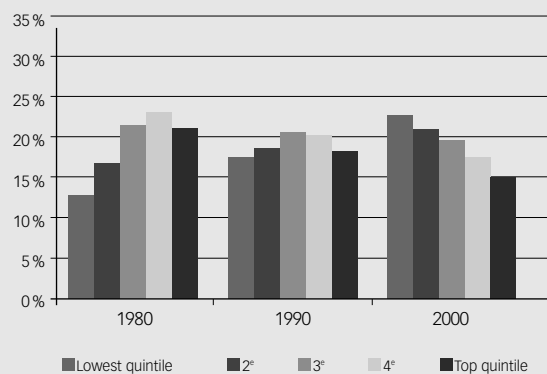
Many studies have documented the deteriorating labour market performance of recent immigrants through the late 1980s and 1990s. This deterioration has continued despite the improved macro-economic condition in the late 1990s and increases in the educational attainment of immigrants. A considerable amount of research has focused on factors associated with this deterioration, including changes in immigrants' source regions and socio-demographic composition, declining returns to foreign work experience, a broad deterioration in labour market outcomes for new labour market entrants, and the increasing competition from highly educated Canadian-born. However, much remains to be learned about individual differences among immigrants. How and why do immigrants with different socio-demographic attributes perform differently? Why do immigrants with similar characteristics have different experiences in terms of economic integration? The creation of new data sources, such as Statistics Canada's Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, will provide new insights on these issues.

Recent immigrants' poor labour market outcomes are not only relevant to immigrant selection and settlement policies, but also related to much broader issues of social cohesion/exclusion.

**Chart 2a – Immigrants in Canada 10 years or less**  
Distribution across family income quintiles

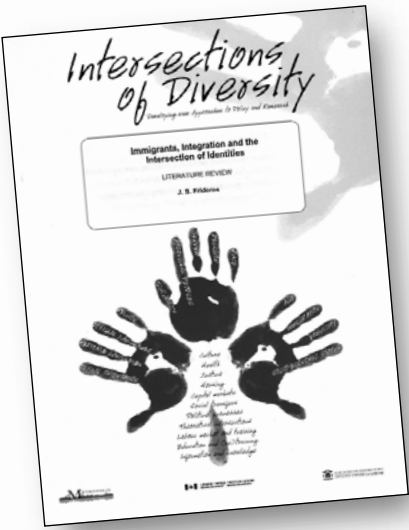


**Chart 2b – Immigrants in Canada 11 to 19 years**  
Distribution across income quintiles



## References

- Aydemir, Abdurrahman & Mikal Skuterud. *Explaining the deteriorating entry earnings of Canada's immigrant cohorts: 1066-2000*. Statistics Canada, Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series No. 225, Ottawa, 2004.
- Bloom, David E., Gilles Grenier & Morley Gunderson. "The changing labour market position of Canadian immigrants." *Canadian Journal of Economics* 28 (1995): 987-1005.
- Engeland, John, Roger Lewis, Steven Ehrlich and Janet Che. *Evolving Housing Conditions in Canada's Census Metropolitan Areas, 191-2001*. Statistics Canada: Trends and Conditions in Census Metropolitan Areas Series. Cat. 89-613, Ottawa, 2005.
- Frenette, Marc & René Morissette. Will they ever converge? *Earnings of immigrant and Canadian-born workers over the last two decades*. Statistics Canada, Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series No. 215. Ottawa, 2003.
- Gingras, Yves & Richard Roy. "Is there a skill gap in Canada?" *Canadian Public Policy* 27 supplement 1 (2000): 5159-5174.
- Green, David & Christopher Worswick. "Entry earnings of immigrant men in Canada: The roles of labour market entry effects and returns to foreign experience." Department of Economics, University of British Columbia, 2004.
- Haan, Mike. *The homeownership hierarchies of Canada and the United States: Comparing the housing patterns of white and non-white immigrants of the past thirty years*. Statistics Canada, Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series No. 238. Ottawa, 2005.
- Heisz, Andrew & Logan McLeod. *Trends and Conditions in Census Metropolitan Areas – Low-income in Census Metropolitan Areas*. Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 89-613, No. 001. Ottawa, 2004.
- Moore, Eric and Michael Pacey. "Changing income inequality and immigration in Canada, 1980-1995." *Canadian Public Policy* 29 (2003): 33-52.
- Morissette, René, Xuelin Zhang & Marie DROLET. *The evolution of wealth inequality in Canada 1984-1999*. Statistics Canada, Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series No. 187, Ottawa, 2002.
- Picot, Garnett. "The Deteriorating economic welfare of Canadian immigrants." *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 13(1) (2004): 25-45.
- Picot, Garnett and Feng Hou. *The rise in low-income rates among immigrants in Canada*. Statistics Canada, Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series No. 198. Ottawa, 2003.
- Reitz, Jeffrey. "Immigrant success in the knowledge economy: Institutional changes and the immigrant experience in Canada, 1970-1995." *Journal of Social Issues* 57 (2001): 579-613.
- Schellenberg, Grant. *Trends and Conditions in Census Metropolitan Areas - Immigrants in Canada's Census Metropolitan Areas*. Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 89-613, No. 003. Ottawa, 2004.
- Sweetman, Arthur. *Immigrant Source Country School Quality and Canadian Labour Market Outcomes*. Queen's University, School of Policy Studies, 2003.



## Intersections of Diversity Literature Reviews

To accompany a policy-research seminar on intersections of diversity, nine literature reviews were commissioned to examine how ethnicity, race, religion and heritage languages intersect with immigration, Aboriginal status, official languages, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, region, gender and age.

These reviews can be found on the Metropolis website at: [http://www.canada.metropolis.net/events/Diversity/diversity\\_index\\_e.htm](http://www.canada.metropolis.net/events/Diversity/diversity_index_e.htm)

# FACTORS AFFECTING THE SOCIAL ECONOMIC STATUS

## of Canadian immigrants in the new millennium

### ABSTRACT

Canadian society is undergoing some profound changes at the turn of this new millennium. The impact of globalization on Canadian society and global restructuring on the Canadian economy is such that the Canadian economy is much more open to a global process of production and a global division of labour. Yet key social indicators such as rates of poverty, labour market participation, unemployment rates, sectoral and occupational segregation and health status increasingly suggest that the social economic status of recent immigrants is in decline. The author contends that these trends will not be reversed if it is left to the magic of the market. It will require political action to confront the social economic crisis associated with the decline in the socio-economic status of recent immigrants.

### The changing condition of the immigrant experience in Canada's new millennium

Canadian society is undergoing some profound changes at the turn of this new millennium. The impact of globalization on Canadian society and global restructuring on the Canadian economy is such that the Canadian economy is much more open to a global process of production and a global division of labour. The Canadian labour market is being 'globalized' by the influx of new immigrants, especially from the global South, many of whom are fleeing political and economic conditions unleashed by global restructuring in their places of origin, as globalization destabilizes societies, leading to collapsed economies and forcing many talented people on the move, seeking new opportunities and stability elsewhere.

Yet what many have found in Canada is a society and a labour market also dealing with the similar forces of restructuring, forces which have combined with historical structures of gender and racial discrimination to make many of those immigrants, most those from racialized groups, as vulnerable and increasingly reduced to a lower social economic status than was the case with their predecessors in the last century. Key social indicators such as rates of poverty, labour market participation, unemployment rates, sectoral and occupational segregation and health status increasingly suggest that the social economic status of recent immigrants is in decline. The progress of recent immigrants is often measured by their ability to achieve income parity with other Canadians over a reasonable amount of time. This form of socioeconomic assimilation is used to determine the success of immigrant integration in Canadian society. Historically, the majority of immigrants have achieved some degree of economic success in the Canadian labour market: over a ten-year span, many immigrants starting with wages and salaries lower than the earnings of comparable Canadian-born workers were able to 'catch up' to those with limited skills and as quickly as two years, for university graduates. Often, as the length of residence in Canada increased, the earnings exceeded those of Canadian-born workers and their occupational status began to correspond with that of Canadian-born workers (Harvey and Siu, 2001; Reitz, 2001).

For immigrants, labour market attachment is critical to integration, identity formation, ability to claim a sense of belonging and ultimately, full citizenship. Perhaps more specifically, it is central to their pursuit of livelihood. In the late 20th century and in the new millennium, however, as the flow of immigration has shifted from European sources to Asian, African, Middle Eastern, Latin American and Caribbean sources, the normal processes of integration have begun to falter for too many immigrants (DeVoretz 1995; Pendukar, 2000; Worswick, 2004). National data show that immigrants arriving since 1980, are disproportionately stuck at the bottom of the economic ladder, in terms of income, employment, access to high-paying sectors and jobs and employment status (Frenette and Morissette, 2003; Picot and Hou, 2003). For too many recent immigrants, their hold on steady and regular employment has become particularly tenuous and their experience in the labour market is increasingly marked with high levels of precariousness, leaving them disproportionately consigned to low paying, part-time, temporary, insecure employment, under poor working conditions. The implications for their social economic status are not hard to imagine, increasingly

defined by a disproportionate exposure to low income, poverty and declining health status. These conditions amount to increased social exclusion for entire segments of recent immigrants, disrupting the aspirations of successful integration for both the newcomers and the host society.

Mainstream analyses attempting to explain the emergence of these differential labour market experiences opt for a neo-classical explanation of how labour markets operate autonomously to optimally utilize available human capital, insisting on the assumption that employers are rational agents seeking optimal productivity from available labour. They suggest that to understand what is going on with recent immigrants' economic performance, we need to focus on a number of key factors, including changes in labour demand due to restructuring, immigration lag or period of stay, and low human capital (De Voretz, 1995; Stoffman, 2002). From that point of view, the source country and ethnic or racial character of present day immigration does not matter.

There is little doubt that some of the factors they cite contribute to the differences in earnings and occupational status responsible for the declining social economic status of recent immigrants, but what careful analysis also shows is that even when you control for the above factors, there are residual differences that can best be accounted for by considering employment discrimination as a major factor (Akbari, 1999; Christofides and Swinsisky, 1994). Racial and gender discrimination in employment are historical factors that have always determined the patterns of incorporation of immigrant labour into the Canadian labour market. To posit that employers cannot afford to discriminate because they are rational actors seeking to maximize their benefits from the labour market cannot be sustained since racial and gender hierarchies have historically influenced the assignment of jobs that were open to newcomers to Canada. That is why many immigrant professionals end up working as domestics, or janitors, cab drivers, nurses aides and the like. In fact, it is a convergence of factors that offers the best explanation for the conditions increasingly observed as typical of the immigrant experience in new millennium in Canada (Grant and Oertel, 1998).

### Canada's changing population and its labour market implications

The significance of our attention to the issue of the declining social economic status of immigrants may have to do with the fact that immigration accounted for more than 50% of the net population growth and 70% of the growth in the labour force over the first half of the 1990s (1991-96), and according to a recent study by the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, is expected to account for virtually all of the net growth in the Canadian labour force by the year

2011 (HRSDC, 2002). According to the 2001 census, immigrants made up 18.4% of Canada's population, and is projected to rise to 25% by 2015. At 18.4% of the Canadian population, immigration represents its largest share of the Canadian population in more than 50 years. In Toronto, Canada's largest city, over 25% of the students in the school system arrived in Canada in the last ten years.

Secondly, in 2001, Canada was home to about 4 million racialized group members, or 13.4% of the Canadian population, a 24.6% increase since 1996. This increase far outpaced the Canadian rate of 3.9% over the five year period. Their share of the population is projected to rise to 20% by 2016. Much of that growth can be accounted for through immigration since Canada welcomed an annual average of close to 200,000 new immigrants and refugees over the 1990s. Since the 1970s, increasing numbers of immigrants to Canada have come from Asia and the Middle East. Asian-born immigrants accounted for more than half (57%) of the immigrants who arrived since 1991.<sup>i</sup>

Overwhelmingly, the changes in immigration composition have been most felt by Canada's three biggest urban areas – Toronto, Vancouver, and Montréal. Recent immigrants have transformed these areas into diverse cultural centres, and their increased contributions to the life and economies of cities like Toronto have led many Torontonians to proclaim diversity as their city's strength. In 2001, 4 out of every 10 recent immigrants to Canada settled in the Toronto CMA, and 60% of them were from Asia and the Middle East. The other big magnet for recent immigrants is Vancouver, which received 18% of all recent immigrants to Canada between 1991-96, 80% of whom were Asian-born.<sup>ii</sup>

### Old and new sources of inequality in the Canadian labour market

The new immigrants are confronted with persistent forms of exclusion and new economic imperatives that generate uneven access to work and compensation and combine to increase the levels of inequality experienced by recent immigrants in the Canadian labour market. These include the impact of processes of globalization, historical processes of racial discrimination and access barriers to professions and trades. Increasingly, the racialized labour market experiences are characterized by the following:

- Labour market segregation;
- Unequal access to employment;
- Over-representation in low-income sectors and occupations;
- Under representation in high-income sectors and occupations;
- Income inequalities; and
- Higher than average rates of unemployment and underemployment.

Immigration accounted for more than 50% of the net population growth and 70% of the growth in the labour force over the first half of the 1990s (1991-96), and according to a recent study by the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, is expected to account for virtually all of the net growth in the Canadian labour force by the year 2011.



**Globalization, labour market deregulation, immigration flows and the declining social economic status of recent immigrants**

In attempting to understand the causes and significance of these developments, it may be worthwhile to ask why these changes matter. What is different about this wave of immigration from the previous ones? Perhaps the most critical variation lies as much in the conditions under which it is occurring as in the character of the immigration. The conditions are increasingly dictated by a global mode of economic organization, which is often referred to as globalization. The neo-liberal economic restructuring imposed by successive rounds of free trade agreements and the broader processes of globalization has intensified the impact of the historical processes that apply to racialized labour. In the same way that globalization has unsettled the Canadian labour market with demands for flexible labour deployment, lowering wages and bringing labour into competition, it has provoked worldwide migrations and reordered the global division of labour, creating conditions in the Canadian labour market increasingly similar to those typical of the global South. The conditions of precarious employment, intensified work arrangements, intensified exploitation of labour, high levels of flexibility in labour deployment aimed at satisfying global capital's tendency to divest where conditions are not most favourable, now greet immigrants upon entry into Canada. These conditions are creating a kind of 'South-in-the-North' phenomenon, complete with declining social economic status. Indeed, non-standard employment arrangements, contract, part-time or temporary work, multiple jobs often mediated through employment agencies who pay the worker a fraction of the compensation, are increasingly becoming the norm, at least in some urban centres and in some sectors.

So, global forces and events have as much currency as domestic considerations in our understanding of new development in immigrant social economic status. Increased immigration from the global South, labour market deregulation, flexible labour deployment and precariousness go hand in hand with historical racial and gender discrimination and the retreat of the welfare state to explain the prevailing high levels of poverty among recent immigrant populations. Precarious employment is generally defined by such conditions as low pay, no job security, poor and often unsafe working conditions, intensified work schedules, excessive hours of work, low or no benefits, and low or no control over work for workers in the workplace. Precarious employment depresses wages in the sectors in which it becomes generalized. Recent immigrant workers, especially women, are disproportionately represented among the occupations and sectors that are highly dependant on precarious work arrangements, such as

commercial and retail, hospitality and other service industries, light manufacturing, textile and garment, domestic work), as well as the low-status yet highly precarious occupations (such as manual, sales, clerical, janitorial, food service, harvesting, low-end health care workers, domestic workers).

**Immigrant status and racial discrimination in employment**

Racial discrimination in employment remains a barrier to access to secure, full-time employment in well-paying sectors of the economy, further exacerbating the vulnerabilities imposed by globalization. Most jobs continue to be filled through word of mouth or through internal labour markets that tend to reproduce the composition of the workplace. Surprisingly, after 17 years of the federal *Employment Equity Act*, the composition of the federal public service has not changed to reflect the population it serves (Report of the Federal Taskforce on Visible minorities in the Public Service, 2000).

The differential economic outcomes identified can be attributed to racially discriminatory systemic practices such as:

- Differential treatment in recruitment, hiring and promotion;
- Extensive reliance on non-transparent forms of recruitment such as word of mouth which reproduce and reinforce existing networks;
- Differential valuation or effective devaluation of internationally obtained credentials; and
- Use of immigrant status as a proxy for lower quality of human capital.

**Higher rates of unemployment and underemployment**

Unemployment and labour force participation data show that unlike in earlier phases of immigration, there has been a downward trend in the employment access of immigrants over the last 20 years. The patterns of higher unemployment and lower labour force participation coincide with the shift in immigration from the Global South. They reflect the dual impact of the vulnerabilities arising from neo-

liberal restructuring and the persistence of racial discrimination in employment.

Increased immigration from the global South, labour market deregulation, flexible labour deployment and precariousness go hand in hand with historical racial and gender discrimination and the retreat of the welfare state to explain the prevailing high levels of poverty among recent immigrant populations.

**Table 1 - Labour force participation rates for immigrants, non-immigrants, and visible minorities (%)**

	1981	1991	2001
Total labour force	75.5	78.2	80.3
Canadian-born	74.6	78.7	81.8
All immigrants	79.3	77.2	75.6
Recent immigrants	75.7	68.6	65.8
Visible minorities	n/a	70.5	66.0

Source: Statistics Canada, 2003: *The Changing Profile of Canada's Labour Force and The Conference Board of Canada*, April 2004, *Making a Visible Difference The Contribution of Visible Minorities to Canadian Economic Growth*.

**Table 2 - Unemployment rates for immigrants, non-immigrants, and visible minorities (%)**

	1981	1991	2001
Total labour force	5.9	9.6	6.7
Canadian-born	6.3	9.4	6.4
All immigrants	4.5	10.4	7.9
Recent immigrants	6.0	15.6	12.1
Visible minorities	n/a	n/a	12.6

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Analysis Series. *The Changing Profile of Canada's Labour Force*, February, 11, 2000 and 2001 *Employment Equity Data Report*, Human Resource and Development Canada.

These disturbing trends cannot be explained by a disparity in educational attainment between the average Canadian rates and those of recent immigrants and racialized group members. Some have suggested that lower-quality human capital of racialized immigrants is responsible for the declining social and economic status of recent immigrants. Yet, partly because of a more restrictive selection process, immigrants are coming in with higher levels of educational attainment than Canadians. In 1998, racialized immigrants with university education experienced a 10.4% unemployment rate, compared to 6.6% for non-racialized immigrants and 4.2% for non-racialized Canadian born.

There is no doubt that when you compare the unemployment rate for those who entered Canada in 2001 at 29.7%, while the national average sat at 7.4% , it can be safely argued that the adjustment effect accounts for some of the difference. But the trends show a general decline in the ability of racialized immigrants to benefit from their investment in education.

#### **Brain Waste: Recent immigrants and educational attainment**

Increasingly, educational attainment is not an automatic predictor of occupational and income status when it comes to immigrant groups. According to a 1999 study by A. Akbari on the 'quality' of immigrants who arrived in the 9 periods from 1956 to 1994, the percentage of those without a high school education has been declining and is lower than that in the Canadian population in all the periods, while that of university graduates has been growing, and outpacing the level in the general Canadian population. However, studies show that they cannot translate that educational advantage into comparable incomes and occupations (Li, 2001).

**Table 3: Post-secondary education among immigrants (%)**

Group	University	College	Trades	Total
Imm. since 1970	22.5	12.1	14.0	48.4
Imm. since 1980	25.5	12.5	10.9	48.6
Imm. since 1990	40.7	12.7	7.57	60.9
Total Canada, 2001	22.2	17.9	12.	53.4

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census analysis series, *Education in Canada: Raising the Standard* (March 11, 2003)

Yet other data show that for recent male immigrants, full-time employment earnings fell 7% between 1980 and 2000. In contrast, this compares with a rise of 7% for the

Canadian-born cohort. Among the university educated, the drop was steeper (13%). For recent female immigrants, full-time employment earnings rose but by less than other female full-time earnings (\$23,800 to \$26,800 versus \$28,800 to \$34,400; and among university-educated cohorts, 32,7000 to 34,7000 versus 45,200 to 50,000 for the university-educated group). (Frenette and Morissette, 2003; Picot and Hou, 2003)

Much of the gap in skills and compensation is likely related to the barriers many immigrants face in getting their professional and trade credentials recognized in Canada. There is a cost associated with this gap in educational attainment and employment income. The loss is to the individuals, their families and to the Canadian economy. The skills of those who are not integrated into their fields of expertise degrade over time and studies show that after 3 years, 90% don't return to their occupation of training.

According to a Conference Board of Canada report issued in 2001, the estimated annual loss of income due to non-accreditation lies somewhere between \$8,000 – \$12,000 or \$4.1 – \$5.9 billion annually (CBC, 2001). Another study by Reitz suggests that the estimates are higher, at about \$55 billion annually (Reitz, 2001).

#### **Material implications of restructuring and persistent discrimination**

Globalization, employment discrimination and the barriers to access to professions and trades that we spoke about have real implications on the lived experiences of recent immigrants. These conspire to impose an experience of disproportionate vulnerability to low-income individuals and generate related manifestations of social exclusion such as poor neighbourhood selection and high health risks, among others.

The material implications of these developments for new immigrants are that they experience differential life chances:

- A double-digit racialized income gap;
- Chronically higher than average levels of unemployment;
- Segregated labour market participation;
- Deepening levels of poverty;
- Differential access to housing and segregated neighbourhood selection;
- Disproportionate contact with the criminal justice system; and
- Higher health risks.

#### **Low income and immigrant status: the racialization of poverty**

The upshot of the unequal patterns of labour market participation and the vulnerabilities identified above is that recent immigrants suffer disproportionately higher levels of low income. This phenomenon has been referred to as the racialization of poverty. The racialization of poverty is linked to the process of the deepening social exclusion of racialized and immigrant communities arising from the concentration of economic, social and political power. This is especially the case of urban Canada.

Some of the most important increases in low income rates in Canada have occurred among recent immigrants. Low-income rates have risen among successive groups of

immigrants, and have almost doubled between 1980 and 1995, peaking at 47% before easing up in the late 1990s.

In 1980, 24.6% of immigrants who had arrived during the previous five-year period lived below the poverty line. By 1990, the low-income rate among recent immigrants had increased to 31.3% and rose further to 47.0% in 1995. The rate fell back to 35.8% in 2000 (Picot and Hou, 2003). The traditional trajectory that saw immigrants catch up with other Canadians over time seems to have been reversed in the case of racialized immigrants.

Alarming, the data show that while low income rates among recent immigrants with less than high school graduation increased by 24% from 1980 to 2000, low income rates increased by 50% among high school graduates and a whopping 66% among university educated immigrants! (Frenette and Morissette, 2003)

### Racialization and Neighbourhood Selection in Urban Canada

The racialization of poverty has also had a major impact on neighbourhood selection and access to adequate housing for new immigrants and racialized groups. In Canada's urban centres, the spatial concentration of poverty or residential segregation is intensifying along racial lines. Immigrants in Toronto and Montréal are more likely than non-immigrants to live in neighbourhoods characterized by high rates of poverty.

Young immigrants living in low income areas often struggle with alienation from their parents and community of origin, and from the broader society. The social services they need to cope with dislocation are lacking, the housing on offer is often sub-standard or, if it is public housing, is often poorly maintained because of cutbacks. As well, they face the crises of unemployment, despair and violence. In short, immigrant youth find themselves in disproportionate contact with the criminal justice system.

**Table 4: Toronto Area racialized enclaves and experience of high poverty rates (%)**

	University degree	un-employment	low income	single parent
Chinese	21.2	11.2	28.4	11.7
South Asian	11.8	13.1	28.3	17.6
Black	8.7	18.3	48.5	33.7

Source: Statistics Canada, 2003

### Conclusion

The changing face of Canada comes courtesy of immigration, especially from the global South. It comes with its challenges, mainly the decline in the socio-economic status of new immigrants. These trends emerge out of the imperatives of globalization, which are combining with historical structures of racial and gender discrimination to intensify the vulnerabilities faced by new immigrants. These trends will not be reversed if it is left to the magic of the market. It will require political action to confront the social economic crisis associated with the decline in the socio-economic status of recent immigrants. It will require the mobilization of communities and those interested in social justice. It will

require federal and provincial government action on the recognition of international qualifications, employment equity, job creation, and action by the labour movement to ensure higher levels of unionization among those who are employed in precarious jobs and sectors so that they have the ability to bargain fair wages and safe working conditions. Addressing these challenges will require that representative public and political institutions reflecting Canada's diversity, especially in the urban centres.

### Notes

- 1 Statistics Canada, 2001 Census data, 2003.
- 2 Ibid.

### References

- Akbari, A.H. "Immigrant 'quality' in Canada: more direct evidence of human capital content, 1956-1994," *International Migration Review*, 33 (Spring 1999): 156-175.
- Conference Board of Canada. Making a Visible Difference: The Contributions of Visible Minorities to Canadian Economic Growth. *Economic Performance and Trends*, April 2004.
- DeVoretz, D.J. (ed.). *Diminishing Returns: the Economics of Canada's Recent Immigration Policy*. Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, 1995.
- Frenette, M. & R. Morissette. *Will they ever converge? Earnings of immigrants and Canadian-born workers over the last two decades*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. Analytical Studies paper No. 215, 2003.
- Grant, H. & R. Oertel. "Diminishing Returns to Immigration? Interpreting the Economic experience of Canadian Immigrants." *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 30(3) (1998):57-76
- Harvey, E.B. & B. Siu. "Immigrants' Socioeconomic Situation Compared, 1991-1996." Ottawa: INSCAN 15(2) (Fall 2001).
- Human Resources Development Canada. *Knowledge Matters: Canada's Innovation Strategy*, February, 2002. [www.hrdc.gc.ca/stratpol/sl-ca/doc/summary.shtml](http://www.hrdc.gc.ca/stratpol/sl-ca/doc/summary.shtml)
- Smith, E. & A. Jackson. *Is Work Working for Workers of Colour?* Canadian Labour Congress, 2002.
- Li, P. The Market Worth of Immigrants' Educational Credentials, *Canadian Public Policy*, 27(1) (2001): 23-38.
- Pendakur, R. *Immigrants and the Labour Force: Policy, Regulation and Impact*, Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000.
- Picot, G. & F. Hou. *The rise in Low-Income rates Among Immigrants in Canada*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Research Paper Series. Catalogue n° 11F0019MIE2003198, 2003.
- Reitz, J.G. "Immigrant Skill Utilization in the Canadian Labour Market: Implications of Human Capital Research." *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 2(3) (Summer 2001).
- Report of the Taskforce on the participation of Visible Minorities in the Federal Public Service, 2000: *Embracing Change in the Federal Public Service*. Ottawa: Supply & Services Canada, 2000.
- Stoffman, D. *Who gets in : what's wrong with Canada's immigration program, and how to fix it*. Toronto : Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 2002.
- Worswick, C. *Immigrants Declining Earnings: Reasons and Remedies*. C.D. Howe Institute, 2004.

# ETHNOGENESIS

## Immigrants to Ethnics and the Development of a Rainbow Class Structure

### ABSTRACT

Today's immigrants and their children are being asked to transform into "Canadians." And, over time, they may integrate into Canadian society, although they also will produce new hybrid ethnic groups and identities. Simultaneously, today's policy makers have developed policies and programs based upon models of acculturation and ethnic identification largely from the historical experiences of earlier European immigrants. However, recent data suggests that these models are perhaps not the most appropriate for identifying the processes of ethnic integration. Current information suggests that a process of "segmented assimilation" is occurring in Canadian society, in which some immigrant groups are rapidly integrating while other groups are not. The focus of this brief essay is to point out that neither of the two fragile majority communities have taken substantive, decisive action to facilitate/integrate immigrants into Canadian society.

Before addressing the issue of immigration and ethnicity, we need to clarify the social organization of Canadian society. First of all, Canada is a country with a "split-ethnic majority," an issue that has held the attention of Canadians for the past three decades. The unique social organization of Canada finds two "majorities" in the same country and this has resulted in a social fragility as the divisive domestic struggle continues on. Second, the existence of two "majorities" within the geographical space of Canada has meant that each of the two majorities have taken different steps to deal with ethnicity. Overall, in English-speaking Canada and in Québec, little social policy has been developed to deal with the ethnic dimension of immigrants entering Canada. However, in Québec, most of the effort has focused on language while in the remainder of Canada, emphasis has been on immigrant settlement. At the same time governments have spent countless hours refining the criteria for allowing immigrants to enter Canada. Unfortunately once they arrive, both fragile governments have only the general multicultural/interculturalism social policy to guide them in dealing with the ethnic dimension of immigrants.

The focus of this brief essay is to point out that neither of the two fragile majorities have taken substantive, decisive action to facilitate/integrate immigrants into Canadian society. Today's focus on integrating immigrants has centred on the human capital and language abilities immigrants bring in. Little attention is given to enhancing or facilitating the spouses' or children's (the next generation) ability to integrate other than to make available public service organization facilities which are inappropriate for immigrants and their children. (See for example Reeves and Frideres, 1981, on the role of various types of service organizations). Specifically, the lack of policy and programs related to ethnic communities has resulted in the ever-increasing gap between immigrants and the larger society with regard to social and economic indicators of quality of life.

### The context

Canadian society has been transformed in terms of its ethnic makeup over the past three decades due to its immigration policy and role in facilitating immigration, including refugees. Jedwab (2001) notes that today the majority of immigrants to Canada now come from Asia and the Middle East. Some three-quarters of our most recent immigrants come from Asia, Africa, the Middle-East and Central and South America and fall largely within the category of visible minorities. Today while immigrants make up nearly 20% of the total Canadian population, visible minorities also have shown an increase with nearly 14% of the population now classified as visible minority. Thus not only has the ethnicity of immigrants revealed a major difference from historical patterns, it has introduced the issue of visible minority into ethnic relations. It is estimated that while "whites" remain the largest group, they are a declining proportion and by mid-century, will not be the majority, if current trends continue (Tiryakian, 2003). As these new immigrant groups form in Canadian society, the process of *ethnogenesis* occurs and the children of immigrants become ethnics in tomorrow's society.

Today's immigrants are heavily concentrated in larger urban centres across the country. For example, in Toronto, over half the population are immigrants. In other major metropolitan areas

across the country, the percentage is not as high but they make up a sizeable proportion of the urban population. This increasing size and concentration of the immigrant population, along with its diversity in culture and social class, makes it an issue policy makers need to attend to immediately. Policy-makers must make a decision as to whether or not these new ethnics will revitalize the nation or create major social problems. Policies today suggest they seem paralyzed with inaction.

Today's immigrants and their children are being asked to transform into "Canadians." And, over time, they may integrate into Canadian society, although they also will produce new hybrid ethnic groups and identities. Today's policy-makers have developed policies and programs based upon models of acculturation and ethnic identification largely from the historical experiences of earlier European immigrants (Rex and Singh, 2003). However, recent data suggests that these models are perhaps not the most appropriate for identifying the processes of ethnic integration. Current information suggests that a process of "segmented assimilation" is occurring in Canadian society, in which some immigrant groups are rapidly integrating while other groups are not. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) have noted that this segmented process is a result of several factors:

- the human capital brought by immigrant parents and the context of reception;
- the differential pace of acculturation among parents and children, including the development of language gaps between them and its bearing on normative integration and family cohesiveness;
- the cultural and economic barriers confronted by second-generation youth in their quest for successful adaptation; and
- the family and community resources (social capital) for confronting these barriers (p. 8).

All of these structural conditions intersect in such a manner that give impetus to the social and economic trajectory of children of immigrants. Some of the ethnic groups created by recent immigration are clearly in an upward mobility path. They are integrating into mainstream society and enriching it with their culture and energies. However others are blocked in their aspirations and are headed in a downward spiral, making up a greater proportion of the poverty population. This differential trajectory of immigrant/ethnics reflects the notion of "segmented assimilation" that has been identified by Portes and Rumbaut and has been ignored by our policy-makers. Already a "rainbow underclass" seems to be emerging as immigrants are occupying the lower rungs of both occupational status as well as income. This new phenomenon suggests that a "colour line" has been established, albeit informally, but nevertheless as potent as one that is public. Moreover, once this gap has been created, upward mobility of children of immigrants becomes increasingly difficult.

As I have noted above, there is no single path that immigrants (or their children) take when trying to integrate into Canadian society. However, we do know that the different outcomes of the second generation (children of immigrants) are determined by the experiences and achievements of their parents. Immigrant resettlement is influenced by what they bring with them in terms of skills, experiences and resources as well as the environment of the host society. The mode of incorporation of immigrants and their children reflect a number of social forces such as the official policy toward immigrants, public receptivity of immigrants and the character and resources of preexisting co-ethnic or related ethnic communities. While these factors focus on the attributes of the immigrant-ethnic, there are other issues that impact on an immigrants' ability to integrate.

### Barriers to integration

Of all the barriers, none is more important than discrimination. Previous research on youth experiencing discrimination shows that they tend to shift their identity to ethnic or racial from "Canadian." A second barrier to successful integration is the tension between educational achievement and alternative life choices. As I have noted earlier, most immigrants settle in large metropolitan areas and within them, in central cities. This residential concentration puts immigrant children in close contact with the cultural models of the inner city that are not supportive of formal educational achievement within public service organizations. Only those children ensconced in well-structured communities tend to be unaffected by the "oppositional" role models they come into contact with. Moreover, the influence of these external role models is not contingent upon the parents' socio-economic status but rather on the character of the family and the density of networks within the ethno-cultural community. In short, ethnic communities that are able to maintain high levels of institutional integration and solidarity are relatively immune to these external influences and can shape the positive contribution of their children and create integrative forces. As such, their children are able to integrate and become "Canadians."

This discussion highlights the importance of ethno-cultural communities in both the lives of immigrants and for Native-born Canadians across the country. If an ethnic community is able to operate as a source of social capital by reinforcing parental authority and expectations for the future, external forces that are inimical to the expectations of parents, will be neutralized. As Rumbaut and Portes (2001) point out, this resource cannot be purchased in the market but rather depends instead on the density and strength of networks grounded on a common heritage. This means that the more successfully integrated immigrants do not depend on complete acculturation but rather on selective preservation of immigrants parents' culture and the collective ties that go with it.

Today while immigrants make up nearly 20% of the total Canadian population, visible minorities also have shown an increase with nearly 14% of the population now classified as visible minority.

I argue that the current government policies and programs, the host society's receptivity and the preexisting ethnic community function to place individuals in different positions at the entry of the funnel of integration. Unfortunately, politicians and policy makers have not identified these factors as important to the social integration of immigrants and their children. Moreover, such a position is directly opposed to theories of immigrant assimilation that focus exclusively on individual human capital (Borjas, 1999). Research emanating from the Metropolis Project shows that constraints and opportunities created by social structures have much more impact on immigrant integration than the immigrants' ambition or level of skill. At the same time, government policies and programs impact local social structures, including the structure and shape of ethnic communities which in turn, affect individuals, determining the extent to which human capital can be put into play and social capital accessed for normative regulation of the second generation can take place (Rambaut and Portes, 2001).

### Conclusion

The question thus remains, why has government not taken action to deal with these issues? First of all, past experience has clearly demonstrated that government is not prepared to be "proactive" on social issues and thus does not address them until they have matured into full-blown pathologies. Instead, focus is on concentrated poverty of immigrants, violence (family and other), gangs, drugs and other "high profile" social pathologies that capture the interest of the media and politicians. A second reason for not addressing the above issue is the resurgence of "Nativism." These proponents have argued against immigration and would prefer to keep immigrants out or isolate them until they magically become integrated into Canadian culture.

Finally, existing policies dealing with immigrants such as English/French immersion (which does not allow them to become functional in one of the official languages) and the subsequent loss of heritage language and culture, weaken immigrant parents' authority and help drive a wedge between generations. This in turn lessens the social capital inherent in their families and co-ethnic communities. Despite the presence of large numbers of professionals and entrepreneurs in today's pool of immigrants, the majority are poor. The data suggest that the best change for educational achievement and economic mobility among the children of immigrants lies in "selective acculturation." However, this position has no political constituency to support it or provide a basis by which new social policy is developed. What is needed then, is to help the children of immigrants preserve a clear sense of their roots, the value of fluency in a second language and the self-esteem grounded on strong family and community bonds. Unfortunately, when structural changes in the institutional arrangements of the public sphere and the relation of the public sphere to the private/communal sphere are called for, public policy seems resistant to change.

The lack of understanding of the role of ethnic communities in the integration process has been an impediment for the integration of immigrants and their children. A singular focus on developing policies and programs utilizing public service organizations and not ethnic (member) service

organizations has begun to accelerate the process by which some immigrant/ethnic communities are unable to develop sufficient social capital to support the goals and dreams they had when coming to Canada.

### References

- Benhabib, S. *The Claims of Culture Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*. Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Borjas, G. *Heaven's Door: Immigrant Policy and the American Economy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Etzioni, A. *The Monochrome Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Jedwab, J. "Leadership, Governance, and the Politics of Identity in Canada." *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 33(3) (2001): 4-38.
- Lash, S. and M. Featherstone, "Recognition and Difference: Politics, Identity, Multiculture." *Theory, Culture and Society* 18(2-3) (2001):1-20.
- Portes, A. and R. Rumbault, *Legacies*. Berkeley and New York: University of California Press and Russell Sage Foundation, 2001.
- Reeves W. and J. Frideres, 1981, "Government Policy and Indian Urbanization: The Alberta Case." *Canadian Public Policy*, 7(4) (1981): 584-595.
- Rex, J. "Le multiculturalisme et l'integration politique dans les villes europeennes," *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie* 105 (July-December 1998): 261-280.
- Rex, J. and G. Singh, 2003, "Multiculturalism and Political Integration in Modern Nation States-Thematic Introduction." *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 5(1) (2003): 3-19.
- Rumbault, R. and A. Portes, *Ethnicities*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Siebersi, H. "The Management of Multiculturalism: Coming to Terms with the Multiplication of Experienced Difference." *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* 6(2) (2003):209-230.
- Tiryakian, E. "Assessing Multiculturalism Theoretically: *E Pluribus Unum, Sic et Non*." *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* 5(1) (2003): 20-39.

# RACE, ETHNICITY AND IMMIGRATION IN THE WORKPLACE

## Visible Minority Experiences and Workplace Diversity Initiatives<sup>i</sup>

### ABSTRACT

In this article, Kareem Sadiq examines the intersections of race, ethnicity, immigration and workplace discrimination. It is argued that a broad-based, national workplace diversity initiative is required to remove discriminatory barriers and effect systemic change. Employing an 'eco-systems' perspective, he suggests that – through national partnerships with government, business, NGOs, academia and other stakeholders – the Multiculturalism Program has an important role to play in promoting diversity in all Canadian workplaces.

In recent years, a robust research agenda on the labour market participation rates of visible minorities in Canada has produced telling results: a large number of visible minorities in this country experience occupational, wage and other labour market disadvantages when compared to their non-visible counterparts. We know much about the statistics on disadvantage, but we know much less about *why* visible minorities are excluded from certain labour market opportunities, and *what* to do about it. Lack of relevant work experience and foreign credential assessment account for some of this inequality, but the evidence suggests that racial discrimination and other exclusionary practices account for a significant amount of labour market disadvantage (Pendakur and Pendakur, 1998; Pendakur and Pendakur, 2002a; Pendakur and Pendakur, 2002b; Reitz, 2005).

Current research on visible minority labour market participation and employment equity addresses the numerical under-representation of visible minorities in the workplace (see Antunes et al., 2004; Parkin and Mendelsohn, 2004; and Jain and Lawler, 2003 for recent examples). While on-going statistical analyses of visible minority labour market participation rates are useful and necessary, I suggest that policy makers need to consider seriously workplace dynamics of exclusion. A focus on numerical representation is only one half of the employment equity equation. Visible minority wage and occupational gaps are not merely statistical anomalies; they are the result of a complex set of social processes that interact to exclude certain people from economic opportunities.

Studies indicate that holding employment is a key indicator of sense of belonging and social inclusion (Hum and Simpson, 2003; Kazemipur, 2002; Kazemipur and Halli, 2001). But it is important to qualify the link between employment, inclusion and belonging: holding a job is not in and of itself an indicator that one feels included or that one belongs. Rather, feelings of belonging and inclusion are determined by on-the-job experiences, such as feeling valued for one's skills, being accepted by one's co-workers, and being afforded equality of opportunity. In 2002, the Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS) reported that 56% of visible minorities experienced discrimination in the workplace (Statistics Canada, 2003, 21). What is the nature of this discrimination and what do we do about it?

An emerging body of research examines visible minorities' everyday workplace experiences and identifies a range of exclusionary practices (Bates and Este, 2000; Carnevale and Stone, 1994; Livers and Cavers, 2003; Mor Barak, 2000; and Shih, 2002). Racism, stereotyping, and employer attitudes towards visible minorities' skills and competencies impedes their occupational mobility and fosters a sense of detachment from the workplace. In light of this evidence, it is clear that employment equity policies founded on numerical representation cannot be effective *unless they are implemented in tandem with broad-based workplace diversity initiatives that challenge discriminatory attitudes and the exclusionary treatment of visible minorities.*

What role can the Multiculturalism Program and other stakeholders play in the promotion of workplace diversity?<sup>1</sup> In recent years, Canadian Heritage's Multiculturalism Program has shifted its focus from cultural identity retention to multicultural integration and social inclusion (Donaldson, 2003; Hum and Simpson, 2003). This shift, while controversial to some (see Donaldson, 2003), has

**KAREEM D. SADIQ**  
Kareem Sadiq is a research officer with the Multiculturalism and Human Rights Branch at the Department of Canadian Heritage.

important implications for visible minority labour market policies and programs. Under the *Multiculturalism Act* (1988, Section 3.1.c.), the Multiculturalism Program is mandated to “promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of Canadian society and [to] assist them in the elimination of any barrier to that participation.” Given this mandate, I believe that the Multiculturalism Program has an important part to play in the promotion of workplace diversity.

In order to create effective diversity policy and programming, policymakers must seriously consider two main questions: 1) What is the relationship between race, ethnicity immigration and workplace discrimination?; and 2) What directions should the Multiculturalism Program and other stakeholders take to promote diversity in Canadian workplaces?

In this article I do not propose specific workplace diversity policies *per se*; nor do I provide a comprehensive review of the range of intersections of diversity and their impact on workplace diversity. Rather, I set out to accomplish two tasks. The first is to get people to think reflexively and frankly about the ‘stuff’ of workplace barriers. Employment barriers represent a set of social processes and I want to consider how exclusionary workplace practices based on race, ethnicity and immigration limit visible minorities’ access to employment opportunities.

Second, I want to consider how the Multiculturalism Program, its government partners, academia, businesses, NGOs and other stakeholders can implement sustained and broad-based initiatives that will promote the acceptance of visible minorities in the workplace and remove discriminatory barriers. We have much to learn about the diversity policies and programming of individual organizations, but in order to effect systemic change, we need to think more seriously about diversity partnering and programming at a national scale.

### **Race, ethnicity and immigration: intersecting dynamics in the workplace**

#### **Race**

Race is a social construct that refers to real or imagined phenotypical differences between people (Tastoglou, 2003; Bolaria and Li, 1988). Depending on the social values of dominant societal groups, visible distinctions between people may be singled out and differentiated, reflecting the ideological, political, economic and cultural biases of those who have the power to define (Driedger, 2003, 4). Ideologies of racism that socialize and communicate phenotypical differences may thus serve as the grounds to discriminate against minorities and devalue their contribution to society (ibid).

In the workplace, one’s ‘visible minority’ status – itself a race-based socially constructed term – may be the basis of exclusionary treatment. However, it is important at the outset to elucidate the relationship between visible minority status and workplace discrimination. When considering race, I argue that people’s attitudes are in part shaped by their exposure to difference; in other words, the degree of social interaction that they have with members of visible

minority groups. It is often assumed that people who have heterogeneous inter-ethnic social networks are more tolerant and accepting of others than those who have homogeneous intra-ethnic networks. In turn, it is assumed that workplaces which are diverse and heterogeneous are sites of tolerance and acceptance. These assumptions warrant qualification.

Drawing on classic social network literature, I argue that acceptance of others is shaped by one’s *range*, *volume* and *quality* of social contact (Burt, 1983). Range refers to the number of visible minority groups with which people have contact. When we talk about workplace diversity, how diverse is the diversity? In other words, how many minority groups are represented in any given workplace? Do workplaces develop an organizational culture that favours some minority groups over others? Volume refers to the number of individual contacts within each visible minority group. How many individuals from different minority groups do people come in to contact with in the workplace? Quality refers to the frequency of contact and the strength of the relationship between people. To what extent do people socialise with minority colleagues outside of work? Minorities may be *tolerated* by their colleagues within in the workplace, but are they *accepted* by their colleagues outside of it?

Social network range, volume and quality vary among individuals and may produce differential attitudes towards certain visible minority groups. Furthermore, this process is not limited to dominant group (read white) perceptions of visible minorities; it equally affects visible minorities’ attitudes towards other visible minorities and the white majority. This adds a level of complexity to the workplace diversity problem: as Canada’s population becomes more diverse, how will majority-minority relations *and* inter-minority relations affect people’s access to economic opportunities?

#### **Ethnicity**

The ethnicity and ethnic identity literature demonstrates that discriminatory attitudes are not formed on the basis of race alone. Stasiulis (1990, 276) refers to ethnicity as “the world views, traditions and practices brought by immigrants to Canada and dynamically reproduced and transformed within Canadian society.” Eriksen (1993) and O’Callaghan (1999) describe ethnicity as both a sense of separateness and collectivity: it designates the differences between groups of people, but it also identifies likeness with likeness according to a set of shared characteristics.

Ethnic identity, in turn, is both an ascription placed on individuals as well as individual self-expression (O’Callaghan, 1999). Ethnic identity is ascribed when ethnic labels – based on origin, race, religion, gender, language et cetera – are imposed on to others. In the workplace, ethnic labelling can ascribe stereotypical characteristics surrounding employability, personal suitability and fit. Discrimination can occur through the exclusion of rights and opportunities based on these ascriptions (Ferguson, 1991).

As self-expression, the formation of ethnic identity involves a conscious dismantling and reconstruction of cultural forms and world views (Bottomley, 1992). Identities are not stable concepts; they are shaped within the interplay of specific modalities of power (Hall, 1996). To mitigate



discrimination, it is argued that visible minorities can choose identities that fit with the organizational culture of particular workplaces (ibid.). These identity choices are strategic, political constructs that may enable access to employment and other economic resources. Below, I expand upon this concept through a consideration of immigrant status.

### Immigration

Immigration – in particular immigrant status – has a significant impact on workplace experiences, especially within the context of intersecting ‘identities’ and ethnic and racial labelling. Canadian-born visible minorities and immigrant visible minorities face, at the same time, common and distinct sets of workplace constraints. The common set of constraints surround race and ethnicity, and the distinct set of constraints concern immigrant status. Ethnic and racial labels are ascribed to both Canadian-born visible minorities and immigrant visible minorities, however Canadian-born visible minorities may be in a better position to draw upon strategic identity choices that demonstrate a fit with the organizational culture of the workplace.

In many ways, ‘demonstrating fit’ is a function of cultural capital. Cultural capital is defined as the acquisition of social status through cultural practices which involve the exercise of taste and judgement (Bourdieu, 1984). The concept also includes a wider set of social distinctions that act as markers of class and ethnicity, such as economic status, language ability and accent. In the workplace, visible minority job seekers and employees can demonstrate that they ‘fit’ with an organization by mirroring its’ cultural norms and practices. While some issues surrounding organizational fit affect whites and visible minorities alike, I argue that whites are seldom if ever subject to pejorative and discriminatory racial and ethnic labelling, especially where they constitute the majority of workplace employees. By virtue of their visible status and other characteristics, minorities must overcome racial and ethnic ascription *in addition* to various concerns with organizational fit (such as sharing a company’s philosophy, work style and beliefs).

Strategic identity choices are only successful in so far as they confer *sufficient* cultural capital to demonstrate workplace fit. Canadian-born visible minorities are familiar with workplace norms and can partially mitigate ethnic labelling by demonstrating that they share collective cultural traits. Immigrant visible minorities meet with mixed success. Depending on their age and year of arrival, some immigrants will be able to summon cultural capital on par with the Canadian-born. Other immigrants are unfamiliar with workplace norms and suffer a significant cultural capital deficit. Still others fall in the middle; they can summon some degree of cultural capital, but have deficits in other areas – or what I refer to as *differential cultural capital*.

To illustrate the link between cultural capital and workplace fit, I briefly examine the connection between accent and language skill. At a recent racism-free workplace consultation between government, NGOs and federally-regulated private sector businesses, a human resources manager for a large corporation indicated that:

“Accent influences our hiring and promotion decisions, because it indicates that the person may not have the language skills to do the job. It doesn’t matter if they are Canadian or foreign trained. We screen these candidates more closely to ensure that their language skills are at the appropriate level.”

Accent is a marker of cultural and ethnic difference, an indicator that one may not have the skills to perform the job. In as much as ‘closer screening’ can be utilized to evaluate an immigrant candidate’s language skills, discriminatory attitudes towards accent call into question his or her fit with an organization. As Creese and Kambere (2003, 566) note, “accents, embodied by racialized subjects, also shape perceptions of language competency...[and] may provide a rationale for disentanglement in employment or full participation in civil society...” This example also illustrates the concept of differential cultural capital: in spite of Canadian education and a knowledge of local workplace norms, accent may be perceived so negatively that it overrides other cultural capital gains to form the basis of discrimination.

Finally, I want to address the issue of foreign credential recognition (FCR). Reitz (2005, 3) demonstrates that the reduced value of work owing to the non-recognition of immigrant credentials in Canadian workplaces amounts to over \$2 billion annually. Although scholars and policy makers have focused much on how to overcome FCR barriers (such as improving credential assessment services), not enough attention has been paid to why FCR is such a pervasive problem. There are two sides to the FCR issue. On the one hand, there is a technical concern that immigrants’ foreign-earned credentials reflect the skills and knowledge base required to perform specific jobs. However, on the other hand, it is also argued that the value of foreign earned credentials is filtered through the racial attitudes of employers.

For example, ‘Canadian work experience’ is a prerequisite for many immigrant job seekers, ostensibly because in the absence of reliable credential assessment, it demonstrates possession of appropriate skill sets and on-the-job competence. However, as Reitz (2005, 12) and Jackson (2001) note, racial attitudes may underlie requirements for Canadian work experience, and judgements that a foreign credential is a lower standard than Canadian qualifications may reflect discriminatory bias. Thus, so-called ‘bona fide’ technical assessment processes may be marred by a lack of procedural fairness which in turn produce workplace barriers.

In recent years, Canadian Heritage’s Multiculturalism Program has shifted its focus from cultural identity retention to multicultural integration and social inclusion. This shift, while controversial to some, has important implications for visible minority labour market policies and programs.

## The eco-systems perspective, workplace diversity and the way forward

In the previous section I outlined some of the intersections between race, ethnicity immigration and exclusionary workplace practices. Although I have spoken much about exclusion, I have said little about *inclusion*. In this section, I wish to propose a model that the Multiculturalism Program and other stakeholders can adopt to promote diversity and visible minority inclusion in Canadian workplaces.

### The eco-systems perspective and workplace diversity

Following Mor Barak (2000), I argue that organizations need to adopt a holistic approach to diversity and consider the wider socio-economic environment. Mor Barak (*ibid.*, 339) advocates an eco-systems perspective, whereby organizations move beyond the self-interests of the firm and engage diversity at a broader level. The eco-systems perspective is comprised of four key components or systems: the organization, community, government, and cross-cultural / international entities. In order to be truly diverse, he maintains that organizations must promote internal diversity programs, be active in their communities, participate in government programs that promote the interests of visible minorities and the working poor, and engage in international business collaboration, including foreign recruitment. The eco-systems perspective incorporates a value-based model and a practice-based model which, together, identify exclusionary and inclusionary diversity practices and promote visible minority participation in the workplace.

### Value-based model

The value-based model examines organizations' 'value frame,' and locates them on an exclusion – inclusion continuum. Inclusionary and exclusionary organizations each have a set of guiding principles – whether formal or informal – that determine their openness to difference. For example, exclusionary organizations make no effort to establish community contacts because their primary obligation is to financial stakeholders. Exclusionary organizations may view the working poor as disposable labour and take little interest in government programs that promote their welfare. Inclusionary organizations, however, feel that they are part of the community and thus encourage their employees to engage in activities – such as volunteer work – that enhance community development. Furthermore, inclusionary organizations view the working poor as a potentially upwardly mobile workforce and actively participate in government programs that facilitate their entrance to the labour market (*ibid.*, 342-343).

### Practice-based model

The practice-based model identifies diversity obstacles, recommends good practices and highlights the attendant benefits at each system level. For example, within organizations, discrimination and prejudice may impede the hire, retention and promotion of visible minority candidates. By drawing on diversity programming that promotes acceptance and job satisfaction, organizations lower costs owing to 'revolving door' staff turnover, increase their talent pool, expand business opportunities to other markets, and improve their overall corporate image. At the community level, businesses provide tangible benefits and opportunities to groups in need and demonstrate good 'corporate social performance' when they engage in activities such as youth mentoring, tutoring, and support of cultural institutions. At the level of government, negative attitudes towards social welfare programs and low-income workers pose obstacles to employment. The intersections of race, ethnicity, immigration and class are at play here: racialized low-income earners face a multiple jeopardy situation owing to ethnic labelling and, in the case of immigrants, bias in the assessment of foreign credentials. By making a concerted effort to hire candidates from government labour programs, businesses not only provide economic opportunities to low-income job seekers, they reduce expenditures on employment insurance, social assistance and other federal, provincial and municipal support programs (*ibid.*, 344-345).

### Race, ethnicity, immigration and the eco-systems perspective

The eco-systems perspective is valuable because it offers a systematic approach to the identification of exclusionary practices and the development of good practices to eliminate them. Building on Mor Barak's concept, I argue that the *eco-system perspective* encourages the detection of specific exclusionary practices and the implementation of targeted workplace solutions. In this way, it is possible to determine and document the nature and basis of discrimination within organizations. In

other words, it allows for an identification of the intersections of discrimination. For example, is workplace discrimination characterized by a chilly climate towards visible minorities, ethnic labelling or stereotyping, differential treatment of foreign trained professionals, or a combination of various factors? Although I only address race, ethnicity and immigration in this article, the eco-systems perspective provides a framework to identify and link specific types of exclusionary workplace practices to different combinations of intersections (such as gender and religion, gender and race, et cetera).

The eco-systems perspective is comprised of four key components or systems: the organization, community, government, and cross-cultural / international entities. In order to be truly diverse, [...] organizations must promote internal diversity programs, be active in their communities, participate in government programs that promote the interests of visible minorities and the working poor, and engage in international business collaboration, including foreign recruitment.

The eco-systems perspective benefits employers, but it is also a useful tool for researchers. Two areas of inquiry which have received scant attention in the literature are inter-minority and 'minority-majority' discrimination. The literature assumes that workplace discrimination is a white majority on visible minority phenomenon, but we know that whites are not the only ones to hold discriminatory attitudes. What is the nature and extent of inter-minority and minority-majority discrimination and how does it manifest itself in the workplace? These issues add multiple layers of analysis to the 'intersectionality' of discrimination.

Do members from one or more minority groups engage in exclusionary practices that deny members of other minority groups access to economic opportunities? Are there 'alliances' between minority groups or between minority and majority groups which work to actively exclude certain ethno-cultural groups from the workplace? Are there instances where whites are excluded from 'visible majority' workplaces? More research on inter-minority and minority-majority workplace discrimination is required, and I suggest that the value-based and practice-based components of the eco-system perspective are useful and effective tools that allow researchers, policy makers and employers to identify inter-group discrimination and propose appropriate solutions.

#### **The Multiculturalism Program, diversity stakeholders and the way forward**

I want to expand on Mor Barak's eco-systems approach and apply it to the policy work of the Multiculturalism Program. In keeping with Mor Barak's call for businesses to establish external links and connections, I suggest that the Multiculturalism Program needs to establish a range of *horizontal* and *vertical* stakeholder connections. Given the Multiculturalism Program's mandate under the *Multiculturalism Act*, it is in a unique position to co-ordinate a national workplace diversity initiative in concert with a wide range of partners.

Donaldson (2003, 15) suggests that as part of the Multiculturalism Program's shift towards integration,

Multiculturalism ought to be about bringing people of different backgrounds together to advance a common framework [and] a shared terms of reference...[on]...issues of respect, equality and diversity...It is based on a new approach to community that encourages direct contact.

An eco-systems approach to workplace diversity offers the Multiculturalism Program precisely this opportunity; it provides a road map to identifying partners, developing a shared framework, and promoting diversity and acceptance within all workplaces.

Connecting horizontally and connecting vertically:  
establishing partnership linkages

In order to create meaningful workplace diversity initiatives, develop shared terms of reference on workplace diversity issues, and effect systemic change, the Multiculturalism Program must establish close and sustained nation-wide partnerships with diversity stakeholders and employers. Conceptually, I employ the values-based

exclusion-inclusion continuum to identify two types of partners: 'horizontal partners' – those organizations with successful workplace diversity policies and programming, and 'vertical partners' – those organizations with little or no diversity policies or programming.

Horizontal partners consist of any department, agency or employer that is dedicated to the promotion of workplace diversity, employment equity, and the removal of discriminatory workplace barriers; they include government agencies (federal, provincial, municipal), NGOs, academia, and private sector businesses with active employment equity departments and successful workplace diversity policies. The organizations which constitute horizontal connections are *de facto* good practitioners of workplace diversity.

Vertical partners refer to any organization or workplace that does not engage in good diversity practices or has few mechanisms by which to implement them. Indeed, they may be workplaces which – through systemic barriers and exclusionary practices – actively discourage the hire and retention of visible minorities. Vertical partners would be identified through the research, programming and organizational connections of horizontal partners. Identifying vertical partners is vital for two reasons. First, it will provide policymakers and other stakeholders with more accurate quantitative and qualitative employment data on visible minority under-representation in specific labour market sectors. Second – and more importantly – it will place government, NGO and private sector horizontal partners in a position to identify barriers and conduct interventions to help workplaces develop good diversity practices.

Establishing horizontal and vertical linkages will not be easy. Organizational culture, communication problems, inter-agency territorialism and jurisdictional issues will complicate the creation of sustained partnerships. The success of the eco-systems perspective is predicated on partner stakeholders overcoming their differences to pursue common goals.

While the Multiculturalism Program is not endowed with a mandate to impose its policies on private sector employers, the *Multiculturalism Act* (1988, Sections 3.2.a and 3.2.d) directs federal institutions<sup>2</sup> to "ensure that Canadians of all origins have equal opportunity to obtain employment and advancement within these institutions," and to collect statistical data in order to develop policies, programs and practices that are responsive to Canada's multicultural reality.

Clearly, the Multiculturalism Program has an important role to play in the monitoring and evaluation of workplace diversity within federal institutions. Government is not immune from workplace diversity issues, and the systemic under-representation of visible minorities in the federal public service has been widely documented (Government of Canada 2000). The federal public service must self-reflexively assess its own workplace diversity practices and make a concerted effort to enhance the inclusion Canadian-born and immigrant visible minorities. Indeed, the government must lead by example if it is to successfully promote diversity initiatives at a national level.

It has been suggested that the shift towards integration demonstrates an interest in establishing common frameworks and shared terms of reference on the issue of diversity. The Multiculturalism Program must take an active role in

initiating this national dialogue. To promote the inclusion of visible minorities in Canadian workplaces, the Multiculturalism Program must actively draw on the expertise of government, NGOs, academia and business to establish broad-based and sustainable partnerships, develop shared terms of reference on diversity, and disseminate good diversity practices to all Canadian employers.

## References

- Antunes, P., J.L. MacBride-King & J. Sweetenham. *Making a Visible Difference: The Contribution of visible Minorities to Canadian Economic Growth*. Ottawa: Conference Board of Canada, 2004.
- Bates, M. & D. Este. *Creating Workplace Environments that Reflect Human Rights Values*. Calgary: Cultural Diversity Institute, 2000.
- Bolaria, B.S. & P. Li. *Racial Oppression in Canada*. Toronto: Garamond, 1988.
- Bourdieu, P. *Distinction: A Social Critique of Judgement of Taste*. London: Routledge, 1984.
- Bottomley, G. *From Another Place: Migration and the Politics of Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Burt, R.S. "Range." In R. S. Burt & M. J. Minors (Eds). *Applied Network Analysis: A Methodological Introduction*. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983, 176-194.
- Carenvale, A.P. & S.C. "Stone. Diversity beyond the golden rule." *Training and Development*, 48(10) (1994): 22-40.
- Creese, G. & E.N. Kambere. "What colour is your English?" *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 40(5) (2003): 565-573.
- Donaldson, I. "Identity, intersections of diversity and the Multiculturalism Program." *Canadian Diversity*, 3(1) (2003): 14-16.
- Driedger, L. *Race and Ethnicity: Finding Identities and Equalities*. Don Mills: Oxford, 2003.
- Eriksen, T. *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Pluto Press, 1993.
- Ferguson, B. "Concepts, models and theories for immigrant health care." In B.Ferguson and E. Brown (eds). *Health Care and Immigrants: A Guide for the Helping Professionals*. Sydney, Australia: MacLennan and Petty, 1991.
- Government of Canada. *Embracing Change in the Federal Public Service: The Task Force on the Participation of Visible Minorities in the Public Service*. Ottawa: Treasury Board, 2000.
- Hall, S. "Who needs 'identity?'" In S. Hall & P. du Gay (eds). *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage, 1996, 1-17.
- Hum, D. & W. Simpson. 2003. "Labour market training of new Canadians and limitations to the intersectionality framework." *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 35(3) (2003): 56-70.
- Jackson, A. "Poverty and racism." *Perceptions*, 24(4) (2001). Available on-line at: [www.ccsd.ca/perception/244/racism.htm](http://www.ccsd.ca/perception/244/racism.htm).
- Jain, H.C. & J. Lawler. *Good Practices for Visible Minorities in Canadian Workplaces*. Ottawa: Human Resources Development Canada, 2003.
- Kazempur, A. "The changing colour of poverty in Canada." *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 38(2), 217-239.
- Kazempur, A. & S. S. Halli. "Immigrants and the new poverty." *International Migration Review*, 35(4) (2001): 1129-1157.
- Livers, A.B. & A. Caver. *Leading in Black and White*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2003.
- Mor Barak, M.E. 2000. "The inclusive workplace: an ecosystems approach to diversity management." *Social Work*, 45(4) (2000): 339-352.
- O' Callaghan, C. Ethnicity and Strategic Labelling. Conference paper. *Culture, Race and Community: Making it Work in the New Millennium*. Melbourne Australia, August 19-21, 1999.
- Parkin, A. & M. Mendelsohn. *A New Canada: An Identity Shaped by Diversity*. Montréal: Centre for Research and Information on Canada, 2003.
- Pendakur, K. & R. Pendakur. "The colour of money: earnings differentials among ethnic groups in Canada." *Canadian Journal of Economics*, 31(3) (1998): 518-548.
- Pendakur, K. & R. Pendakur. 2002a. "Colour my world: have earnings gaps for Canadian-born ethnic minorities changed over time?" *Canadian Public Policy*, 18(4) (2002a): 489-513.
- Pendakur, K. & R. Pendakur. 2002b. "Language as both human capital and ethnicity." *International Migration Review*, 36(1) (2002b): 147-177.
- Reitz, J.G. 2005. Tapping immigrants' skills: new directions for Canadian immigration policy in the knowledge economy. *IRPP Choices*, 11(1) (2005).
- Shih, J. "Yeah, I could hire this one, but I know it's gonna be a problem': how, race, nativity and gender affect employer' perceptions of the manageability of job seekers." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 25(1) (2002): 99-119.
- Statistics Canada. "Ethnic Diversity Survey: Portrait of a Multicultural Society." Ottawa: Statistics Canada. Catalogue No. 89-593-XIE, 2003.
- Stasiulis, D. "Theorizing connections: gender, race, ethnicity and class." In P.S. Li (ed). *Race and Ethnic Relations in Canada*. Toronto: Oxford, (1990): 269-305.
- Tastoglou, E. "The immigration process and minority identities: where we are and what we still need to know." *Canadian Diversity*, 1(1) (2002): 14-18.

## Notes

- 1 Barak (2000) broadly defines "workplace diversity initiatives" as programs or strategies that seek to promote the value and acceptance of individual and inter-group difference in the workplace.
- 2 Federal institutions are defined as any department, board, commission or council, or other body or office, established to perform a governmental function by or pursuant to an *Act of Parliament* or by or under the authority of the Governor in Council, including departmental corporations and Crown corporations.
- i The opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the Department of Canadian Heritage or the Government of Canada.

# IMMIGRANTS AND RACIALIZATION IN CANADA

## Geographies of Exclusion?

### ABSTRACT

This research draws on information from Statistics Canada provided to York University through the Data Liberation Initiative and to the Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement, CERIS – Toronto.

Approximately 18% of Canada's permanent residents are foreign-born and their share of the population increases annually as approximately 200,000 immigrants land in Canada. Recent immigrants are coming from new sources, changing the complexion of Canada. The majority of immigrants now arrive from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, Central America and South America. In 2001, more than 80% of the Canadian population born abroad was visible minorities, people who identify themselves as not being of European background, Caucasian race or white colour (Statistics Canada 2003). Living in a racialized society dominated by people from European backgrounds, recent immigrants face challenges to successful integration rooted in their experiences as newcomers and as people of colour.

Visible minority immigrants' experiences are shaped by conditions in Canada's major metropolitan areas where they are concentrated. Three quarters live in Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver (Statistics Canada, 2003). In 2001, 45% of all visible minority immigrants in Canada resided in Toronto, 19% in Vancouver, and 11% in Montréal. Every visible minority immigrant group, except for the Montréal Arab population and Vancouver Japanese population, had its largest numbers in Toronto (Statistics Canada, 2003).

Much of our understanding of the experiences of racialized people in Canada is based on data collected by Statistics Canada. Four social characteristics may be used to classify an individual's ethno-cultural background: place of birth, mother tongue, ethnic origin, and visible minority group (Boyd, Goldmann and White, 2000). Few studies consider how these social characteristics intersect.<sup>2</sup> Yet, the success of visible minority immigrants in Canadian society reflects their experiences as visible minorities and as newcomers. Since immigrants now account for more than 70% of all people from visible minority groups in Canada (Hou and Picot, 2004, Statistics Canada, 2003),<sup>3</sup> understanding the ways they resist and respond to the effects of being newcomers and people of colour is crucial for curbing their social exclusion in Canadian society.

Shaped by the country's economic, social, and political circumstances, immigration policy has always influenced the composition of the Canadian population. Starting with the early 'need' for settlers and labourers, migrants to Canada have been judged on their ability to contribute to, and their ability to 'fit in' in Canada (Stasiulis and Jhappan, 1995). Historically, evaluation of these two factors and the question of whether a migrant was settler or labourer had racialized dimensions (Razak, 2002). Settlers from the colonial headquarters of France, and then Britain, were courted. As Canada grew, labourers for resource-based industries were drawn from countries such as Japan, India, China, and Italy.

Immigration policies often entrenched racism. The *Chinese Immigration Act* and *Chinese Exclusion Acts* imposed large taxes on immigrants from China; the *Continuous Journey Stipulation of 1908* limited immigration from India; and the 1910 *Immigration Act* gave governmental consent to institutionalized racism (Abu-Laban, 1998). Beginning in 1962, overtly discriminatory practices and policies were removed gradually. The introduction of a 'points system,' whereby an applicant for admission to Canada was assessed on the basis of skills, age, education and employment prospects instead of nationality, ethnic origin, race, religion, and colour was a major step forward increasing the 'objectivity' with which would-be immigrants were evaluated (Li, 2003).

At the same time as immigration policies were evolving, multiculturalism was becoming part of Canadian discourse and law. The policy, introduced in 1971, promised that ethnic groups could retain their cultural heritage while participating fully in Canadian society (Hansard, 1971). Incorporated into the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in 1982, multiculturalism policy was revised to

VALERIE PRESTON  
Geography Department

ANN MARIE MURNAGHAN  
Faculty of Environmental Studies  
York University

refer explicitly to racial diversity in the *Multiculturalism Act, 1985* that was ratified in 1988 (Leman, 1999). Current legislation and programs promise full participation in Canadian society to immigrants from all sources and ethno-racial backgrounds.

### Challenges for Canadian Society

Despite the promises of multiculturalism, visible minority immigrants are experiencing exclusion and marginalization in Canada. One measure of their difficulties is the rising percentage of immigrant families that reported incomes below the low-income cut off, a frequent measure of poverty.<sup>4</sup> Between 1991 and 2001, the percentage of families with incomes below the low-income cut off increased for families in which the principal wage earner was an immigrant and declined for families in which the principal wage earner was Canadian-born. Even as the economy grew, poverty rates for immigrant families increased. The divergent trends underscore the persistent economic challenges facing recent arrivals, the majority of whom are visible minorities.

The resulting poverty rates are unacceptably high for visible minority immigrants. In 1996, almost four in ten visible minority immigrant households in the Toronto metropolitan area were living in poverty. Among households with a Canadian-born principal respondent of European background, the percentage with incomes below the low-income cut off was 16.3% (Preston, Lo and Wang, 2003). As recent immigrants, visible minority immigrants are also experiencing different processes of labour market integration than their earlier counterparts from European sources (Aydemir and Skuterud, 2005). On average, their earnings are not catching up with those of the Canadian-born within a decade as was true for immigrants arriving prior to 1986. As a result, recent visible minority immigrants are much more likely to be living in poverty than earlier arrivals who were visible minorities. In 1996, the percentages of visible minority immigrant households in Toronto with incomes below the low-income cut off were 19.0% for those who had arrived before 1986 and 48.5% for those who arrived after 1985 (Preston, Lo and Wang, 2003).

The deteriorating economic performance of visible minority immigrants is not well understood. Researchers have proposed many explanations. Employers are placing less value on foreign work experience than on domestic experience (Aydemir and Skuterud, 2005), immigrants are facing increased competition from highly educated Canadian-born workers (Reitz, 2001, Li, 2003), and accreditation issues reduce immigrants' access to regulated professions (Brouwer, 1999). Fluency in Canada's official languages also influences immigrants' economic performance. As employers

require more literacy from all employees, immigrants who are not fluent in French or English or speak with an accent have more difficulties obtaining employment commensurate with their qualifications and experience (Boyd and Thomas, 2002). Racism may also affect the economic prospects of all immigrants, particularly visible minority immigrants.

### The Question of Segregation

Recently, attention has turned to the impact of residential segregation on the inclusion of visible minority immigrants in Canadian society. Newspapers report growing concern that immigrants are being placed at a disadvantage by living in residential areas where they are the majority of the population (Carey, 2001). In public discourse, there is a growing and troubling association between residential concentrations of visible minorities and poverty. It is useful to analyze the supposed relationship between residential segregation and the economic difficulties facing visible minority immigrants as an avenue for examining how racism and discrimination influence the inclusion of visible minority immigrants.

Although overall levels of segregation in Canadian cities are lower than in American cities, visible minorities are often more segregated from the dominant British and French populations than ethnic groups from European backgrounds (Balakrishnan and Gyimah, 2003; Bauder and Sharpe, 2002; Ray, 1998). In the three large metropolitan areas, visible minority residents experience moderate levels of segregation while residents from southern, central and eastern European backgrounds are segregated slightly. The exception to these trends is the Jewish population that is still highly segregated (Balakrishnan and Gyimah, 2003; Myles and Hou, 2004).

The causes of segregation in Canadian cities are disputed. The gradual decline in segregation for most ethnic groups from southern, central and eastern Europe is often cited as evidence that segregation is largely voluntary, an attempt to maintain cultural identities and heritage

by concentrating in residential neighbourhoods (Murdie and Teixeira, 2003). However, there is recent evidence that some visible minority groups are experiencing difficulties in the housing market that may contribute to segregation (Myles and Hou, 2004). Blacks have lower rates of homeownership than expected on the basis of their incomes, occupation, and education suggesting that discriminatory processes may be operating (Myles and Hou, 2004). Immigrants and refugees who are visible minorities also report discriminatory experiences in the housing market (Owusu, 1998; Novac et al., 2002).

The consequences of segregation for visible minority immigrants in Canadian cities are also not well understood.

Immigration policies often entrenched racism. The *Chinese Immigration Act* and *Chinese Exclusion Acts* imposed large taxes on immigrants from China; the *Continuous Journey Stipulation of 1908* limited immigration from India; and the *1910 Immigration Act* gave governmental consent to institutionalized racism (Abu-Laban 1998). Beginning in 1962, overtly discriminatory practices and policies were removed gradually.

Some research suggests that the incomes of visible minorities who live in neighbourhoods dominated by a visible minority group are lower than those of visible minorities who live in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods (Kazemipur and Halli, 2000; Lee, 2000). Critics question these findings on several grounds. They note that the low-income cut off, the most common measure of poverty, is only one measure of deprivation which is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon (Germain and Gagnon, 1999; Ley and Smith, 2000). Others have found little relationship between the percentage of people in a neighbourhood who are living in poverty and the percentage who are immigrants (Ley and Smith, 2000). Still others note that the various mechanisms by which neighbourhood circumstances limit the life chances of immigrants are not spelled out (Germain and Gagnon 1999). They question the extent to which research that links the residential segregation of African-American populations at the centres of American cities to high and sustained rates of impoverishment (Wilson, 1996) is applicable to the experiences of visible minority immigrants in Canadian cities.

American research is difficult to translate into the Canadian context for three reasons. Patterns of segregation in Canadian cities differ from those in American cities. Levels of segregation in Canadian cities are lower than those in American cities and the effects of racialization are more complex. There is no Canadian equivalent of a ghetto in which a visible minority group dominates the neighbourhood population and high proportions of the group's total population live in neighbourhoods where the group is a sizable majority (Peach, 1996). Even for Chinese and South Asian immigrants, the most segregated visible minority immigrant groups, there is little relationship between neighbourhood location and income (Hou and Picot, 2004; Myles and Hou, 2004). Unlike African-Americans the group that is most often studied with respect to segregation in American cities, many visible minority immigrants are more educated than the average Canadian-born adult. Their educational attainments should ensure that visible minority immigrants enjoy economic success in Canada.

The suburbanization of minorities is also taking different directions in Canada than in the United States, further differentiating segregation patterns in the two countries. In Canadian metropolitan areas, suburbs are home to large and diverse populations of visible minority immigrants who move to the suburbs for many different reasons. For some, the suburbs offer inexpensive social and private rental housing<sup>5</sup> (Owusu, 1998) while others seek homeownership in a suburban setting (Ray, Halseth and Johnson, 1997). The social diversity of the visible minority immigrant population in the suburbs of Canadian metropolitan areas is not matched in American cities where suburbanization is the purview of affluent minority households (Alba, Logan and Stults, 2000).

Finally, recent research in the United Kingdom and Western Europe raises questions about the nature and significance of segregation. Spatial patterns of segregation in Canada are similar in many ways to those in the United Kingdom that are influenced significantly by housing and welfare policies. In this context, a recent analysis of several European cities (Murie and Musterd, 2004) concluded that the characteristics of the neighbourhood affect the options for social mobility once a household experiences poverty and other forms of social exclusion. In the European context where the welfare state actively redistributes income and sets a floor under household income, neighbourhood characteristics do not determine which households experience poverty. Contrary to the American view of segregation, the European experience suggests that segregation may affect visible minority immigrants' future prospects more than they explain their current economic difficulties.

### Looking Ahead

As yet, we have a limited understanding of the social processes that lead to the exclusion of visible minority immigrants. There is tremendous scope for future research. For example, current analyses of the causes of visible minority immigrants' economic difficulties are often contradictory. To explain immigrants' low employment rates, Aydemir and Skuterud (2005) emphasize that employers do not value foreign work experience, while Hum and Simpson (2003) highlight the importance of time of arrival. One way to reconcile these divergent findings is research that takes account of how visible minority status interacts with the effects of gender, period of arrival, and other social characteristics and the ways that these links change over time. Research must also take seriously the possibility that visible minority immigrants are experiencing discrimination in the labour and housing markets. It is insufficient to attribute unexplained differences in housing and employment outcomes to discrimination (e.g., Pendakur, 2000). Audits in which paired applicants who differ only in terms of their skin colour apply for the same jobs or housing vacancies are one of the few means of establishing definitively the extent and nature of discriminatory practices.

Comparative research that documents the changing benefits and disadvantages of segregation would also be useful. Upon arrival in Canada, women from Hong Kong and China benefited from living near other members of their communities, although, later, surrounded by people speaking Cantonese and Mandarin, they felt at risk of losing their fluency in English (Preston and Man, 1999). Research also needs to examine the impacts of living in a low-income neighbourhood on visible minority immigrants' economic prospects. The statistical associations calculated between the proportions of visible minority immigrants in a census tract

Recent visible minority immigrants are much more likely to be living in poverty than earlier arrivals who were visible minorities. In 1996, the percentages of visible minority immigrant households in Toronto with incomes below the low-income cut off were 19.0% for those who had arrived before 1986 and 48.5% for those who arrived after 1985.

and the proportions of the population with incomes below the low-income cut off do not reveal the mechanisms by which residential location affects economic integration. Statistical associations also mask the highly variable nature of neighbourhood effects and their impacts (Hou and Picot, 2004). The multi-ethnic nature of Canadian neighbourhoods also warrants investigation. Given the relatively low levels of segregation in Canadian cities, visible minority immigrants are settling in neighbourhoods with diverse populations. By drawing mainly on American studies of segregation (Borjas, 2000), we overlook the potential role of multi-ethnic neighbourhoods as sites of inclusion in Canadian metropolitan areas.

Given the unique demographic and political characteristics of Canadian cities, we cannot simply transfer ideas from other countries and cities. We need to develop a sophisticated understanding of the factors contributing to exclusion in a Canadian context that has been shaped by immigration and multiculturalism policies implemented more than thirty years ago. The research is essential to combat the exclusion of visible minority immigrants and to achieve the promise expressed in contemporary multiculturalism policies.

## References

- Abu-Laban, Y. "Welcome/ Stay Out, The contradiction of Canadian integration and immigration policies at the millennium." *Canadian Ethnic Studies Journal* 30 (1998): 190-213.
- Alba, R., J. Logan & B. Stults. (2000) "The changing neighborhood contexts of the immigrant metropolis." *Social Forces* 79 (2000): 587-621.
- Aydemir, A., & M. Skuterud. "Explaining the deteriorating entry earnings of Canada's immigrant cohorts, 1966 – 2000." *Canadian Journal of Economics* 38 (2005): 641-672.
- Balakrishnan, T.R., & S. Gyimah. "Spatial residential patterns of selected ethnic groups in Canada 2001: Their significance and policy implications." *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 35 (2003): 113-134.
- Bauder, H., & B. Sharpe. "Residential Segregation of Visible Minorities in Canada's Gateway Cities." *The Canadian Geographer* 46 (2002): 204-222.
- Borjas, G. "Ethnic Enclaves and Assimilation," *Swedish Economic Policy Review* 7 (2000): 89-122.
- Boyd, M., G. Goldmann, & P. White. 'Race in the Canadian Census' In L. Dreiecker & S. Hali (eds) *Race and Racism: Canada's Challenge*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000, 33-54.
- Boyd, M., & D. Thomas. "Skilled Immigrant Labour: Country of Origin and the Occupational Locations of Male Engineers." *Canadian Studies in Population* 29 (2002): 71-99.
- Brouwer, A. *Immigrants Need Not Apply*. Ottawa: The Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 1999.
- Carey, E. "High-rise ghettos," *The Toronto Star*, February 3, 2001, M1-M2.
- Germain, A. & J. Gagnon. "Is Neighbourhood a Black Box? A Reply to Galster, Metzger and Waite." *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 8 (1999): 172-84.
- Germain, A. & D. Rose. *Montréal: The Quest for a Metropolis*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2000.
- Hansard, Government of Canada. *House of Commons Debate on Federal Multicultural Policy*, October 8, 1971.
- Hou, F. *Recent immigration and the formation of visible minority neighbourhoods in Canada's large cities*, Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2004.
- Hou, F. & G. Picot. *Visible Minority Neighbourhood Enclaves and Labour Market Outcomes of Immigrants*, Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2004.
- Hum, D. & W. Simpson. "Economic Integration of Immigrants to Canada: A Short Survey," *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*, 13 (2004): 46-61.
- Kazempour, A., & S. S. Halli. "The colour of poverty: A study of the poverty of ethnic and immigrant groups in Canada." *International Migration*, 38 (2000): 69-88.
- Lee, K. *Urban poverty in Canada: a statistical profile*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 2000.
- Leman, M. *Canadian Multiculturalism*. Parliamentary Research Branch Publication 93-6E. Ottawa: Library of Parliament, Government of Canada, 1999.
- Ley, D. & H. Smith. "Relations Between Deprivation and Immigrant groups in Large Canadian Cities," *Urban Studies* 37 (2000): 37-62.
- Li, P. "Initial Earnings and Catch-Up Capacity of Immigrants," *Canadian Public Policy* 29 (2003): 319-337.
- Murdie, R., & C. Teixeira. "Towards A Comfortable Neighbourhood and Appropriate Housing: Immigrant Experiences in Toronto." In Anisef, P. & Lanphier, M. (eds.) *The world in a city*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003, 132-191.
- Murie, A. & S. Musterd. "Social Exclusion and Opportunity Structures in European Cities and Neighbourhoods," *Urban Studies*, 41 (2004): 1441-1459.
- Myles, J. & F. Hou. "Changing Colours: Spatial Assimilation and New Racial Minority Immigrants." *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 29 (2004): 29-58.
- Novac, S., Darden, J., D. Hulchanski, & A-M. Seguin. *Housing Discrimination in Canada: The state of knowledge on housing discrimination*. Ottawa: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2002.
- Owusu, T. Y. "To buy or not to buy: Determinants of home ownership among Ghanaian immigrants in Toronto." *Canadian Geographer-Geographe Canadien* 42 (1998): 40-52.
- Peach, C. "Does Britain Have Ghettos?" *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers*, 21 (1996): 216-235.
- Pendakur, R. (2000) *Immigrants and the labour force: policy, regulation, and impact*. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Preston, V., Lo, L., & S. Wang. "Immigrants' Economic Status in Toronto: Stories of Triumph and Disappointment." In Anisef, P. and Lanphier, M. (eds.) *The World in a City*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003, 192-262.
- Preston, V. & G. Man. "Employment Experiences of Chinese Immigrant Women: An Exploration of Diversity." *Canadian Woman Studies/Cahiers de la femme*, 19 (1999): 115-122.
- Ray, B.K. "The Measurement and Meaning of Segregation in Montreal," in McAndrew, M. and N.L. Vincent (eds.) *Metropolis Year II, The Development of a Comparative Research Agenda*. Montréal: Inter-University Research Centre of Montréal on Immigration, Integration and Urban Dynamics, 1998, 249-259.
- Ray, B., G. Halseth & B. Johnson. "The changing 'face' of the suburbs: Issues of ethnicity and residential change in suburban Vancouver." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 21 (1997):75-99.
- Razak, S. *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society*. Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 2002.
- Reitz, J. "Immigrant Success in the Knowledge Economy: Institutional Changes and the Immigrant Experience in Canada, 1970-1995," *Journal of Social Issues*, 57 (2001): 579-613.
- Stasiulis, D. K., & R. Jhappan. "The Fractious Politics of a Settler Society." In D. K. Stasiulis & N. Yuval-Davis (eds) *Unsettling settler societies: articulations of gender, race, ethnicity and class*. London: Sage, 1995.



Statistics Canada. *2001 Canadian Census of Population*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2003.

Wilson, W.J. *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*. New York: Knopf, 1996.

2 For an important exception, see (Hou and Picot, 2004; Hou, 2004).

3 In the interest of clarity, the terms in this article are congruent with those used by Statistics Canada in the 2001 Census of Population and do not reflect the political views of the authors.

4 The low-income cutoff is the minimum income for a household to meet its basic needs. The value of the low-income cutoff is adjusted for household size and the population size of the household's place of residence.

5 Social housing includes housing units that are owned and managed by the government and cooperative housing that offers subsidized housing to low-income tenants.

#### Notes

1 All correspondence should be addressed to the first author at Department of Geography, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, M3J 1P3 or vpreston@yorku.ca

**RYERSON UNIVERSITY**

**New!**

## **Now Offers M.A. Program in Immigration and Settlement Studies**

#### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Explores immigration trends, policies and programs in Canada from multi-disciplinary perspectives.
- Capitalizes on the expertise of over two dozen faculty members drawn from the humanities, social sciences, community services and business disciplines.
- Features courses, a placement and a research paper.
- Students drawn from across Canada and abroad.
- Prepares graduates for immigration-related careers, as well as further academic study.
- Enriches the knowledge and skills of practitioners currently employed in immigration-related fields.
- The program is available in both Full-time (12 month) and Part-time (24 month) study options.
- Scholarships and awards are offered on a competitive basis.

**Next Admission Date:** Fall 2006 Term

**Application & Additional Information:** [www.ryerson.ca/gradstudies/immigration](http://www.ryerson.ca/gradstudies/immigration)

**Application & Admission Contact:** [gradadmit@ryerson.ca](mailto:gradadmit@ryerson.ca) or (416) 979-5150

**Program Contact:** [iss@ryerson.ca](mailto:iss@ryerson.ca) or (416) 979 -5000, ext. 4863

Study Immigration & Settlement at Ryerson University in Toronto

# ON THE ETHNO-CULTURAL HETEROGENEITY OF BLACKS IN OUR 'ETHNICITIES'

## ABSTRACT

The ethno-cultural backgrounds of Blacks in Canada are, arguably, more diverse than those of any other group, even though Blacks are routinely homogenized not only in the mass media, but also in academic discourse. The present narrative sheds light on the enormous diversity of Blacks in Canadian cities and identifies some of the problems and opportunities the Black presence engenders. It is argued that the Black presence in Canada, like that of other minorities, offers considerable prescience and nuanced scrutiny of our prevailing values and taken-for-granted assumptions.

Even though the history of Blacks in Canada goes back to the 17th century, it was only after the introduction of the point system in the 1960s that Blacks began to arrive here in significant numbers. There are certainly no simple answers to why people engage in international migration. However, for most Blacks the move to Canada can plausibly be attributed to the yearnings for a higher standard of living and political freedom. Black African and Caribbean countries are among the least developed in the world. And over the past decade or so, ethnic conflicts, political instability, and the scourge of AIDS have combined, quite precariously, with harsh environmental conditions to create deplorable living conditions in several African countries, in particular. The living conditions in some Caribbean nations (e.g., Haiti) are not much better, either. It therefore comes as no surprise that many Black Africans and Caribbeans become immigrants in a place like Canada. The Canadian Black population is patently heterogeneous. However, due, perhaps, to the dearth of data or the sheer lack of analytical rigor, many are those who routinely talk of “the Black Community,” as though Blacks are homogenous. The present piece sheds light on the cultural heterogeneity within the Black population in Canada, and highlights the “unique” problems and opportunities of the Black presence in our cities. The urban tilt here is not fortuitous: it does not only fulfill the general intent of a new magazine – *Our Diverse Cities* – but also reflects the high concentration of Blacks in urban Canada. Although necessarily brief and mainly theoretical, most of the arguments espoused here derive from a comprehensive, empirically-grounded study of Black Canadians by the present author (see Mensah, 2002), which readers are encouraged to consult for additional insights.

## Understanding the heterogeneity of Blacks in Canada

Africa and the Caribbean are among the most ethno-racially diverse regions of the World. While people of Black African descent are the overwhelming majority in the principal sources of Caribbean immigrants to Canada—including Jamaica, Trinidad-Tobago, Haiti, Barbados, and Grenada—we must note that the Caribbean is home to many other ethno-racial groups. After the abolishment of slavery, several Chinese and East Indians indentured laborer were brought to the region to work on the sugar plantations. Many of these laborers brought their families with them and remained in the region after their contracts. Moreover, centuries of ethno-racial mixing in the region has yielded a sizeable proportion of mixed population which further complicates the region’s ethno-racial heterogeneity. Quite expectedly, the European powers propped up their own cultures and languages in their respective colonies in the region. We thus find English, French, and Spanish, and their respective Patois and Creole versions, spoken across the Caribbean. Of the two Canadian official languages, English is by far the most popular among Caribbean immigrants, due to the British colonial dominance in the region. With the exception of Haiti, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic, all the main Caribbean immigrant sources have English as their official language. In fact, Haiti is the only country among the top ten sources with French as its official language, hence the high affinity of Haitian immigrants to Québec. While Catholicism dominates the religious landscape of such countries as Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Cuba, various protestant denominations (e.g., Anglican, Methodist) are the prevalent in others, such as Jamaica, Barbados, and St. Kitts. There also exist a large number of Hindus and Muslims in Trinidad-Tobago, Voodooos in Haiti, and Rastafarians in Jamaica.

**JOSEPH MENSAH**  
Atkinson School of Social Sciences, York University, and  
Center of Excellence for Research in Immigration and Settlement (CERIS) Toronto

The ethno-racial backgrounds of African immigrants are, arguably, more diverse than those of any other group in Canada, even though Africans are routinely homogenized in our mass media. Africa is undoubtedly the indigenous home of most people who fall into the ambiguous category of “Blacks” in Canada. However, there are some Blacks whose place of birth, mother tongue, or country of last permanent residence (or even those of their parents) are not in Africa. Also, even though most African immigrants from Central and Western Africa are likely to be ‘Black,’ under any reasonable definition of the term, the same can hardly be said of immigrants from Northern, Southern, and Eastern Africa. Northern Africans, including Moroccans, Libyans, Algerians, Tunisians, and Egyptians, usually consider themselves, and are generally described as Arabs (even in the Canadian census). Also, immigrants from South Africa are just as likely to be Whites, Indian, or “Coloured” as they are to be Black. The situation among East Africans is equally complicated by the large number of East Indians, who trace their ethnicity/nationality to that region. We must recognize that while most African countries have predominantly Black populations, there exists an enormous intra- and inter-national ethnic diversity among Africans. Harm de Blij (1993) and Jackson and Hudman (1990) estimate that Africa has anywhere from 600 to 1,000 different languages. Perhaps no African country exhibits greater linguistic diversity than Nigeria, the most populous nation on the continent. With three major ethno-linguistic regions – the Hausas on the north, Yorubas on the West, and Ibos on the south – and more than a dozen major languages, each of which is spoken by over a million people, and another 230 lesser established tongues, Nigeria’s ethno-linguistic diversity is likely to baffle many Canadians. The ethnic diversity of Africa is further complicated

by the discrepancies between the continent’s pre-colonial tribal territories and its modern geopolitical boundaries, most of which were drawn by the colonial powers during the Berlin Conference of 1884-85, with little regard for the human and physical geography of the areas involved. These discrepancies, so dramatically portrayed by the spaghetti-like map of Figure 1, underlie much of the contemporary ethnic and tribal conflicts ravaging the continent.

### Blacks in our diverse cities

By 2001 there were some 662,210 Blacks in Canada, making Blacks the third largest visible minority group, after Chinese and South Asians. Most Blacks reside in cities, with the overwhelming majority living in Toronto (46.81%), Montréal (21%), and Ottawa-Gatineau (5.78%) (Table 1). Slightly more than half of the Black population in Canada (344,255 or 52%) is immigrant. As can be seen from Table 2, with the exception of Halifax, which has traditionally been home to most ‘indigenous’ Blacks, the Black immigrant population outnumbers their non-immigrant counterparts in most cities. Moreover, as with other visible minorities, the ‘influx’ of Blacks into Canadian cities, besides Toronto and Montréal, has been a recent phenomenon, with the vast majority arriving only since 1981.

Do Blacks of different ethno-cultural or national backgrounds tend to live in different Canadian cities? Are there discernable regional patterns in the ways Blacks from either the Caribbean or Africa select their respective cities of residence? Tables 3 and 4 rank the ethnic origins of Blacks in our cities who come from the Caribbean and Africa, respectively. Clearly,

Jamaicans, Trinidadian-Tobagodian, Barbadian, Guyanese, in that order, are the leading Caribbean groups to be found

### Map of African tribal and political boundaries

Note: Most of Africa’s modern national boundaries were drawn by the colonial powers during the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 with little or no regard for the human and physical geography of the areas they divided. In the process, some unified tribes were ripped apart, and hostile ones were lumped together. Without question, much of the tribal and ethnic conflicts in contemporary Africa can be attributed to the dramatic discrepancies between national and ethnic boundaries.



See :Fellmann, J. and col., 1992, p. 415.  
Mensa, J., 1997.  
Sadowski, Y., 1998, p. 15.

across Canadian cities; the notable exceptions are in Montreal and Ottawa-Gatineau, where the Caribbean presence is understandably dominated by Haitians.

Compared with the Caribbeans, the Black African presence in Canadian cities is far more complicated, with very few distinct patterns: Firstly, Somalis are the leading group in nearly all the cities with the exceptions of Calgary and Vancouver, where South Africans, most of whom are unlikely to be Blacks, in any case, dominate; Halifax, where Nigerian are the leading group among the very small number of Black immigrants in that city; and Montréal, where Francophones, such as Congolese, Cameroonians, Zairians, and Mauritians (with Ghanaians as outliers) dominate. Secondly, there is some affinity between Somali, Ethiopian, and Eritrean groups in Canadian cities. This affinity is perhaps attributable to their shared background in Islamic religion and Arabic (and to some extent, English) language. This affinity is surprising, given the historic conflicts between Ethiopians and Eritreans, for instance, back in Africa. In any case, the fact that some 6% of Ethiopians in Africa are of Somali background is equally important here. Only a finely disaggregated spatial data could shed light on the true nature of the intra-urban residential patterns of these groups. Thirdly, the only West African ethnic origins that feature prominently in our large cities, outside of Montréal, are those of Ghanaians and Nigerians. Whether Ghanaians and Nigerians feature so dominantly *because* there are Canadian visa offices in these two nations or *that is why* there are visa offices is difficult to say.

In addition to the ethno-cultural diversities engendered in our cities by Blacks from the Caribbean and Africa

are those attributable to the “indigenous” Black population in Canada and to contemporary Black immigrants from the United States, Latin America, and other regions of the world. The Black experience in Canada is, arguably, unique, not only because of the immense heterogeneity it brings, but also because Blacks are the only people whose ancestors were forcibly removed from their homelands and enslaved in this part of the world. Furthermore, Blacks are generally, albeit speciously, seen as the polar opposite of Whites, the dominant group, and, consequently, face the worst forms of skin-colour racism, as well as all the negative connotations that ‘Black’ conjures in both the sacred and secular discursive practices of the West. A corollary of their antithetical position is the fact that “Black” is often the all-encompassing label for most racially mixed people, regardless of their skin color. This is as true of Black-cum-White offspring as it is of Black-cum-other-visible-minority offspring. What this does is to further complicate the heterogeneity of Blacks in our society. Moreover, “Black” is the only visible minority category in the Canadian census that has no specific national or geographic reference point, thereby making the category highly ambiguous; the geographic reference points of such categories as Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and Japanese are too obvious to delay us here. And who can gloss over the obvious fact that Blacks are the most ‘visible’ of the visible minorities in Canada, and, ironically, among the most ‘invisible’ in our corridors of power. The preceding, together with the realization that most Black immigrants come from Africa and the Caribbean (two of the poorest regions of the world), certainly makes the Black uniqueness thesis hard to nullify.

**Table 1 - The Population of Blacks in Canadian Cities<sup>1</sup>**

City	Urban Population	Black Population	% of Canada's Black Population in the City	% of City's that is Black
Calgary	943,310	13,665	2.66	1.45
Edmonton	927,020	14,095	2.12	1.52
Halifax	355,945	13,085	1.97	3.68
Hamilton	655,055	12,855	1.94	1.96
Kitchener	409,765	7,345	1.11	1.79
London	427,215	7,610	1.15	1.78
Montréal	3,380,645	139,303	21.00	4.12
Oshawa	293,550	7,180	1.08	2.44
Ottawa-Gatineau	1,050,755	38,185	5.78	3.63
Toronto	4,647,955	310,500	46.81	6.68
Vancouver	1,967,475	18,405	2.77	0.93
Windsor	304,955	8,125	1.22	2.66
Winnipeg	661,725	11,440	1.72	1.73

<sup>1</sup> These are cities with 5,000 or more Black residents. Source: Statistics Canada; 2001 Census of Population <http://estat.statscan.ca/cgi-win>

### Implications...

What are the implications of the uniqueness and heterogeneity of Blacks for their integration into Canadian society, in general, and for the socio-economic and cultural vitality of our cities, in particular? The leading factor in immigrants' decision on which city (or rural community) to settle is the presence family and friends (Justus, 2004). Once

in their selected destinations, Black immigrants – perhaps, more so than others – face several difficulties in finding decent, affordable housing, employment, and education, due to their disadvantaged economic background and the prevalence of skin-colour racism in Canada. Often, Blacks in cities, such as Toronto, Montréal, and Halifax, find themselves in rundown, racially segregated housing (Murdie, 1994;

**Table 2 - Blacks and Immigrant Status and Period of Immigration for Selected Cities**

City	Total Black Population	Non-Immigrant Population	Immigrant Population	Before 1961	1961-1970	1971-1980	1981-1990	1991-Non-Permanent Resident	2001
Calgary	13,665	6,210	7,105	80	415	1,335	1,725	3,555	350
Edmonton	14,100	6,875	6,640	55	660	1,555	1,535	2,840	585
Halifax	13,085	11,905	945	40	80	120	160	550	235
Hamilton	12,850	6,210	6,070	130	1,110	1,410	1,115	2,305	570
Kitchener	7,350	3,395	3,855	55	475	870	735	1,715	100
London	7,610	3,995	3,360	100	520	565	620	1,555	255
Montréal	139,300	59,850	76,215	1,075	5,805	20,745	19,051	29,570	6,240
Oshawa	7,180	3,710	3,440	55	730	1,160	715	775	25
Ott.-Gatineau	38,180	14,670	21,915	230	1,355	2,930	4,935	12,470	1,595
Toronto	310,495	125,620	178,250	1,735	21,205	44,945	42,105	68,250	6,630
Vancouver	18,405	8,815	9,135	120	1,095	1,970	1,985	3,965	460
Windsor	8,125	4,915	3,045	50	250	570	560	1,630	165
Winnipeg	11,440	5,5190	5,960	120	775	1,255	1,430	2,375	290
Canada	662,210	297,985	344,255	4,420	36,485	82,845	80,690	139,815	19,970

Source: Statistics Canada, January 21, 2003. 2001 Census of Canada. Catalogue number 97F0010XCB2001003.

**Table 3 - Top 5 Caribbean Ethnic Origins in Selected Canadian Cities, 2001**

City <sup>1</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
Calgary	Jamaican	Trinidadian-T.	Barbadian	Guyanese	Haitian
Edmonton	Jamaican	Trinidadian-T.	Guyanese	Barbadian	Grenadian
Halifax	Jamaican	Barbadian	Trinidadian-T.	Guyanese	Cuban
Hamilton	Jamaican	Trinidadian-T.	Guyanese	Barbadian	Cuban
Kitchener	Jamaican	Guyanese	Trinidadian-T.	Barbadian	Bahamian
London	Jamaica	Trinidadian-T.	Barbadian	Guyanese	Grenadian
Montréal	Haitian	Jamaican	Trinidadian-T.	Barbadian	Dominican
Oshawa	Jamaican	Guyanese	Trinidadian-T.	Barbadian	Grenadian
Ottawa-Gatineau	Jamaican	Haitian	Trinidadian-T.	Barbadian	Guyanese
Toronto	Jamaican	Guyanese	Trinidadian-T.	Barbadian	Grenadian
Vancouver	Jamaican	Trinidadian-T.	Barbadian	Guyanese	Cuban
Windsor	Jamaican	Trinidadian-T.	Barbadian	Guyanese	Cuban
Winnipeg	Jamaican	Trinidadian-T.	Guyanese	Barbadian	Grenadian

<sup>1</sup> These are cities with 5,000 or more Black residents.

Source: Statistics Canada, January 21, 2003. 2001 Census of Canada. Catalogue number 97F0010XCB2001001.

**Table 4 - Top 5 African Ethnic Origins<sup>1</sup> in Selected Canadian Cities, 2001**

Cities <sup>2</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Calgary</b>	S. African	Ethiopian	Nigerian	Sudanese	Somali
<b>Edmonton</b>	Somali	Ethiopian	Eritrean	S. African	Nigerian
<b>Halifax</b>	Nigerian	S. African	Ethiopian	Sudanese	Ugandan
<b>Hamilton</b>	Somali	S. African	Ghanaian	Congolese	Sudanese
<b>Kitchener</b>	Somali	Ethiopian	S. African	Sudanese	Eritrean
<b>London</b>	Somali	Sudanese	Ethiopian	S. African	Eritrean
<b>Montréal</b>	Congolese	Ghanaian	Cameroonian	Zairian	Mauritian
<b>Oshawa</b>	S. African	Kenyan	Ethiopian/Ghanaian	S. Leone	Nigerian
<b>Ottawa-Gatineau</b>	Somali	Ethiopian	Eritrean	Congolese	Ghanaian
<b>Toronto</b>	Somali	Ghanaian	Ethiopian	S. African	Nigeria
<b>Vancouver</b>	S. African	Somali	Ethiopian	Ghanaian	Nigerian
<b>Windsor</b>	Somali	Ethiopian	Nigerian	Rwandan/Sudanese	Ghanaian
<b>Winnipeg</b>	Ethiopian	Eritrean	Sudanese	S. African	Nigerian

<sup>1</sup> North Africans, including Libyans, Algerians, Moroccans, Egyptians and Tunisians are excluded, as the Canadian census categorizes them as Arabs.

<sup>2</sup> The ranking in these cities are approximations, since many of the categories used in the Census are overlapping (a good example is the use “Black” “Ghanaian,” “Akan,” and “Ashanti” – a typical Ashanti may very well belong to the other 3 categories).

Source: Statistics Canada, January 21, 2003. 2001 Census of Canada. Catalogue number 97F0010XCB2001001.

Mensah, 2002, Ornstein, 2002; Torjman and Leviten-Reid, 2003). While such places provide the necessary support networks for the eventual settlement of Black immigrants, they also engender serious negative consequences, not the least of which is the potential for heightened marginalization and ghettoization. Disturbingly, many who live in such unsafe and rundown neighborhoods pay fairly similar price for their housing as do “their more affluent neighbors, a few streets over” (Preugger, Cook, and Hawkesworth, 2004, 124). Also, residents of such poor neighborhoods generally pay more for auto and residential insurance, grocery, and many other urban facilities, because of the relative paucity of these facilities and the high incidence of crime and violence, these neighborhoods invariably breed, regardless of the racial background of the residents involved.

Meanwhile, once the image of a ‘crime area’ crystallizes in the mass media, the police intensifies its surveillance and racial profiling of the residents of these neighborhoods, which then yields the familiar self-fulfilling prophesy, articulated in the *audacious* scholarship of Scot Worley and his colleagues at the University of Toronto: “Because the Black community is subject to much greater police surveillance, they are also much more likely to be caught when they break the law than white people who engage in the same forms of criminal activity” (Wortley and Tanner, 2004, 197). *Audacious* is used advisedly here, as police departments in many cities deny racial profiling, while at the same time opposing any suggestion to collect the necessary race-base data on the people they stop and search. Insurance companies, employers, and many other individuals and institutions of power engage in their own ecological, homogenizing, and genetic fallacies about Blacks living in such neighborhoods.

Not surprisingly, many Blacks in such neighborhoods now use the addresses of friends and families in other neighbourhoods for job, auto insurance, and other applications, to avoid the hefty and craftily veiled penalties that are associated with their places of residence.

The sheer number and diversity of ethno-cultural organizations and social clubs advertised in any of the leading Afric-Caribbean or Black Newspapers, points to the difficulties imbedded in any attempt to mobilize Blacks for political and other actions in our cities. In addition to continental/regional organizations (i.e., African-Canadian and Caribbean-Canadian organizations), and the scores of national ones, such as the Ghanaian-, Somali-, Jamaican-Canadian organizations, are the numerous intra-national, ethno-linguistic organizations and social clubs. Unfortunately, some of these organizations are not merely overlapping in their objectives, but are often competitive and antagonistic, rendering them susceptible to the usual divide-and-rule tactics of dominant groups and institutions. Indeed, any attempt to unite Blacks, or to seek communicative rationality-*a-la-Habermas*, is essentially an exercise in frustration – at the risk of sounding pessimistic. Often, inklings of unity in this diversity are engendered only in the face of high-profile racial incidence against Blacks and other minorities. John Biles and Erin Tolley (2004), for instance, write about how the uneven application of Canada’s anti-terrorism and security regulations and increased racial profiling by the police in Ottawa have galvanized Somalis and other minorities in that city to be actively involved in politics.

At the same time it bears stressing that the Black presence has important positive implications for life in our ‘EthniCities.’<sup>iii</sup> With only 5% of its members in the retirement

cohort, compared to the national average of 12%,<sup>iii</sup> the Black population is relatively young. Also, contrary to popular belief, the levels of education among Blacks are very comparable to those of other Canadians (Mensah 2002). Thus, given a level playing field, Blacks could contribute immensely to the socio-economic and cultural life of our cities. The outstanding accomplishments of Blacks in Canadian sports – perhaps the only field, which by its very nature bears some semblance to a level playing field – hints of what we can expect to gain, as Canadians, in other spheres of human endeavor, by tapping into the youthful, exuberant human resources that the Black presence offers. The potential benefits of Blacks’ ethnic diversity to the cultural vitality of our society should be apparent to even the most cursory observer of the ongoing cultural-turn in our cities and academia. In education, in particular, the diversity of voices and ‘lifeworlds’ of Blacks offers our children the opportunity to learn from people of different cultural backgrounds and contrapuntal perspectives. One does not need to be a student of Hegelian dialectics to appreciate the stunning prescience and enhanced awareness that the self – or the dominant group, in this case – stands to gain from the contradictions, creative destructions, and the nuanced scrutiny of prevailing values and taken-for-granted assumptions that the encounter with the Other invariably yields. The ensuing improvement of the dominant group’s self-awareness is all the more important when we acknowledge, as did Nietzsche in the preface to his *Genealogy of Morals*, that of all the knowledge that we seek, the hardest to achieve is self-knowledge – hence Nietzsche’s famous axiom: “Each man [sic] is farthest from himself.” Still, the legion difficulties our educators face in establishing any semblance of absolute, authoritative moral values in this postmodern, multicultural, and patently relativist educational environment can hardly be overlooked.

### ...And a brief Conclusion

Estimates by Statistics Canada suggest that by 2017, “[a]bout one-half of the population in Toronto and Vancouver could belong to a visible minority.”<sup>iv</sup> Issues relating to the presence of Blacks and other minorities could only assume more significance in our public discourse, as the ‘visible minority’ population becomes the ‘invisible majority.’ It is only prudent to begin substantive discussions on the integration of Blacks and other visible minority into our cities, before it is too late. Much of the rhetoric of vibrant EthniCities, promulgated by our municipal leaders through tourist brochures, ads, and multicultural festivities, with its redolent self-congratulation and triumphalism, needs to give way to genuine managerial and discursive practices that respect the basic humanity of the Blacks and other visible minorities and offer them their fair share of the proverbial municipal pie.

### Bibliography

- Biles, John & Erin Tolley. “Getting seats at the table(s): The political participation of newcomers and minorities in Ottawa.” *Our Diverse Cities*, 1 (Spring 2004): 174-179.
- de Blij, Harm J. *Human Geography: Culture, Society and Space*. New York: John Wiley, 1993.
- Fellmann, J; A. Getis & J. Getis. *Human Geography: Landscape of Human Activities*. Dubuque, Iowa: W.C. Brown, 1992.

- Jackson, Richard A. & L.E. Hudman. *Cultural Geography: People, Places and Environment*. St. Paul: West, 1990.
- Justus, Martha. “Immigrants in Canada’s cities.” *Our Diverse Cities*, 1 (Spring 2004): 41-48.
- Mensah, Joseph. *Black Canadians: History, Experience, Social Conditions*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2002.
- Mensah, Joseph, “Colonialism and human factor degradation in Africa.” *Review of Human Factor Studies*, 3(1) (1997):48-64.
- Murdie, Robert. “Blacks in near-ghettos? Black visible minority population in Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority Public Housing Units” *Housing Studies*, 9(4) (1994): 435-457.
- Nietzsche, F. *The Genealogy of Morals*. New York: Vintage, 1973.
- Ornstein, M. *Ethno-Racial Inequality in the City of Toronto: An Analysis of the 1996 Census*. Toronto: City of Toronto, 2002.
- Pruegger, Valerie J.; D. Cook; & A.B. Hawkesworth. “Implications of urban diversity for housing” *Our Diverse Cities*, 1 (Spring 2004): 124-125.
- Sadowski, Y. “Ethnic conflicts.” *Foreign Policy*, 111 (Summer 1998): 12-19.
- Statistics Canada. “Canada’s visible minority population in 2017.” *The Daily*, Tuesday March 22, 2005.
- Statistics Canada, *2001 Census of Canada*. Catalogue number 97F0010XCB2001001, January 21, 2003.
- Statistics Canada, *2001 Census of Canada*. Catalogue number 97F0010XCB2001003, January 21, 2003.
- Torjman, S. & E. Leviten-Reid. *The Social Role of Local Government*. Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2003.
- Wortley, Scot & Julian Tanner, “Discrimination or ‘good’ policing? The racial profiling debate in Canada.” *Our Diverse Cities*, 1 (Spring 2004): 197-201.
- Wortley, Scot & Julian Tanner 2003. “Data, denials and confusion: The racial profiling debate in Toronto.” *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 45(3) (2003): 367-389.
- Wortley, Scot, John Hagan, & Ross Macmillan. “Just Des(s)erts: The racial polarization of perceptions of injustices.” *Law and Society Review*, 31 (1997): 637-

### Notes

- i See Wortley, Hagan, and Macmillan, 1997; Wortley and Tanner, 2003 and 2004.
- ii This postmodern wordplay was borrowed from John Biles and Erin Tolley 2004, p. 175.
- iii This estimate was made from the Statistics Canada, January 21, 2003, *2001 Census of Canada*, Catalogue number 95F0363XCB2001003.
- iv Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, March 22, 2005, p. 2.

### Author

Joseph Mensah teaches geography at the School of Social Science, Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies, York University, and has a cross-appointment to the Graduate Program in Geography at York; he is also a Research Associate at the Centre of Excellence in Research in Immigration and Settlement (CERIS) in Toronto. Dr. Mensah has written several journal articles and contributed chapters to a number of books. He is the author of *Black Canadians: History Experiences, Social Conditions* (Fernwood, 2002) and the co-editor of *Globalization and the Human Factor: Critical Insights* (Ashgate, 2004).

# BEYOND THE TROJAN HORSE

## Religion, Immigration, and Canadian Public Discourse

### ABSTRACT

In the past two or three decades, profound shifts have occurred in the religious landscape of this country. These developments are the result of at least two forces: first, the complex and contested expressions of some form of secularization and differentiation, and second, Canada's relatively progressive immigration policies. What are the implications of this new reality for Canadian religions? And are we too reluctant to the contradiction between a set of policies that frames religious diversity positively, and a broader society that lacks the most basic knowledge required to understand this new and extremely ambiguous feature of our society?

Thanks to the prominence of a number of empirical studies, as well as the many media stories these have generated in the past several years,<sup>1</sup> many Canadians are by now accustomed to hearing that in the past two or three decades profound shifts have occurred in the religious landscape of this country. These developments are the result of at least two forces: first, the complex and contested expressions of some form of secularization and differentiation, and second, Canada's relatively progressive immigration policies.

While the combined influence of secularization and differentiation in Western countries is the subject of a very large scholarly literature,<sup>2</sup> the focus of this essay is the relationship between religion and immigration. After all, it is the relatively "new" religions (read: non-Christian religions, but also non-European Christianities), that most conspicuously challenge some of the fundamental assumptions and prejudices of many Canadians.

First, consider the kinds of changes we have seen between 1991 and 2001:<sup>3</sup>

- in 2001, 76% of Canadians identified themselves as Christians, whereas 82% of the country identified in this manner in 1991;
- 43% of Canadians are Roman Catholics, a figure that is basically unchanged since the last census;
- the percentage of Canadians who define themselves as Protestants has declined from 35% in 1991 to 29% in 2001;
- there has been significant growth in the unaffiliated conservative Protestant traditions;
- the Jewish population (329,000) has grown 4%;
- the Muslim community (580,000) has grown 129%;
- the Hindu and Sikh communities (300,000 and 280,000 respectively) have each grown about 89%;
- the Buddhist community (300,000) has increased by 83%;
- those indicating that they have no religion have increased significantly, from 12% to 16% (4.9 million) of the Canadian population; and
- weekly religious attendance has fallen from 53% in 1957 to about to about 19% in 2000.

These figures reflect at least three noteworthy shifts: 1) significant changes and declines within (especially "mainline") Euro-Canadian Christianity; 2) a growing tendency to opt out (permanently or temporarily) of traditional categories; 3) dramatic growth within traditions associated with "visible minority" ethno-religious populations.

What are the implications of this new reality for Canadian religions? As far as Christianity is concerned, non-European immigration is helping to sustain its dominant position in the so-called "religious marketplace." As well, the less ethnocentric immigration regime of the past few decades – manifested in the immigration of (to name but a few) Latino and Filipino Roman Catholics, African Anglicans, Korean Presbyterians, and Chinese evangelicals – is having a dramatic impact on Canadian churches.<sup>4</sup> For many Christians, these changes are ambiguous: on the one hand, non-European and non-white Christian newcomers bring in new members and enrich liturgical and ritual life. On the other hand, these newcomers also naturally influence and sometimes challenge established Canadian denominations (Bramadat and Seljak, forthcoming). The recent debates within the United Church and the Anglican Church over the churches' official positions on same-sex



marriage provide evidence of some of the strains of these changes. Of course, these issues have been debated without unequivocal resolution for some time, but it is noteworthy that within these two Protestant anchor denominations, many newcomer ethnic minority sub-communities seem to be consistently opposed to this expanded definition of marriage.<sup>5</sup>

While these changes in Canada's dominant tradition are significant, the dramatic – and, it must be admitted, for some, frightening – part of the new demographic reality of religion in Canada is the fact that between 1991 and 2001 the Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist communities have each either more than doubled, or nearly doubled in size. These increases should not surprise anyone, especially when one considers that the top ten source countries for immigration in 2002 included China, India, Pakistan, Iran, and Sri Lanka, obviously countries without Christian majority populations. Moreover, immigration from these five countries accounted for roughly 40% of all immigration that year and for nearly 80% of immigration from all top ten source countries combined.

One of the most interesting and complicated dimensions of these changes is the fact that in many of these growing groups, a nearly inextricable relationship exists between ethnic and religious modes of identification. This connection appears to be more salient in religious traditions associated with societies and cultures in which religious and ethnic identities have not become as differentiated or compartmentalized as they more commonly are in the so-called – though, we need to remember, never monolithic – West (Bramadat and Seljak, 2005; Berns McGown, 1999; McLellan, 1999).<sup>6</sup> In fact, almost every contemporary national and international news story involving religion – consider the “tables and chairs” debate in the Canadian Sikh community, the debate among Canadian Muslims over “Shariah tribunals,” the responses of many non-Christian traditions to the same-sex marriage debate, the murder of Dutch artist Theo van Gogh by a radicalized Dutch Muslim of Moroccan descent – in fact also involves significant, even perhaps determinative ethnic themes. Efforts to tease apart these two forces are often doomed from the start.

If we can agree that religion – especially as it is expressed *alongside* or *within* ethnic terms – is a major feature of many of the challenges facing principally immigrant-receiving countries such as Canada, we need to ask ourselves if as a society we are capable of responding meaningfully to this ancient and yet modern force. To provide at least a provisional answer to this question, I want to consider two case studies of Canadian communities that have figured prominently in immigration-related news in the past decade. Then I want to offer a few suggestions for

ways we might address our currently inadequate capacity for understanding the kinds of social changes related to the new degree of religious diversity in Canada.

First, let us consider Chinese religion, a complex manifestation of Chinese culture (Thompson 1996; Paper, Paper, Lai, 2005) which includes features one normally associates with Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, and folk religion, but which may be considered greater than the sum of these parts. Many scholars of Chinese religion estimate that a significant majority of Chinese Canadians are engaged in some way in these integrated religious practices, principles, and worldviews. However, if we accept the 2001 Census at face value, roughly *four times* as many Chinese Canadians fall into the “no religion” category than do other Canadians.

This seems extremely counter-intuitive, given that many of the Chinese who claim to have no religion *also* engage in traditionally defined religious practices, including, among others, ancestor veneration or worship, divination, the celebration of religious festivals and rituals, and the veneration of indigenous and international Buddhist personages. A more plausible tripartite explanation for this statistical peculiarity is that “Chinese religion” is not an option on the censusform; Chinese religion is as yet un-acknowledged in Canadian public discourse; and the very concept or term “religion” as it is traditionally employed in the West does not necessarily name the diverse (yet nonetheless coherent) phenomena grouped together by scholars and others under the category Chinese religion.

In any case, Chinese religion does seem to function in the same way as other religions in that it provides a social and symbolic setting conducive to immigrant integration, a context for forming bonds of solidarity, a religious framework for preserving and passing on religio-cultural customs and convictions, etc. However, because we are reluctant to consider the deep connections between ethnic and religious modes of identification, we are still ignorant of some of the core religious

sensibilities of probably well over half a million people in this country.

A second case study involves the two main varieties of post-September 11th discourse on Islam: for the sake of brevity, I distinguish here between “Islamophobic” and “naïve” approaches. The former term was coined nearly a decade ago in Europe<sup>7</sup> to denote a deep pre-rational fear of Islam and a commitment to the notion that Muslims belong, as Samuel Huntington famously and fatuously claimed, to a categorically different “civilization” with which the “West” must by definition “clash.” Islamophobes would have us believe that Muslims can never really fit in in the “West” – due to their tradition's *inherently* illiberal and anti-democratic

If we can agree that religion – especially as it is expressed alongside or within ethnic terms – is a major feature of many of the challenges facing principally immigrant-receiving countries such as Canada, we need to ask ourselves if as a society we are capable of responding meaningfully to this ancient and yet modern force.

roots. (This claim always puzzles the millions of Muslim democrats who have been living happily and productively in the West for decades or longer.) Like most phobias, Islamophobia is a problem wherever it appears; however, we are fortunate that brazen instances of Islamophobia are relatively rare in Canada.<sup>8</sup>

The second, or “naïve” approach to Islam – and religion in general – can be crudely summarized as follows: religion *per se* is a virtuous enterprise, so anyone who claims to have religious reasons for doing something violent or exclusionary must, by this common definition, be either: a) insane, b) ignorant about the true peaceful nature of his religion, or c) using religion as a Trojan horse within which he is hiding his true motivations, which are typically understood to be essentially political, sexual, or economic.

It is easy to understand why progressive liberals would define *true* Christianity, Islam, or Hinduism as being oriented essentially toward so-called progressive liberal pluralistic values. This approach to religion is very useful for people who are interested in using a religion, or several religions, to support their own spiritual quest. Unfortunately, to essentialize religion as a solely virtue-seeking project, and as an inherently sweet and lovely force, is to deny the deep complicity of religion in countless examples of cruelty and injustice.

Like democracy, feminism, capitalism, Christianity, and technology, Islam is an ambiguous system of ideas, texts, values, art, institutions and aesthetics that has been built over centuries by many people in many historical contexts. As such, we should expect that there will be a great many legitimate expressions of this tradition, and we should be suspicious of people who claim to speak on behalf of a self-evidently authoritative version. We should also be cautious about people who seek to correct menacing Islamophobic stereotypes by proffering naive stereotypes that attribute all illiberal events and actors to perversions of an essentially pure, virtuous, and divine entity.

As Robert Orsi reminds us (2004), we must also pay attention to the prescriptive connotations of categories such as modern, secular, terrorism, and fundamentalism. Together these terms participate in the meta-narrative of modernist progress. This story, with its good guys (modern secular democrats) and its bad guys (atavistic fundamentalist religious zealots) is typically imperceptible to those within this story; to those outside of the story (that is, to the “fundamentalists”) the narrative is perceived as hostile, demeaning, and hegemonic. The point is that the binary

construction of Islam (as frightening or harmless) is an inadequate heuristic tool for understanding the real conflict between a certain form of Islam and certain dimensions of Western societies.

Among other things, these two case studies demonstrate that as a society, we are not well equipped to understand the deep religious diversity that is, of course, a predictable product of the principles that have guided our immigration policies for a few decades. Canada’s famous “point system” approach to determining the suitability of Canadian immigration applicants is certainly not perfect, but it represents a marked improvement over the racial and ethnic “quota system” that once prevailed in this country, not to mention the more tribal, assimilationist, and guest worker policies one finds in Western Europe. However, recent events in Holland (the murder of Van Gogh), France (conflicts over restrictions on religious symbols in schools), and the Middle East (the on-going Arab-Israeli conflict, and the Iraqi front in the “war on terror”), have led some commentators to wonder if in fact the Canadian-style multicultural principles which at least partly inform our immigration policies, are adequate for dealing with both religion and religious discrimination in the contemporary globalized environment.

Will Kymlicka (2004) observes that Canadian multiculturalism grew out of specific historical realities, and is thus not necessarily applicable elsewhere (or at least everywhere). While this is undoubtedly true, our relatively open citizenship, immigration, and multicultural regimes still seem to suit the Canadian context. However, we are far too reluctant to resolve (or even to acknowledge) the contradiction between a set of policies that frames religious diversity positively, and a broader society (including policy makers and much of our intellectual elite) that lacks the most basic knowledge required to understand this new and extremely ambiguous feature of our society.

To address this contradiction – and if we do not choose to address it sooner, we will probably be forced to do it later – we might consider the following three recommendations: 1) we could ensure

that all Canadian high school students understand the basic features of major religious traditions; 2) we could insist that our journalists, academics, and policy makers are not allowed to neglect the explicitly religious features of social or political issues; and 3) we could continue to discuss the implications of the endurance of religion in the midst of modern industrialized societies (that is, Why, in the societies shaped by the Enlightenment and late capitalism, has religion survived?). The challenges posed by religion in

Like democracy,  
feminism,  
capitalism,  
Christianity, and  
technology, Islam is  
an ambiguous  
system of ideas,  
texts, values, art,  
institutions and  
aesthetics that has  
been built over  
centuries by many  
people in many  
historical contexts.  
As such, we should  
expect that there  
will be a great  
many legitimate  
expressions of this  
tradition, and  
we should be  
suspicious of  
people who claim  
to speak on behalf  
of a self-evidently  
authoritative  
version.

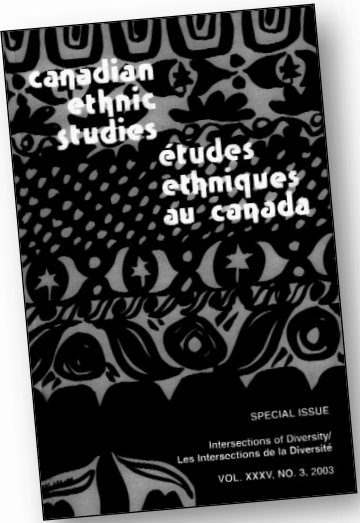
our era are far more immense than many will acknowledge, but if we respond intelligently and creatively to the new religious landscape, the potential benefits for our civil society are great.

#### References

- Bibby, Reginald. *Restless Gods*. Burlington: Stoddart, 2002.
- Bramadat, Paul. *The Church on the World's Turf: An Evangelical Student Group at a Secular University*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Bramadat, Paul & David Seljak, eds. *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada*. Toronto: Pearson, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Forthcoming. *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*.
- Berns McGown, Rima. *Muslims in the Diaspora: The Somali Communities of London and Toronto*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.
- Kymlicka, Will. "Marketing Canadian Multiculturalism in the International Arena." *International Journal* 59(4) (2004): 829-852.
- McLellan, Janet. *Many Petals of the Lotus: Five Asian Buddhist Communities in Toronto*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.
- Paper, Jordan, Li Chuang Paper & David Lai. The Chinese in Canada: Their Unrecognized Religion. In *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada*, P. Bramadat & David Seljak, eds. Toronto: Pearson, 2005.
- Orsi, Robert. "The Disciplinary Vocabulary of Modernity." *The International Journal* 59(4) (2004): 879-885.
- Swatos, William, ed. Theme Issue, "The Secularization Debate." *Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review* 60(3) (1999).
- Thompson, Laurence. *Chinese Religion: An Introduction*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 1996.

#### Notes

- 1 It has been about four years since the last Census, and two years since Statistics Canada released the results of the Census questions related to religion. The Ethnic Diversity Survey, released in the Fall of 2003, Reginald Bibby's most recent (2002) book, and a number of smaller polls conducted by private companies, have also significantly improved the empirical portrait of religion in Canada.
- 2 For example, see Swatos (1999).
- 3 All figures are approximations.
- 4 This may be part of what some commentators have called the "empire strikes back" phenomenon, in which individuals from regions on the periphery of a given empire migrate to a region closer to the perceived centre of the empire, and begin to influence that region's putatively cohesive culture.
- 5 It is important to note that the influence of ethnic minorities within Christian churches has not been uniformly "conservative;" on the contrary, it is often the case that relative newcomers – many of whom have had real-life experiences of poverty, marginalization, and in some cases, torture – can spur an individual church or a denomination toward a far more "progressive" stance on matters related to human rights and justice.
- 6 There are groups in Canada and elsewhere that can also be described as pre- or non-differentiated, that is, as living within a far more "enchanted" and thoroughly religious framework when compared with the broader so-called "secular" mainstream. The Amish Christians and Hassidic Jews are two examples of such communities. However, as I describe in a book on the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (2000), such worldviews can also be maintained (or "negotiated") from within the dominant culture, and by individuals who are totally indistinguishable from the majority population.
- 7 See <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/pdfs/islamophobia.pdf>
- 8 However, see the website of the Canadian Council on American Islamic Relations for reports and discussions of Islamophobic incidents and tendencies. <http://www.caircan.ca/index.php>



## Special issue of Canadian Ethnic Studies

This special issue of *Canadian Ethnic Studies* (Vol. XXXV, No. 3, 2003) was guest edited by a team comprised of two researchers (Yvonne Hébert from the Faculty of Education, University of Calgary; and Julia Kwong from the Department of Sociology at the University of Manitoba) and two policy makers (John Biles and Erin Tolley with the Metropolis Project Team based at Citizenship and Immigration Canada). Contributions include ten papers commissioned by the Multiculturalism Program following the 2003 seminar in each of the policy areas explored at the seminar: political processes; housing; labour and training; capital markets; education and (re)training; justice; health; information and knowledge; culture; and social transfers. To order a copy of this journal, please visit <http://www.ss.ucalgary.ca/CES/>

# RELIGION, PLURALISM AND FAITH-BASED ARBITRATION

## Consequences for Canadian Muslim Women

### ABSTRACT

Ontario is currently the hotbed of a debate on the application of religious laws in family matters, using legally binding arbitration, as a clause in the *Arbitration Act* opened the possibility of using other laws in arbitration settlements. This article sheds a new light on one of the most controversial social debates in the province and on the consequences of Islamic Sharia for Canadian Muslim women.

In Ontario, starting October 2003, a debate emerged on the application of religious laws in family matters, using legally binding arbitration. This issue arose because of a clause in the *Arbitration Act* which states that other laws may be applied in arbitration settlements. Although the Attorney General's staff stated that this clause was specifically added to resolve a dispute between Ontario and one of the American states,<sup>2</sup> this same clause can also be used for family matters. The issue is that instead of restricting resolution of commercial disputes, the door was opened for any laws from any country or any religion and for any purposes. There was a surprising lack of foresight on the part of the government of the day which is now resulting in significant issues for Ontarians.

This issue has stirred the activism and consciousness of Canadian and international faith-based organizations, feminists groups, community groups, researchers and the media. Due to public outcry, the Premier of Ontario, Dalton McGuinty, appointed Ms. Marion Boyd (former Ontario Attorney General under the provincial NDP government) to review the *Arbitration Act* and the impact arbitration has on people who may be vulnerable, including women, persons with disabilities and the elderly. The Review was to include a review of the use of religious-based arbitration.

Ms. Boyd met with a number of groups including, those who were proponents and opponents of this issue.

One of the proponents for the use of Sharia/Muslim Family law, the Islamic Institute for Civil Justice (IICJ) reviewed the *Arbitration Act* to find that the *Act* legally permits the use of any religious laws and so they proposed the use of Sharia/Muslim family law in Ontario. The *Act's* permission for private, legally binding arbitration would settle issues that affect the personal status of people such as wills, inheritance, marriage, remarriage, marriage contracts, divorce, maintenance, custody and maintenance of children and guardianship.

The IICJ and other organizations have put forward that Sharia/Muslim Family law gives Muslim women better rights than those provided under the laws of Canada, Ontario and the West. They argue that the Canadian Charter enshrines the right to practice one's religion and that this move is a form of accommodating the needs of religious minorities within a multicultural society. They accept the argument that the use of private arbitration relieves the backlog at courts and engaging in private arbitration is a matter of choice. They also claim that as informal mediation is taking place, with decisions being made by religious leaders and lawyers, it would be better to have these recognized by the *Arbitration Act* and given legitimacy; and that the confidentiality of arbitration is emphasized, especially for women who do not want their problems made public and thus be victim to exploitation or defamation.<sup>3</sup>

Organizations and individuals opposing the use of religious laws in private legally binding arbitration under the *Arbitration Act*, do not accept these arguments. They point to the progress of the last 30 years to separate Judeo-Christian values from the Family Law regime and to base these laws on human rights principles, and now question the return of religiously-based laws for Canadian religious women. The use of private arbitration will privatize family law by creating a parallel system of law that allows the religious, cultural and political elites to decide on the applicable law, with the option of circumventing Canadian family law.<sup>4</sup> The current *Family Law Act* has values stated in the Preamble, while the *Arbitration Act* has no underlying principles about the family.

The Canadian Council of Muslim Women, (CCMW) along with several other women's organizations, state that family issues should be a matter of public law. Any implementation of religious laws in family matters will be harmful for many women and children, especially considering the

**RAZIA JAFFER**  
Razia Jaffer is the President of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women.

prevalent conservative interpretations of Muslim Family Law as applied to women.<sup>5</sup> Religious laws are based on a patriarchal model of the family and not on equal partnership of the family.

### Canadian Muslim Women – Combatting Old Stereotypes and Defining New Roles

The 2001 Census reports that the Muslim population has grown 128% over the past decade to approximately 580,000, [2% of the Canadian population] of which 276,075 were women (Hamdani, 2004). Based on 2001 Census, recent research of Dr. Daood Hamdani released by CCMW, shows that Muslim women are among the poorest women in Canada, are underemployed despite high levels of education and tend to work part-time in low-paying jobs. Muslim women have a higher rate of unemployment and a lower rate of labour force participation compared to other women. Compared to other women, twice as many Muslim women remain separated; fewer of them are divorced and marital breakdown among Muslim women aged 18-24 is higher than their peers (Hamdani, 2004).

Preliminary results from the 2003 Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS) on the role religion plays in the lives of Canadians illustrates the importance of religion for Muslim Canadians. The data shows that 76% of Canadian Muslims ranked religion as being important to them, 32% of Canadian Muslim participated in religious activities at least once a week and 65% of Muslim respondents participated in individual religious worship (including prayer, meditation and other forms of worship taking place at home or in any other location) (Ibrahim and Janhevich, 2004).

These recent findings emphasize the central role that Islam and the Muslim community play in the daily lives of Canadian Muslim men and women.

For Muslim women, like other women, the struggle related to gender-related issues has been a long one and is on-going. Many of the obstacles women face stem from the gender-related stereotypes assigned to them in Canadian society and within the Muslim community itself.

Furthermore, culturally-based traditions and practices blur the lines between religiously-mandated codes of behaviour and culturally-based gender expectations. Research also shows that Canadian Muslim women do not want to add to the anti-Muslim sentiments or Islamophobia. These women are committed to tackling a myriad of difficult issues, including the proposed Islamic tribunals, through dialogue, research, partnerships and awareness raising.

### Elucidating Muslim Family Law/Sharia

It is important to understand the parameters of Sharia, Muslim Family Law and Muslim jurisprudence. Sharia is a comprehensive religious term to define how Muslims should

live, while *fiqh* (jurisprudence) is limited to the laws promulgated by Muslim scholars, based on their understanding of the *Qur'an* and the practices of the Prophet (Ramadan, 2004). It is argued that using the term 'Sharia' immediately causes believing Muslims to hesitate in expressing any opposition, as no Muslim wants to be against the Sharia. However, the correct use of the term Muslim Law opens up the discussion and one can then explore the issues within.

Of additional importance is that Muslim Family Law/Sharia is not a homogeneous civil code, but complex system of jurisprudence based on five schools of thought interpreted by culturally and ethnically diverse individuals. As the research by the network, *Women Living Under Muslim Laws* has concluded, the laws vary and what is considered Muslim in one country is unknown in another. They found

there are variations in applications of Muslim Family Law/Sharia and that women's rights were rarely based on equality.

Muslim Family Law is based on a patriarchal model of the family which places the man as head of the family and though the wife has certain rights she is expected to obey her husband because he provides for her (Esack, 2002). Many proponents of Muslim family law accept that men have the right to marry up to four wives; women must be obedient; following divorce a wife does not receive any maintenance except for a period of 3 months to one year and most agree that the children should go to the father, usually at ages 7 for boys and 9 for girls (Mernissi, 1991). If the wife wants a divorce she must go to court, while the husband has the right to repudiate the union without recourse to courts. Inheritance favours males, [because it is argued that they are responsible for the costs of the family] to the extent that the wife gets only a portion at the death of the husband and a daughter will only receive one third inheritance, whereas a son receives two-thirds.

In this patriarchal model, women do have rights. The woman keeps her wealth, if she has any; she is provided with a gift at

the time of marriage (*mahr* which could be an iron ring or property or gold or money) she inherits in her own right; in theory she does not have to share in the provision of the household needs, and she keeps her own name. In return she accepts the patriarchal model and the prescribed roles for herself and her male relatives, including her husband.

### Deconstructing the Boyd Report

Ms Boyd's report entitled *Dispute Resolution in Family Law: Protecting Choice, Promoting Inclusion* is a puzzling title, as her findings and recommendations promote exclusion and isolation of religious women.

It is perplexing that in her Report, Ms Boyd rightly admits that there is virtually no information on the impact of religious arbitration on women, however, she then states in her first recommendation that she found no adverse

76% of Canadian Muslims ranked religion as being important to them, 32% of Canadian Muslim participated in religious activities at least once a week and 65% of Muslim respondents participated in individual religious worship (including prayer, meditation and other forms of worship taking place at home or in any other location).

impact on women, and therefore recommends private legally binding arbitration using religious laws. Under the Oversight and Evaluation section, the Report also states, “the government lacks information about the extent to which arbitration is used in family law and inheritance and how this mechanism has impacted on vulnerable people” (Boyd, 2004).

The Boyd report’s statements that other religious groups use religious based arbitration for family matters is misleading. The *Arbitration Act* is not used for the Jewish divorce or “Get,” but we understand that the Beis Din’s have used the *Arbitration Act* to settle commercial disputes.<sup>6</sup> Neither the Catholics nor the Anglicans use the *Arbitration Act* and Ismaili Muslims have established their own Community Arbitration Board that follows Canadian laws.

She admits that the *Arbitration Act* was problematic for family matters and so instead of considering any other alternative, proceeds to making forty-six recommendations to ameliorate an inappropriate legislation. The report has little consideration of women’s equality or welfare and appears to emphasize the use of religious laws as part of religious freedom, thereby creating the false juxtaposition of religious freedom and equality rights.

#### Bakht analysis of the Boyd Report

Bakht states that it fails to find a balance between the rights of religious minorities and women. It unquestionably and inappropriately gives preferentiality to religious freedom demonstrating a clear refusal to assume responsibilities for the protection of vulnerable persons within minority groups, women in particular (Bakht, 2005).

Ms. Boyd proposes the application of the “statement of principles of faith-based arbitration.”

What does this mean when there is no one codified, agreed upon single Muslim law on which this state of principles could be based? In addition, Ms. Boyd does not provide any details on what would constitute a statement of principles and who would formulate the parameters.

True and free choice is not a reality for many Canadian Muslim women, especially immigrant women that may live in religious or cultural enclaves, lack resources and support systems, are not proficient in English or French, are not aware of their rights in Canada, and may be increasingly vulnerable to coercion (Ahmed, 2005).

Arbitration is said to be voluntary and consent of both parties is required, but the probability that the woman may be pressured to agree to arbitration still exists. It is not that Muslim women are incapable of making appropriate choices and decisions for themselves, but the strong influence of family, religion and community cannot be underestimated.

In her report, Ms. Boyd states: “Religious law serves to determine who is considered a full member of the religious community...Those who do not conform to religious law may find themselves ostracized, disintegrated to practice their religion within the community or entirely disowned by the community.” (Boyd, 2004)

It is difficult to understand how she thinks that those who do not conform will really feel like they have a choice.

As well, proponents of Sharia Tribunal Councils publicly claim that “Sharia/Muslim Family Law is the law for all Muslims. If women reject decisions based on these laws these women will be seen as bad Muslims who reject Islam” and very few Muslims would challenge such statements for fear of being labeled blasphemous and losing the support of their community. (Armstrong, 2004)<sup>7</sup>

There are no recommendations for mandatory training of arbitrators, neither is the issue of education of arbitrators in Muslim or other religious jurisprudence addressed. Recommendations on oversight and evaluation of arbitrators address record keeping and reporting requirements, but who will provide the human and financial resources to ensure full compliance with these requirements? More public education regarding family law and arbitration is welcomed, particularly the provision of linguistically and culturally appropriate legal information; however, there is no mention about the resources required to achieve these.

The 2001 Census reports that the Muslim population has grown 128% over the past decade to approximately 580,000, [2% of the Canadian population] of which 276,075 were women.

#### Multiculturalism: Help or Hindrance

Throughout this debate, multiculturalism has been evoked. Does multiculturalism sanction or prevent Islamic tribunals for Muslims? Some claim the creation of the Islamic tribunals is the dark side of multiculturalism which will ghettoize Muslims and will lead to a two-tiered legal system – one for Muslims and one for everyone else (Ahmed, 2005). All those involved are strong believers in Canada’s Multiculturalism Policy, which is based on the principle that “all individuals should be free to make their own choices about whether or how to express their ethnic and religious identity, and that all groups should respect basic liberal values of human rights and democracy.” (Kymlicka, 2005)

However, Kymlicka raises two serious questions that will require further research. He asks if “native-born Canadians will continue to support Multiculturalism, and extend the same trust to Muslims that has been shown to other non-European groups, or will they follow the European path of retreating from multiculturalism when confronted with politicized Muslim minorities?” He also probes whether “Muslim leaders and organizations will accept the liberal foundations and constraints of Canadian multiculturalism, or will they attempt to use multiculturalism to perpetuate illiberal practices for which they claim a religious sanction?”

The recognition and celebration of differences should not lead to fragmentation of ethnic, religious, or racial communities, nor should it mean that each group is not part of the whole, nor that minority women should be discriminated against and have their equality rights taken away from them. CCMW recognizes that the *Multiculturalism Act* works within a larger legal and legislative framework which includes the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Citizenship Act* and the *Human Rights Act*. Canada is signatory to a number of international treaties, including

the *Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*, the *Convention on Civil and Political Rights* and the *Convention for the Elimination of Violence Against Women* and the approval of Islamic Tribunals would seriously violate these international treaties.

A study by Pascale Fournier examining the application of Sharia/Muslim Family Law in western liberal states reported that the British proposal to establish a separate system of Muslim Family Law was rejected in order to uphold universally accepted human rights values, especially in relation to women. Ms. Fournier also stated the following: “What is apparent is that Canadian Muslim women risk being ghettoized and their equality rights seriously violated in a country that is known in the world for its commitment to human rights.” (Fournier, 2004).

The province of Ontario is not being supported by some of the other provinces. For example, the British Columbia Attorney General made a clear statement against the use of faith-based arbitration in British Columbia. Recently the Québec legislature came out strongly in favour of the family law being applied to all and that religious laws can not be used for arbitration.<sup>8</sup> However, the comments of the former Québec immigration minister about refusing immigrants to Canada, who believe in Sharia, does not facilitate tolerance, feeds into negative sentiments and hurts a community that is feeling besieged.

### Summary and Next Steps

CCMW is comprised of believing women who are committed to their faith and are extremely concerned that the use of Muslim Family Law will erode the equality rights of Canadian Muslim women.

CCMW has been fortunate that other organizations such as those for human rights, for Muslims and other women’s groups, have understood that this is not a struggle for Muslim women only, but rather that it is of significance for all Canadians. For although the focus has been on the proposed application of Sharia/Muslim Family Law, all agree that the discussion is more fundamental than what is affecting the Muslim communities just now. Protecting the rights of women and minority communities is the responsibility of all Canadians as there are social, political and economic consequences for not ensuring the rights of the most vulnerable.

CCMW will continue to work with its membership, supporters and partners to lobby the Ontario government. To this end, CCMW will continue to dialogue with different representatives of the Muslim community, strengthen international networks so as to learn from groups that are challenged with similar issues, engage at the grassroots and continue public education activities. CCMW will collaborate with other groups to ensure that the province proceeds with a much needed review of the *Family Law Act*.

The intent is to ensure that family matters are removed from the *Ontario Arbitration Act* and that no other provincial government allows family matters to be settled under its *Arbitration Act*, in order to protect women’s equality rights.

### References

- Ahmed, E. “Promoting Inclusivity: Protecting (whose) Choices?” *Challenging Fundamentalisms: A Web Resource for Women’s Human Rights*. [www.whrnet.org/fundamentalisms/docs/issue-promoting\\_inclusivity-0501.html](http://www.whrnet.org/fundamentalisms/docs/issue-promoting_inclusivity-0501.html)
- Armstrong, S. “Criminal Justice.” *Chatelaine*, November 2004.
- Bakht, N. *Family Arbitration Using Sharia Law: Examining Ontario’s Arbitration Act and its Impact on Women*. Ottawa: National Association of Women and the Law, 2004. <http://www.nawl.ca/brief-sharia.html>
- Bakht, N. *Arbitration, Religion and Family Law: Private Justice on the Backs of Women*. Ottawa: National Association of Women and the Law, 2005. <http://www.nawl.ca/whatsnew.htm>
- Boyd, M. *Dispute Resolution in Family Law: Protecting Choice, Promoting Inclusion*. Toronto: Government of Ontario, 2004. <http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/about/pubs/boyd/>
- Esack, F. *The Qur’an: A Short Introduction*. Oxford: One World, 2002.
- Fournier, P. *The Reception of Muslim Family Law in Western Liberal States*. Toronto: Canadian Council of Muslim Women, 2004. [http://ccmw.com/main/postion\\_papers.htm](http://ccmw.com/main/postion_papers.htm)
- Hamdani, D. *Muslim Women: Beyond the Perceptions*. Toronto: Canadian Council of Muslim Women, 2004. [http://www.ccmw.com/publications/Muslim\\_Women\\_Beyond the Perceptions.pdf](http://www.ccmw.com/publications/Muslim_Women_Beyond_the_Perceptions.pdf)
- Ibrahim, H. and Janhevich, J. “Muslims in Canada: An Illustrative and Demographic Profile.” *Our Diverse Cities*. Number One: Spring 2004. Ottawa: The Government of Canada, 2004, 49-58.
- Kymlicka, W. *Testing the Bounds of Liberal Multiculturalism* (unpublished paper). Presented at the CCMW conference on “Muslim Women’s Equality Rights in the Justice System: Gender, Religion and Pluralism in Toronto, April 9, 2005.
- Mernissi, F. *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women’s Rights in Islam*. Reading: Perseus Books Publishing, 1991.
- Mill, R. (Coordinator) *A Review of the Muslim Personal/Family Law Campaign: An Interview with Syed Mumtaz Ali*. Toronto: Islamic Institute for Civil Justice, 1995. <http://muslim-canada.org/pfl.htm#1>
- Ramadan, T. *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Women Living Under Muslim Law. Knowing Our Rights: Women, Family, Laws and Customs in the Muslim World*. London: WLUML, 2003.

### Notes

- 1 Razia Jaffer is the President of the *Canadian Council of Muslim Women* (CCMW) which is a faith-based Muslim women’s organization which works to assist Muslim women in gaining an understanding of their rights, responsibilities, and roles in Canadian society. See [www.ccmw.com](http://www.ccmw.com) for more details.
- 2 CCMW was informed of this earlier decision during their July 2004 meeting with Marion Boyd.
- 3 For details on the IICJ position, visit their website at <http://muslim-canada.org/pfl.htm#1>.
- 4 Open Letter sent to the Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General of Ontario) regarding the Application of Religious *Family Law Matters using Ontario’s Arbitration Act*, submitted by Jean-Louis Roy (Rights and Democracy: International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development). <http://www.ddrd.ca/frame2.iphtml?langue=0&menu=m01&urlpage=/english/commdoc/publications/women/sharialetter.html>

5 See Open Letter sent by CCMW to Premier Dalton McGuinty and Hon. Michael Bryant dated January 15, 2005 in response to the release of the Boyd Report. <http://ccmw.com/ShariaInCanada/Letter%20to%20Ontario%20Premier%20Attorney%20General.htm>

Organizations that have supported CCMW include, National Association of Women and the Law, the YWCA, Rights and Democracy, Women Living Under Muslim Laws, National Association of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women, the Ontario Council of the Canadian Federation of University Women, Ontario Association of Interval and Transitional Housing, the Muslim Canadian Congress, Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC), Legal Education Action Fund, the International Campaign Against Shari'a Court in Canada, Amnesty and the National Council of Women of Canada.

6 The Beis Din are religious tribunals that resolve civil disputes using Jewish laws. Arbitrators at the Beis Din are typically Orthodox rabbis who are recognized experts in Jewish law.

7 The IICJ Website also states that as Canadian Muslims, you have a clear choice. Do you want to govern yourself by the personal law of your own religion, or do you prefer governance by secular Canadian family law? If you choose the latter, then you cannot claim that you believe in Islam as a religion and a complete code of life actualized by a Prophet who you believe to be a mercy to all. If you choose the former (i.e., to be governed by your religion), then you must accept the necessary consequence that you must follow a course of action that will enable you to achieve that end. You cannot shirk from your religious and moral duty to try for what can be achieved lawfully within the parameters of the Canadian democratic system and constitutional legal rights.

8 Québec recognizes the inappropriateness of arbitration for families: "Disputes over the status and capacity of persons, family matters or other matters of public order may not be submitted to arbitration" (Article 2639 of the Civil Code of Québec, S. Q., 1991).

## Journal of International Migration and Integration *Metropolis Research and Policy Review*

## Revue de l'intégration et de la migration internationale *Compte rendu de Metropolis sur la recherche et les politiques*

The Journal of International Migration and Integration (JIMI) is a multidisciplinary scholarly journal which publishes original research papers, policy discussions, and book reviews that enhance the understanding of immigration, settlement and integration, and contribute to policy development. JIMI is printed four times a year with articles in English or French.

La Revue de l'intégration et de la migration internationale (RIMI) est une revue spécialisée multidisciplinaire qui publie des travaux de recherche, des discussions portant sur les politiques et des critiques de livres qui font avancer les connaissances en matière d'immigration, d'établissement et d'intégration et qui contribuent à l'élaboration des politiques. La RIMI paraît quatre fois par année et présente des articles en anglais et en français.



JIMI  
1-17 Humanities Centre  
University of Alberta  
Edmonton, AB T6G 2E5  
Canada  
Tel: (780) 492-0635  
Fax: (780) 492-2594  
Email: [jimi@ualberta.ca](mailto:jimi@ualberta.ca)  
Web Site: <http://jimi.metropolis.net>



# RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

## ABSTRACT

In democratic and pluralist societies, the issue of religion in the public sphere gives rise to many serious and complex debates. Such issues require discussions among people from different domains. On the one hand, it requires contributions from researchers working in universities, in various public and parapublic institutions, and in private and community organizations. On the other hand, it requires the points of view of decision makers and religious groups. This paper provides an overview of some of the contributions that will appear in the book *La religion dans la sphère publique*. The issue of diversity is examined from a statistical point of view and in relation to the question of religion's place in the model of Canadian multiculturalism. The book also includes studies of relations between the state and religion in Québec, in the education and health sectors, and in the municipal sphere. Finally, several studies look at the public sphere's secularity and neutrality.

In democratic and pluralist societies, the issue of religion in the public sphere gives rise to many serious and complex debates. It involves the relations between religions and different spiritual trends, government, and civil society; these three areas obviously cross various aspects of the public and parapublic domains: educational institutions, social and health services, penal and legal institutions, and public policies. On another level, the issue has considerable impact on the workplace, the community, and the family. Consider, for example, the recent debates on gay marriage, contraception, AIDS prevention, managing work schedules, wearing religious symbols in schools, and building new places of worship for non-Christians. Various issues often cause us to reflect on the challenge of living together, of respecting the diversity of beliefs and visions of good, while agreeing to a common way of functioning and certain common values.

Such issues require discussions among people from different domains. On the one hand, it requires contributions from researchers working in universities, in various public and parapublic institutions, and in private and community organizations. On the other hand, it requires the points of view of decision makers and religious groups themselves, including those who identify with a specific system of belief – whether it be religious, spiritual, atheist, or secular, for example.<sup>2</sup> This paper provides an overview of some of the contributions that will appear in the book *La religion dans la sphère publique* [religion in the public sphere].<sup>3</sup> The issue of diversity is examined from a statistical point of view and in relation to the question of religion's place in the model of Canadian multiculturalism. The book also includes studies of relations between the state and religion in Québec, in the education and health sectors, and in the municipal sphere. Several studies look at the public sphere's secularity and neutrality.

## Canadian society and religious diversity

Sociologist Peter Beyer provides an analysis of Canadian statistics on the religion of Canadians (1981–2001).<sup>4</sup> He notes that old-stock Canadians have been becoming decreasingly religious, while immigration has been intensifying cultural and religious pluralism since the 1981 census. However, Canada remains a predominantly Christian country (2001: 77%). At the same time, however, the number of people who say that they have no religion is increasing – more so among men than among women – as is the number of non-denominational Christians. Beyer has also observed a trend that suggests a certain de-institutionalization of religion. Newcomers can just as easily adapt to the influence of their host society as they can resist it. Although we cannot predict the underlying attitudes and choices of future generations, we can still, based on current data, anticipate a continuous flux of immigrants from the world's main religious groups – Christians (particularly Catholics), Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists, and to a lesser degree, Sikhs, Jews and Jains. Also, the increasing number of non-European Christians will probably change Christianity considerably. Comparing the two large urban centres of Vancouver and Toronto with that of Montréal, we see that Vancouver and Toronto have a much larger diversity of religions than Montréal, which is still a predominantly Christian city – primarily Roman Catholic – with fewer people who are either not religious or who belong to other religions.

John Biles, of the Metropolis Project, has investigated the capacity of Canadian multiculturalism to take religious diversity into account. Based on two case studies, he has investigated the nature of the separation between the state and the Christian church in Canada.<sup>5</sup> The first study addresses the refusal to grant visas to a number of Lutheran Church representatives from Asia and Africa during their worldwide meeting in Winnipeg in 2003. The second examines the issue of Christian sanctuaries where refugees have sought asylum to escape deportation. In both cases, strong criticism from the churches, which was often supported by public opinion, contested the decisions rendered by the immigration department. Biles concludes that Canadian public opinion seems to accept that Christian churches play a critical role. However, many people in the Canadian elite insist on the separation of church and state. Biles notes that the Christian churches undeniably play a key role in that they have an impact on the public sphere, but he suggests that serious consideration be given to the possible contributions of other religious groups. Enhancing the Canadian model of diversity requires both a recognition of the positive critical role that religion can play in certain matters and an end to limiting this possibility to Christianity.

Sophie Therrien provides an overview of how religious diversity in Québec is addressed in legislation and in politics.<sup>6</sup> Following a brief historical overview, she examines the articles of the charters of rights (Québec, 1975; Canada, 1982) as they relate to religion and the guarantee of the fundamental freedoms of belief and religion. Individual expressions of belief are so important in those articles that strong personal beliefs are enough to qualify as a demand, regardless of conformity to the group. Also, in 1985, the obligation of reasonable accommodation made its appearance in Canadian and Québec law.<sup>7</sup> Therrien specifically defines the concepts of laicity and secularization by situating the recent adoption of the concept of open secularity in Québec, which aims for increased consideration of religious diversity. Therrien suggests that healthy management of religious diversity must be supported by a legal framework and, on a larger scale, by the recognition of the religious dimension of a citizen's identity, which contributes to the richness of community life.

#### Educational, municipal and health environments

Christine Cadrin-Pelletier's article describes the significant steps marking the evolution of religious education in schools, in relation to these diversity issues.<sup>8</sup> She identifies a homogeneous Catholic world and a heterogeneous Protestant world prior to 1974. Between 1974 and 1995, several major events significantly changed the education system. In 1977, the adoption of the *Charter of the French Language* further diversified the population attending Francophone Catholic schools, particularly in Montréal. The charters of rights and freedoms (1975, 1982) set out new requirements for the respect of religious freedoms. Catholic

programs did not address religious diversity until Secondary V,<sup>9</sup> and it was not until 1991 that openness to religious diversity was considered essential learning at the high school level, and until 1994 at the primary school level.<sup>10</sup> Cadrin-Pelletier seems to regret the creation, "parallel" to scholastic services, of a Direction des services aux communautés culturelles [cultural community services branch], in cooperation with the ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration [department of cultural communities and immigration], which in 1996 became the ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration [department of relations with the citizens and immigration]. Then, in 1995, various factors led to the deconfessionalization of the school system and a change in lessons and activities.<sup>11</sup> In 2002 in particular, the National Assembly introduced certain provisions in Québec's *Education Act*, which established an open secular attitude toward religion in public schools. Corporate culture in education, from this point of view, is changing, but controversy exists. Cadrin-Pelletier therefore concludes that the issue of whether to teach religious diversity in public schools remains unresolved.

Old-stock  
Canadians have  
been becoming  
decreasingly  
religious, while  
immigration has  
been intensifying  
cultural and  
religious pluralism  
since the  
1981 census.

Myer Siemiatycki (Ryerson University) studied the case of Toronto, which saw its Catholic and non-Christian populations increase very rapidly at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He points out that the municipal authorities are on the front lines in terms of determining the styles of belonging and the inclusion of differences, since they decide the rules governing, for example, zoning, recreation, public libraries and schools. In this respect, Toronto promotes many ways of recognizing diversity, but it seems to have an aversion to the word "religion." Among other examples, the city's action plan to eliminate racism and discrimination makes no mention of religion in any of the 20 indicators it suggests. Conflicts between Jews and Muslims have, nonetheless, increased

recently in Toronto. Moreover, among the 10 advisory committees and working groups that deal with discrimination issues, none addresses religion. In 2000, the school board, for its part, produced a guide on accommodating religious demands (holidays, prayers, dress codes, etc.). Siemiatycki notes that, to be considered, these issues must be the object of complaints or demands from the individuals concerned. Following the example of other major Canadian and western cities, urban planning in relation to the construction of non-Christian places of worship and their spatial and symbolic dimensions is the subject of debate and tension among residents.

Three articles address the health-care sector. Alex Battaglini recognizes that religion is barely considered a factor among the concerns of the Québec government's public health branch or in research on health in Québec. As a result of the secularization of health-care institutions during the 1960s, biomedical concerns were paramount. Paradoxically, a significant proportion of Québeckers believe that their spiritual values have a positive impact on their health, and this is corroborated in rare studies on the subject.

One study shows that religion and spirituality are a protective factor in relation to health.<sup>12</sup> However, religion can lead to risk factors, particularly in cases where a person's beliefs oppose specific medical treatments.<sup>13</sup> He therefore suggests that popular beliefs can be health determinants, that religious traditions can contribute to a person's health, and that we must be more vigilant as to the coherence between promoted public health values and those held by a diversified population.

Gilbert Gariépy, chaplain at a Manitoba hospital, adds to this discussion, stating that many people distrust religion, medical science and psychiatry. Spiritual intervention services in the health-care sector are generally limited because it is difficult to evaluate their real impact according to medical science criteria. Among the numerous challenges this intervention – traditionally pastoral, Christian and Jewish in Canada – faces are welcoming religious diversity; providing better support for individuals of Aboriginal faiths, which are also very pluralistic; and reflecting the increasing number of people who do not identify with either a faith community or a religion but who do, however, request “spiritual” service (the concept of the de-institutionalization of religion, observed by Beyer). New types of professionals are also being called upon to build various relations with religion, without any tie with or accountability to a religious group, for example.<sup>14</sup> Provincial laws incorporate spirituality into the definition of health to varying degrees. For example, in Manitoba, it is absent, limiting the definition to physical and psychological factors. This is not the case in Ontario and Québec. Moreover, in 1998, Manitoba enacted the *Personal Health Information Act* (PHIA), which makes access to information difficult for people offering certain services, like spiritual care. Ontario even set up an independent organization, the Multifaith Council of Ontario,<sup>15</sup> to advise the government on matters pertaining to religion and health in order to ensure that patients with different spiritual orientations are respected. To address some of the questions raised by Gariépy, let us turn to the work by anthropologist Marie-Pierre Bousquet (Université de Montréal), who examined the religious system of Amerindians, which is referred to as “Aboriginal spirituality” or pan-Indian, and which is neither dogmatic nor governed by an institutional mechanism. An interesting fact is that, while federal and provincial policies tried to curb traditional Aboriginal faith practices until the 1950s, they are now supporting the use of these practices in correctional, health and social services programs as effective therapeutic tools, and are even integrating them into various civic and political rituals.

#### What separates the state and religion?

In closing, let us look at the problems raised by Farrow and Brunk on the relations between state and religion.

Farrow notes that secularism often reigns in the public sphere, because of the fear of the influence of religion and in order to curb public demonstrations of religion.<sup>16</sup> He focuses on two models of secularism. Liberal secularism, based on the ideas of Locke, recognizes the separation between religion and state, without, however, denying that religion has a certain place in the public sphere. He offers the example of a statement made by the Chief Justice of Canada: “Religion is an integral aspect of people's lives, and cannot be left at the boardroom door. What secularism does rule out, however, is any attempt to use the religious views of one part of the community to exclude from consideration the values of other members of the community.”<sup>17</sup> But what religion can influence the public sphere in this way? Farrow examines certain communitarian positions that assume that the life of

“Religion is an integral aspect of people's lives, and cannot be left at the boardroom door. What secularism does rule out, however, is any attempt to use the religious views of one part of the community to exclude from consideration the values of other members of the community.”

– Chief Justice C.J. McLachlin

citizens does not separate the temporal from the spiritual, according to their vision of a good life. To be recognized, this vision must, however, be advanced by established and coherent communities of belief and culture. Farrow endorses a type of secularism in which the public and secular sphere share a common space, fostering collective action, but without trying to answer the higher questions of life. These are advanced by the specific communities themselves. He also offers a certain “Christian secularism” which seeks a substantial consensus between different communities and which is working toward this, without excluding other religious beliefs or different visions of good. This Christian secularism applies to the entire society and supports a functional state that is modest enough not to substitute itself for cultural and religious communities, which alone can provide an ultimate sense of meaning and common good.

Conrad G. Brunk questions what place religious values and beliefs have in the public sphere.<sup>18</sup> In the context of moral debates, such as those over abortion and the use of stem cells, he notes that the dominant vision of a liberal democracy denies a voice to the religious groups that have opinions on these matters, preferring that public policies offer the broadest range of choice possible, which would mean the “neutrality” of the state. However, while legalizing abortion allows a plurality of private options, in the name of the liberal value of autonomous moral conscience, the same is not true for the use of stem cells for research purposes. In this case, research uses public funds in the interest of public health. Brunk maintains that we cannot therefore push religious arguments outside the sphere of discussion or choose them over “rational” arguments. In fact, any position represents a disputable system of beliefs and values – even the so-called modern, liberal and rational position, which has its own philosophical tradition and orthodoxy. The decisions of the state must therefore take into account a debate that allows for these multiple conflicting positions, religious and otherwise.

Prior to these debates on the relations between state and religion are various reflections on interreligious dialogue and the possible contribution of religions to community life: social and ethical criticism, and contributions to peace and to the criticism of ideologies that instrumentalize religion and politics. Likewise, new issues in assessing religion are arising in our societies: in addition to the traditional status of religious experts in various traditions, how can different environments better understand and know different religious and spiritual trends, and how can they better negotiate with them? This is what Patrice Brodeur intends to investigate through the development of a theory of applied critical analysis of religion. He examines the relations between experts in the critical study of religion, religious worshippers, and researchers on believers of religious discourses.<sup>19</sup>

From all of the contributions, we learn that we cannot limit our thinking to one private vision of religion in which religion would be relegated to an individual's private space or to a specific associative or community sphere. We are also reminded that the rational "I" of modern times is not as neutral as it appears. More importantly, distinct discomfort permeates the relations between decision-makers, players on various levels of the public sphere, and religious groups. Significant challenges in knowledge and recognition will therefore arise in Canadian society if it wants to perfect its model for taking diversity into account.

#### Notes

- 1 Solange Lefebvre, Chair of Religion, Culture and Society, Faculty of Theology and Religious Sciences, Université de Montréal, Solange.lefebvre@umontreal.ca, www.cerum.umontreal.ca.
- 2 The position of Chair of Religion, Culture and Society was created with the aim of investigating these questions and bringing together stakeholders from all of these sectors.
- 3 The book *La religion dans la sphère publique* (ed. Solange Lefebvre), will be published in fall 2005 by the Presses de l'Université de Montréal. It will include other texts that are not relevant here and that address European issues, case studies and interreligious dialogues.
- 4 The data from 2001 indicate that religious pluralism is increasing, since Statistics Canada identified 114 categories of affiliation. The analysis is based on data collected between 1971 and 2001, under the direction of P. Beyer (University of Ottawa), with the cooperation of John H. Simpson and Leslie Laczko, and the assistance of Kyuhoon Cho, Wendy K. Martin and Rubina Ramji. These data were taken from Statistics Canada, 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001 Census Custom Tabulations. Do0324, CD-ROM, Ottawa, Statistics Canada, Advisory Services Division, 2003.
- 5 According to Biles, Christianity is tremendously diverse, and that subject will be addressed in *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada* (Bramadat and Seljak ed., forthcoming). That diversity, however, seems less apparent to the Canadian public than the diversity of non-Christian religions.
- 6 Sophie Therrien is a research officer at the Conseil des relations interculturelles, Government of Québec. Her analysis is based on *Laïcité et diversité religieuse : l'approche*, CRI, March 2004.
- 7 This concept appeared in Canadian law in a judgment rendered in a case involving a conflict between religious convictions and a work schedule. See M. Drapeau, "L'évolution du droit du travail à la lumière de l'arrêt Meiorin," *Revue du Barreau*, Spring 2001, p. 306; and José Woehrling, "L'accommodement raisonnable et l'adaptation de la société à la diversité religieuse," *Revue de droit de McGill* (1998) 43 R.D. McGill, p. 325.
- 8 C. Cadrin-Pelletier is head of the Secrétariat aux affaires religieuses [religious affairs secretariat] of the ministère de l'Éducation du Québec [Québec department of education].
- 9 Ministère de l'Éducation, Direction de l'enseignement catholique, *Le phénomène religieux*. Document d'appoint. Québec, 1990, 260 p.
- 10 Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Comité catholique, Notice to the Minister of Education. *L'enseignement moral et religieux catholique au primaire. Pour un enseignement mieux adapté aux jeunes et aux contextes actuels*, Québec, April 1994; Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Comité catholique, Notice to the Minister of Education. *L'enseignement moral et religieux catholique au secondaire. Pour un enseignement mieux adapté aux jeunes et aux contextes actuels*, Québec, June 1991.
- 11 Particularly the publication of this report: ministère de l'Éducation, *Laïcité et religions. Perspective nouvelle pour l'école québécoise*, Report by the working group on the place of religion in schools, Québec, 1999, 282 p.; and ministère de l'Éducation, *Dans les écoles publiques du Québec, une réponse à la diversité des attentes morales et religieuses*, Québec, 2002. Note that various options for religious teaching must be offered, and they always include a confessional lesson; and that a spiritual service and non-confessional community commitment has replaced the pastoral confessional service.
- 12 See M. Clarkson, L. Pica, H. Lacombe, "Spiritualité, religion et santé : une analyse exploratoire," in C. Develuy (ed.) *Enquête sociale et de santé 1998*, Collection la santé et le bien-être, Institut de la statistique du Québec, 2001, p. 603-625.
- 13 See A. Battaglini, S. Fortin et al., *Bilan des interventions en soutien parental et en stimulation infantile auprès de clientèles pluriethniques*, Direction de la santé publique de Montréal-Centre, 1997, 314 p.
- 14 This a matter under debate by the Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education (CAPPE); site: www.cappe.org.
- 15 The collective work to be published, *La religion dans la sphère publique* (ed. Solange Lefebvre) consists of a text on the contributions of this organization, written by its director, Liz Chappel.
- 16 See Douglas Farrow (McGill University), "Three Meanings of Secular," *First Things* 133 (May 2003), 20-23, for a simple typology of secularisms; and *Recognizing Religion in a Secular Society*, ed. D. Farrow (Montréal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004).
- 17 McLachlin C.J., in *Chamberlain v. Surrey School District No. 36* (2002 SCC 86), at §19.
- 18 Brunk is the Director of the Center for Studies in Religion and Society, University of Victoria. He refers particularly to the work of Jeffrey Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2004.
- 19 Patrice Brodeur, of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Sciences at the Université de Montréal, is Canada Research Chair on Islam, Pluralism, and Globalization. This definition of a new sub-discipline of the critical analysis of religion, Brodeur explains, requires that a theory and particular methods be developed to understand how this triangle works in various domains, such as the intersections between religion and politics, education, law, health, the media, the economy, the environment, and inter-identity relations.

# GENDER AND MIGRATION INTERSECTIONS

## In a Canadian Context

### ABSTRACT

Given the tremendous changes in Canada's labour market over the last 30 years, and parallel changes in norms about the roles and responsibilities of women and men in various social contexts, research that does not accord serious attention to immigrants as gendered subjects is fundamentally flawed. Gender is the necessary lens to examine migration, settlement and integration processes in order to (1) develop a truly inclusive understanding of the ways in which Canadian society is changing and will change as a consequence of immigration and growing socio-cultural diversity; and (2) understand population movements and their consequences for development and citizenship, broadly defined, in an increasingly globalized world.

Demographic aging and a low birthrate, coupled with policy decisions that have brought about some of the highest annual rates of immigrant arrival in Canada since World War II, means that there is scarcely a sector of Canadian society or a region which is not affected by immigration or where immigrants do not make a contribution. Less fully appreciated is the fact that migration, settlement and integration processes are dynamic and highly differentiated between groups and deeply gendered. How immigrants 'do' in Canada, their needs and contributions, why, when and how they arrive then maintain linkages with their places of origin, and the roles that newcomers play in the lives of their children are all fundamentally related to their identities, roles and responsibilities as women and men. Gender is the necessary lens to examine migration, settlement and integration processes in order to (1) develop a truly inclusive understanding of the ways in which Canadian society is changing and will change as a consequence of immigration and growing socio-cultural diversity; and (2) understand population movements and their consequences for development and citizenship, broadly defined, in an increasingly globalized world.

Research has focused on either the un-gendered "immigrant" as a meaningful analytical category or the generic immigrant man unencumbered by his own gender identity and culture. Given the tremendous changes in Canada's labour market over the last 30 years, and parallel changes in norms about the roles and responsibilities of women and men in various social contexts (e.g., the family, schools, government, politics and community organizations), research that does not accord serious attention to immigrants as gendered subjects is fundamentally flawed. As a consequence, our understanding of migration and settlement as a process is far from complete, and policy is insufficiently sensitive to women's and men's distinct needs. Research must go beyond simply 'adding in' sex as a variable because gender is a negotiated and historically constructed social practice, embedded in cultural norms and institutions. As such it decisively shapes female and male identities, interpersonal and social relations, and determines individuals' and households' access to resources during processes of migration and throughout the period of settlement and integration. Equally, the frequent equation of 'gender' with 'women' is highly problematic. This practice has ghettoized research about women and left men as an undifferentiated "other" category about which far too much is assumed. Feminist theory and research have highlighted the need to study the social construction of masculinities in relation to migration and gender identities in established ethnic communities (Willis and Yeoh, 2000).

A growing interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary body of scholarship is beginning to take form in gender migration and settlement studies (Anthias and Lazaridis, 2000; Giles, Moussa and Van Esterik, 1996; Kelson and DeLaet, 1999; Kofman, Phizacklea, Raghuram and Sales, 2000; Tastsoglou and Maratou-Alipranti, 2003; Willis and Yeoh, 2000). Gender practices in 'sending' countries shape the composition of migrant flows, migrants' material and social resources, goals and settlement strategies, while settlement and integration experiences may modify, transform or reinforce these gender practices in multiple ways (Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Salaff, 2000; Tyner, 1999). A highly diverse set of research findings suggests that migration can have 'emancipatory' effects for some women in terms of power relations within households and communities, but it may also perpetuate long-established forms of inequity (Menjivar, 1999; Pessar

**EVANGELIA TASTOGLIOU**  
Associate Professor, Saint Mary's University

**BRIAN RAY**  
Associate Professor, University of Ottawa

**VALERIE PRESTON**  
Geography Department, York University

1995; Pessar, 2000). There is a strong need to deepen our understanding of how newly achieved gender roles are being enacted in households and between women and men, and how gendered norms extend into interactions that women and men have with public and private institutions in both the sending and receiving societies (Goldring, 2000).

Gender is not only a dimension of identity, but a social relation that shapes the form and function of many institutions – the family, the workplace and labour markets, education, laws and policies, and non-governmental associations. In this sense, we can conceive of gender as a structure, or of gendered structures. Such structures are based upon and reflect unequal relations between men and women, with the balance of power systematically tipped against women. Gendered institutions and structures can and do change as a consequence of diverse, gendered immigration. They also change as a consequence of determined women and men, migrant and non-migrant, striving for a greater measure of equality. Within this conceptual framework, gender intersects with and other markers of identity, such as ethnicity, 'race,' language, religion, age and sexuality. These intersections structure social relations within and between newcomer and Canadian-born communities (Agnew, 2003). In addition, in an era of globalization and transnational migration, these gendered intersections affect immigrant involvement and socio-economic and political-cultural relations in the sending societies (Jones-Correa, 2000; Yeoh, Huang and Willis, 2000).

We contend that a comprehensive research agenda, spanning the entire continuum of the migration process from the sending society through to third countries to the ultimate society of reception, is necessary on methodological and ethical grounds. Methodologically, it is crucial to approach migration as a process and, in order to understand it as such, demands looking beyond what happens to women and men post-arrival in Canada. It is also far too facile to presume that settlement in Canada is some kind of migration endpoint. Although women and men may respond very differently to the opportunities that transnational linkages afford, the existence of such extensive and efficient linkages seriously call into question the permanence of settlement in traditional receiving countries like Canada. Morally, given Canada's humanitarian tradition and philosophy of development assistance, Canadians should take an interest in migration not only in terms of how newcomers fit into domestic policy considerations regarding population growth and labour market needs, but also how such policies influence community prosperity and socio-political stability in the developing world. With these considerations in mind,

Morally, given Canada's humanitarian tradition and philosophy of development assistance, Canadians should take an interest in migration not only in terms of how newcomers fit into domestic policy considerations regarding population growth and labour market needs, but also how such policies influence community prosperity and socio-political stability in the developing world.

it is possible to identify a number of specific research objectives can be identified that emphasize the importance of a rigorous consideration of the intersections of gender and migration:

- the kinds of "transnational" linkages that immigrant women and men maintain with communities, families and individuals in other countries, and the influence of these links on household and family structures and well-being, caring-giving responsibilities, economic productivity, civic participation, citizenship and belonging;
- normative gender roles and change among adults in immigrant households; the gendered qualities and character of relationships between parents and children, especially in relation to the maintenance of heritage languages, scholastic performance, and identity formation;
- the role of language, and especially literacy proficiency in English and/or French, for successful integration and in structuring power dynamics within families; and the economic integration of immigrant women and men in a Canadian economy that increasingly emphasizes literacy, knowledge and skill/training flexibility.

Moreover, migration does not occur in abstract space, and any analysis should take explicit account of the places of migration – both transitory and permanent – for women and men. Gender-specific changes in family structures, labour force roles and civic participation are negotiated within particular locales and spatial contexts in sending societies, and are interweaved with the formation of transnational diasporas. Moreover, the inter-related gender- and place-mediated processes are also evident with regard to economic, social and political participation of women and men in large cities (such as Toronto and Vancouver) where the majority of immigrants settle, as well as smaller cities and towns (such as Halifax) that often wish to attract more newcomers.

The importance of gender and its intersections in migration processes has led an increasing number of international research communities to adopt this analytical perspective in migration research. In Canada, in 2002, a group of researchers affiliated with the Metropolis Centres and supported by SSHRC held a series of workshops ("Strategic Workshop on Immigrant Women 'Making Place' in Canadian Cities: Transdisciplinary Approaches to Their Social Networks") that led to the formation of a network of researchers and a web-based policy document.<sup>1</sup> In 2003, the new Atlantic Metropolis Centre of Excellence established the only "Gender, Migration and Diversity / Immigrant Women"<sup>2</sup> research domain in the Canadian (and

international) Metropolis Project network. The domain provides a unique entry point to identify issues of particular relevance to immigrant women that might otherwise be overlooked in migration research. By doing so, it highlights the gendered character of every aspect of the migration process.

Much like Women's Studies programs in the academy, the Gender/Immigrant Women domain represents a different way of approaching what can be known and is a research paradigm that cuts across disciplines. The domain consists of a wide range of substantive research interests that are investigated through a gender lens (and gender in all of its diversity). It also encourages investigation of emerging questions that may not be evident in other research domains that do not foreground the experiences of female and male migrants as *gendered* subjects. Finally, through collaborative research and networking activities between academics in diverse regions of Canada and internationally, policy-makers and NGOs, the Gender/Immigrant Women domain aims to provide a regional and national focus and to function as a clearing-house for gender-based analysis of immigration and diversity. Members and affiliated researchers also engage in gender-based analysis of research questions emerging from the 12 federal priorities for policy-oriented research on immigration and integration, and aim to ensure that such questions take into account gender and immigrant women's experiences.

## References

- Agnew, Vijay. *Where I Come From*. Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2003.
- Anthias, Floya & Gabriella Lazaridis (eds.). *Gender and Migration in Southern Europe. Women on the Move*. New York: Berg, 2000.
- Giles, Wenona, Helene Moussa & Penny Van Esterik (eds.). *Development and Diaspora. Gender and the Refugee Experience*. Dundas: Artemis, 1996.
- Grasmuck, Sherri & Patricia Pessar. "Households and International Migration," *Between Two Islands. Dominican International Migration*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, 133-161.
- Goldring, Luin. "The Gender and Geography of Citizenship in Mexico-U.S. Transnational Spaces," *Identities*, 1(1) (2000): 1-37.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierette "Gendered Transitions," *Gendered Transitions: Mexican Experiences of Immigration*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994, 53-97.
- Jones-Correa, Michael. 2000. "Different Paths: Gender, Immigration and Political Participation." In Willis & Yeoh (eds.). *Gender and Migration*, An Elgar Reference Collection.
- Kelson, Gregory & Debra DeLaet, eds. 1999. *Gender and Immigration*. N.Y: New York University Press.
- Kofman, Eleonore, Annie Phizacklea, Parvati Raghuram & Rosemary Sales (eds.). *Gender and International Migration in Europe*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Menjivar, Cecilia. "The Intersection of Work and Gender: Central American Immigrant Women and Employment in California," in *The American Behavioral Scientist*, 42(4) (1999): 601-627.
- Pessar, Patricia. 1995. "On the Homefront and in the Workplace: Integrating Immigrant Women into Feminist Discourse," *Anthropological Quarterly*, 68(1) (1995): 37-47.

Pessar, Patricia. "Sweatshop Workers and Domestic Ideologies: Dominican Women in New York's Apparel Industry." In Willis & Yeoh (eds.). *Gender and Migration*, An Elgar Reference Collection, 2000.

Salaff, Janet. "The Gendered Social Organization of Migration as Work." In Willis and Yeoh (eds.). *Gender and Migration*, An Elgar Reference Collection, 2000.

Tastsoglou, Evangelia and Laura Maratou-Alipranti (eds). *Gender and International Migration: Focus on Greece*, Special Issue of *The Greek Review of Social Research*, Athens: National Centre For Social Research (EKKE), Vol. 110 A, Spring 2003.

Tyner, James. 1999. "The Global Context of Gendered Labor Migration from the Philippines to the United States," in *The American Behavioral Scientist*, 42(4) (1999): 671-689.

Yeoh, Brenda, Shirlena Huang and Katie Willis, 2000, "Global Cities, Transnational Flows and Gender Dimensions, The View from Singapore," in *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 91(2) (2000): 147-158.

Willis, Katie and Brenda Yeoh (eds). *Gender and Migration*, An Elgar Reference Collection, 2000.

## Notes

- 1 Strategic Workshop on Immigrant Women Making Place in Canadian Cities (2002) *Policy-Relevant Research on Immigration and Settlement - Relevant for Whom? A Working Document*. Montréal: INRS Urbanisation, Culture et Société, Institut national de la recherche scientifique, and Immigration et Métropoles. [Workshop members: D. Rose (coordinator), J. Bernhard, C. Creese, I. Dyck, L. Goldring, A. McLaren, C. Nolin, V. Preston, B. Ray, E. Tastsoglou].
- 2 Conventionally it is known as "Gender / Immigrant Women" domain.

# BARRIERS IN ACCESS TO COMPENSATION

## of Immigrant Workers Who Have Suffered Work Injuries

### ABSTRACT

Canada, like many other countries, has an immigration policy that favors qualified candidates. Through economic necessity, however, immigrant workers accept jobs with dangerous conditions that are inappropriate for their qualifications. The prevalence of work injuries is higher among immigrants than among other workers. Not knowing their rights, and frequently having communication barriers, these workers who have had work injuries experience many difficulties in the course of claiming compensation.

The situation of immigrant workers in Québec is of concern. On the one hand, many of them live in conditions in which economic integration is difficult.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, residential instability, economic insecurity, and the precariousness of their living conditions force them to accept jobs in sectors where the risks of accidents and of occupational diseases are high. Whether or not they are qualified, these workers, during their first years here, often work in manual labor jobs that are inappropriate for their training and their skills, thereby increasing the risks of work injuries.<sup>2</sup> As is the case for access to public services in general, immigrant workers who have had work injuries encounter barriers in access to compensation. The results of the present study demonstrate that immigrant workers encounter many difficulties, and that these may occur at any stage in the compensation process.

### Background

The immigration of workers is a growing international phenomenon; it is sustained by the immigration policies of large countries in need of manpower, as well as by countries that, in the grip of uncontrollable unemployment, export workers. In 1990, in North America alone, 8.6% of workers were immigrants.<sup>3</sup> For the countries exporting manpower, the money that enters the country from expatriates abroad, destined for their family members, represents an important amount that can reach close to 10% of the GDP.<sup>4</sup> Foreign manpower consists of three types of workers: qualified workers who leave as part of a “brain drain,” workers who are qualified in sectors that are not hiring, and unqualified workers employed in temporary or seasonal jobs. All of these workers are at risk of occupational injuries.

The end of the 1970s and the 1990s marked the publication of studies on the prevalence of work injuries among immigrant workers. In the first period, studies focused on the sociology of employment among temporary immigrants in Europe; the second period concentrated on the situation of agricultural workers in the southern U.S., and other industrial sectors in need of low-price labor. Between these two periods, studies tended to focus on ergonomic, physiologic, bacteriologic, and toxic risks to workers.

The prevalence and severity of occupational injuries among immigrant workers have always been important. During the 1970s, in Germany,<sup>5</sup> there were 2.7 immigrant workers injured for every German worker injured, while in France, immigrant workers made up 10% of the workforce, yet experienced 21% of accidents.<sup>6</sup> More recently, from 1996 to 2000, in the United States,<sup>7</sup> the mortality rate of Latin American workers was 20% higher than that of whites and African Americans.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, these workers are more likely to develop subsequent problems, since their living conditions do not allow an adequate recovery from an injury,<sup>9</sup> and they suffer from inadequate access to health services and compensation.

Immigrant workers very often hold jobs in sectors that have high risk<sup>10,11,12,13,14</sup> and offer few opportunities for the future.<sup>15</sup> In the state of California alone, Latin American workers constitute 17% of the workforce, yet they represent 62% of agricultural workers, 25% of manufacturing workers (textiles, foods, machinery), and 20% of construction workers<sup>16</sup> – the industrial sectors with the highest prevalence of permanent and fatal injuries.<sup>17</sup> The work conditions are deplorable, and difficult and repetitive tasks<sup>18</sup> are carried out under pressure in unhealthy and noisy environments.<sup>19</sup> These jobs are often seasonal or temporary,<sup>20</sup> which prevents the worker from acquiring enough

**SYLVIE GRAVEL**  
Public Health Directorate of Montreal  
**LAURENCE BOUCHERON**  
Public Health Directorate of Montreal

**MICHEL FOURNIER**  
Public Health Directorate of Montreal  
**LOUIS PATRY**  
Public Health Directorate of Montreal



experience to accomplish the task without risk. Furthermore, an inadequate knowledge of the language leads to isolation of the worker, lack of comprehension of security regulations,<sup>21</sup> and lack of understanding of rights and procedures for receiving compensation.

Since their creation, North American and European compensation systems have evolved. Coverage of compensable injuries and illnesses has expanded, and certain countries have adopted “no-fault” systems.<sup>22, i</sup> These improvements have brought with them an increase in costs without, however, compensation for the most vulnerable victims. Whether unionized or not, workers prefer to continue to work while undergoing treatment, despite their pain,<sup>23</sup> in order to maintain their connection to the labor market. They are afraid of being fired, of losing their right to remain in the country, or even of becoming poor because the compensations for replacement of income are insufficient.<sup>24,25</sup> For those who succeed in overcoming their fears of reprisals, access to compensation is not automatic. Many studies<sup>26,27,28,29,30</sup> have demonstrated the existence of barriers in accessibility to the compensation system, from the point of entry throughout the entire compensation process. Dembe et al. 2003<sup>31</sup> have described three mechanisms that succeed each other in prejudicing the process of making a claim and gaining access to compensation:

- block entry to the system by discouraging workers from initiating the procedure;
- impose rules structuring access to the system through unavoidable delays and by fixing the amounts of compensation without regard to the impoverishment of workers; and
- minimize the needs of workers by underestimating their capacity to return to work, as well as the risks of relapse and recurrence.

Whether looked at from the medical,<sup>32</sup> administrative,<sup>33</sup> or legal<sup>34</sup> point of view, several players are involved in the dynamics of limiting access: employer, colleague, union, physician, legal advisor, and compensation agent. Despite the diversity of analyses, few studies have investigated the course of compensation according to the status of workers.

### Methods, sampling, and recruitment

A retrospective study comparing immigrant and non-immigrant workers was conducted in Montreal<sup>35</sup> in order to answer the following questions:

- do immigrant and non-immigrant workers who experience work injuries have equal access to the compensation system?
- at what points in the compensation process do factors appear that limit or facilitate access?

Researchers interviewed 104 workers who experienced work injuries concerning the circumstances surrounding the accident and the course of the compensation process.

The convenience sample was composed of one-half immigrants (51%) and one-half non-immigrants (49%) and, in the same proportion, of men (53%) and women (47%). Subjects were recruited through the list of clients of the collaborators in the project: a polyclinic specializing in industrial medicine (40%), an organization working for the rights of workers who have experienced work injuries, offering legal and medical assistance (31%), and a law office providing defense for workers (15%). Some subjects (14%) were also recruited through newspapers and ethnic radio stations. From the initial list of 363 clients, 184 were recruited. The rate of refusal was 43% (80/184).

The workers recruited had to be working for an employer at the moment of the injury. The claim for this injury had to be filed in the period beginning in January 2000. Immigrant workers must have been born outside of Canada, and must have lived in Canada for fewer than 20 years, regardless of their status.<sup>ii</sup>

The data for this study come from two sources: a) individual interviews: one focusing on the stages of the administrative process, and another on the conditions of return to work; and b) the transcription of claims and of the description of events surrounding the accident or the appearance of symptoms of the occupational illness. The interviews were carried out by multilingual interviewers; the first interview lasted an average of one hour and 45 minutes, while the second lasted an average of 45 minutes. This process took place between December 2002 and December 2003. Interview data were analyzed using SPSS software (chi-square analyses and tests of mean differences). Transcriptions of claims were obtained and analyzed using NVivo; these data were then converted into dichotomous variables and added to the files of interview data.

### Results

The first results present the characteristics of the workers. The others describe the main barriers to access encountered by the workers, following the chronological order of the different stages in the compensation process.

An occupational illness was the presenting problem for 26% of subjects, while 76% were injured as a result of an accident. Women (35%) experienced more occupational diseases than did men (22%) as did immigrant workers (32%) compared to non-immigrant workers (24%). Almost one third (30%) of injured workers had been employed by their company for less than one year, while 55% had been at their jobs between one and nine years. The vast majority (81%) were carrying out their usual tasks.

Since their creation, North American and European compensation systems have evolved. Coverage of compensable injuries and illnesses has expanded, and certain countries have adopted “no-fault” systems. These improvements have brought with them an increase in costs without, however, compensation for the most vulnerable victims.

**Figure 1**  
**Rate of Refusal of Compensation by Status of Workers**

Decisions rendered - Refused	Immigrants	Non-immigrants
Events surrounding accident or appearance of symptoms	52%	23%
Diagnosis	49%	34%
Connection between job and accident or illness	52%	32%
Functional limitations	64%	48%
Date of consolidation	78%	56%
Conditions of return to work	58%	69%

Whether concerning an illness or an injury, most workers reported the problem to their supervisor (52%) or to a colleague (30%), but some did not know to whom it had been reported (11%). The work environment is a risky one, since 68% of workers have known a colleague with a similar disease or injury.

Most workers consulted someone the same day, but immigrant workers who developed occupational diseases sometimes waited more than six months (28%), unlike non-immigrant workers (8%). Not having family doctors, workers consulted doctors in emergency departments in private clinics (64%) or in hospitals (37%). These patients saw one doctor after another throughout their convalescence, with only 25% of workers continuing to see the same doctor that they saw initially. The absence of continuity in the medical follow-up was such that many men (40%), and especially immigrants (64%) felt that they had been examined inappropriately and been given an imprecise diagnosis (23%). For all workers, the impact of the injury or disease has been very important on their professional lives (78%), their daily lives (56%), and on their leisure activities (61%).

In principle, the worker writes his or her own statement; 92% of non-immigrant workers were able to do this, compared to only 42% of immigrant workers. This gap is all the more worrisome, because immigrant workers often ask their employer (21%) or a third party, a friend, or a member of the family to prepare the statement (37%).

Workers may be contacted up to five weeks (25%) after having filed their claim. These delays are such that immigrants were much less satisfied (75%) with the contacts they had with compensation agents than were non-immigrant workers (49%).

Decisions handed down by the compensation services may<sup>iii</sup> concern several aspects of the case: the description of the events, the diagnosis, the connection between the injury or illness and the job, the functional limitations of the worker, the date of consolidation<sup>iv</sup>, and the conditions of return to work<sup>v</sup>. Rates of refusal are higher for immigrant workers, with the exception of the conditions of return to work, as shown in the following table. The level of disappointment is so high that 59% of workers expect to contest the decisions.

Many workers do not understand the procedures and decisions (62%); this leads 82% of immigrant workers and 76% of non-immigrant workers to seek legal advice. The compensation board of Québec (CSST) prefers to communicate in writing with workers. However, 54% of workers do not

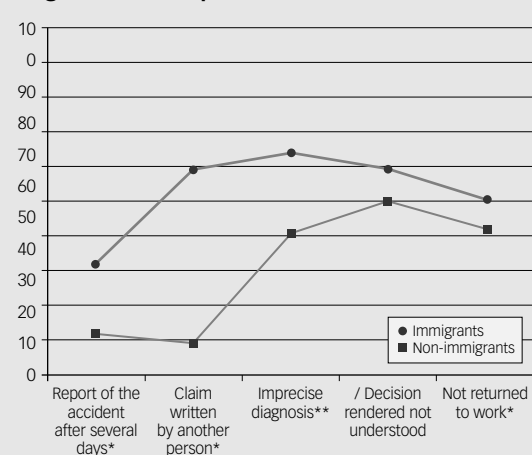
understand these communications, regardless of their status, their education, or the board's decision. For immigrant workers, the problems are not limited to this correspondence, since 55% state that they have had difficulty in making themselves understood, and 58% have not grasped the meaning of the decision.

At the point of the second interview, 51% of immigrant workers, compared to 43% of non-immigrant workers, had returned to work. However, 72% of workers with little education subsequently lost their jobs. Because of economic necessity or through fear of reprisals, workers returned to work in spite of chronic (61%) or occasional (25%) pain. For immigrants, important constraints of transport (47%) and of communication (47%) hindered the continuation of their treatment. Relapses, recurrences, and worsening of the condition were frequent occurrences, regardless of type or of status. Relations with employers deteriorated, especially for immigrant workers (51%) compared to non-immigrants (36%). Many workers (64%) saw their future degraded, particularly immigrant workers (76%).

## Discussion

These results demonstrate that barriers arise at all stages in the compensation process. From the beginning, the immigrant worker delays making a claim, which acts to his or her disadvantage. This is not surprising considering that, in general, from 20% to 45% of workers will not file a claim,<sup>36</sup> and that, in certain industrial sectors, not filing is the norm.<sup>37</sup> At the second stage, that of medical procedures, immigrant workers go to emergency departments of hospitals or clinics for treatment. They leave it up to their doctors to decide what steps to take. Physicians do not necessarily encourage them to file a claim, either because they are not familiar with the compensation system,<sup>38</sup> because they do not want the worker to lose his job, or because they want to avoid becoming involved in debates among experts concerning the health of the worker. At the third stage, that of filing a claim,

**Figure 2 – Comparison Between Immigrant and Non-immigrant Workers at Different Stages in the Compensation Process**



\*Significant  $p < 0.05$  \*\* trend  $p = 0.08$

Statement ▶ Claim ▶ Medical procedures ▶ Administrative course ▶ Return to work

immigrant workers, even those who are educated, are bewildered. Confident that they are being looked after by the system, they are surprised at being refused and at having their claim contested by the employer. In the face of refusal, 25% of workers intend to file an appeal, a rate of contesting equivalent to that identified in other studies.<sup>39</sup> At the fourth stage, which consists of filing an appeal with the compensation board, all workers have difficulty understanding the decisions rendered, and many immigrant workers experience communication problems. The more the administrative process becomes complex, because of disputes, the less the workers understand the outcome of their appeal. Finally, fewer immigrant workers than non-immigrant workers return to the workplace. Non-return to work and firing subsequent to an injury are not specific to the workers in this study. Imershein et al.,<sup>40</sup> in 1994, stated that only 25% of workers who were victims of work injuries returned to work; among these, 96% did not have the support required for their condition, and 76% ended up quitting their jobs, disillusioned, or under threat of being fired. Instead of the dream of a better life, immigrant workers see their family lives as under threat. Here again, the results of our sample are not new, with many studies<sup>41,42</sup> showing that for the majority of workers, pain caused by a work injury affects equally their family lives, their marriages, their social lives, and their leisure activities.

The results of this study demonstrate that the barriers are real for the subjects in our sample. However, the representativeness of our sample is questionable. We used a convenience sample drawn from the lists of clients of collaborators in the study. Nevertheless, the workers in the sample experienced difficulties in access to compensation similar to those investigated in many studies, American as well as European.<sup>43</sup>

## Conclusion

It is not unreasonable to question the equity of treatment accorded to immigrant workers in comparison to that accorded to non-immigrant workers. Everyone involved with workers who have experienced a work injury should cast a self-critical look at their implementation of the factors put in place to assure equal access to the most vulnerable in our society (immigrants, poorly-paid and non-unionized workers, etc.). Professional ethics require that actions taken, information transmitted, and decisions rendered be well understood by the worker, and that their consequences on physical health, professional life, and private life be thoroughly grasped. As emphasized by some studies on work injuries, we must go beyond the simple analysis of medical, familial, and economic consequences of work injuries, and consider all aspects of the impoverishment of means and abilities of workers.

## References

- 1 Ministère Des Relations Avec Les Citoyens Et Immigration. 2004. *L'insertion en emploi des travailleurs admis au Québec en vertu de la grille de sélection de 1996*. Direction de la population et de la recherche, 2004.
- 2 Gravel, S., L. Boucheron, Kane. *La situation des travailleurs et travailleuses immigrant(e)s à Montréal*. Piste 5(1) (2003), revue électronique. [www.pistes.uquam.ca](http://www.pistes.uquam.ca)
- 3 Zoltnik, H. *The Dimensions of International Migration*. Paper prepared for the Technical Symposium on International Migration and Development, United Nations ACC Task Force on Basic Social Services for All. The Hague, 1998.
- 4 Stanton, R.S. Teitelbaum. *International Migration and International Trade*. World Bank Discussion Paper No. 160, Washington, 1992.
- 5 Opfermann, R. "Epidemiology and statistics of occupational accidents and morbidity in migrant workers." *Safety and health of migrant workers international symposium*. Occupational safety and health series, International Labour Organization 41 (1977).
- 6 Araibia, A. "Plus de quatre millions d'émigrés travaillent en France. Safety and health of migrant workers international symposium." *Occupational safety and health series*, International Labour Organization 41 (1977).
- 7 Lopez, D. & C. Feliciano. 2000. "Who Does What? California's Emerging Plural Labor Force." In R. Milkman, *Organizing Immigrants : The Challenge for Unions in Contemporary California*, ILP Press, 2000.
- 8 Richardson, Scott et al. "Hispanic Workers in the U.A. : An Analysis of Employment Distributions, Fatal Occupational Injuries, and Nonfatal Occupational Injuries and Illnesses." National Research Council Workshop : *Communicating Occupational Safety and Health Information to Spanish-speaking Workers and Employers in the U.S.* May 2002.
- 9 Frumkin, H., E.D. Walker & G. Friedman-Jiminez. "Minority Workers and Communities," *Occupational Medicine*, 14(3) (1999): 495-517.
- 10Krahn, H., A. Fernandes & A. Adebayo. "English language ability and industrial safety among immigrants," *Sociology and social research*, 75(1) :17-26.
- 11ROSPA. "Minority report." *Occupational safety and Health*, November 1992.
- 12Döös, M., L. Laflamme, & T. Backström. "Immigrants and Occupational Accidents: A comparative study of the frequency and types of accidents encountered by foreign and Swedish citizens at an engineering plant in Sweden," *Safety Science*, 18 (1994), p. 15-32.
- 13Frederic-Moreau, P. "La prévention des accidents de travail en France. Safety and health of migrant workers international symposium," *Occupational safety and health series*, International Labour Organization, No. 41 (1977).
- 14El Batawi, M.A. "Factors influencing the health and safety of migrant workers. Safety and health of migrant workers international symposium," *Occupational safety and health series*, International Labour Organization, No. 41 (1977).
- 15*Au Bas De L'échelle. Au noir, c'est pas rose!* Éditions Au bas de l'échelle, 1992.
- 16Workers Compensation Insurance Rating Bureau. *Annual Reports*, San Francisco: Wcirb, 1996-2003. Quoted By A.E. Dembe, J. Sum, Blaker, K. Stromberg & I. Nemirovsky. *Workers' Compensation Medical Care in California: Quality of Care*. Commission on Health and Safety and Workers Compensation, 2 (2003): 1-4. [www.chcf.org](http://www.chcf.org), [www.dir.ca.gov/chswc](http://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc).
- 17Windau, J. "Occupational Fatalities Among the Immigrant Population," *Compensation and Working Conditions*, spring 1997.
- 18Carrière, M. & E. Rouger. "Pathologie du travail à la chaîne chez les migrants." *Pathologie du migrant*, 34 (57) (December 1984).
- 19Legault-Faucher, M.
  - 1991a "La saga des nouveaux venus (première partie)," *Prévention au travail*, 4(3) (April 1991).
  - 1991b "La saga des nouveaux venus (deuxième partie)," *Prévention au travail*, 4(4) (May 1991).
  - 1993 "Les fantômes du travail atypique," *Prévention au travail*, 8(2) (March 1993).

- 20Hamm, D. & M. Segall. "Santé et sécurité au travail pour les immigrants." *Au Centre* (revue du centre canadien d'hygiène et de sécurité au travail), April 1992.
- 21Nash, M. "Language barriers and safety. Speaking in tongues," *Occupational Health and Safety Canada*, 6(5) September-October.
- 22Dembe, A.E. *Occupation and Disease: How social Factors Affect the Conception Work-Related Disorders*. Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1996.
- 23Lashuay, N. et al. "We spend Our Days Working in Pain: A Report on Workplace Injuries in the Garment Industry, Asian Immigrant Women Advocates." Quoted in *Working Immigrant Safety and Health*. 2002. Improving Health and Safety Conditions for California's Immigrant Workers, 2002.
- 24Villarejo, D., et al. *Suffering in Silence: A Report on the Health of California's Agricultural Workers*. Sacramento, CA: California Institute for Rural Studies.
- 25Texas Workers' Compensation Research Center. "Economic Outcomes of Injured Workers with Permanent Impairments," *The Research Review*, 3 (27) (1995): 1-4.
- 26Stunin, L. & L.I. Boden. "The Workers' Compensation System: Worker Friend or Foe?" *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, 45 (2004): 338-345.
- 27Imershein, A.W., A.S. Hill, & A.M. Reynolds. "The Workers' Compensation System as a Quality of Life Problem for Workers' Compensation Claimants." *Advances in Medical Sociology*, 5 (1994): 181-200.
- 28Thomason, T. "Correlates of Workers' Compensation Claims Adjustment," *Journal of Risk and Insurance* 6(1) (1994): 59-77.
- 29Sum, J. & L. Stock. Navigating the California Workers' Compensation System: *The Injured Worker's Experience; An Evaluation of Services to Inform and Assist Injured Workers in California*. Report prepared for the Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation by the Labour Occupational Health Program, University of California at Berkeley, 1996. [http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~lohp/Publications/Factsheets\\_And\\_More/navigate.html](http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~lohp/Publications/Factsheets_And_More/navigate.html)
- 30Wish, "California Working Immigrant Safety and Health," *Improving Health and Safety Conditions for California's Immigrant Workers*, 13 (2002).
- 31Dembe, A.E., J. Sum, K. Blaker, Stromberg, & I. Nemirovsky. *Workers' Compensation Medical Care in California: Quality of Care*. Commission on Health and Safety and Workers Compensation 4 (2003): 1-4. [www.chcf.org](http://www.chcf.org) ou [www.dir.ca.gov/chswc](http://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc)
- 32Idem., 31.
- 33Azaroff, L.S., C.L. Levenstein & D.H. Wegman. "Occupational Injury and Illness Surveillance : Conceptual Filters Explain Underreporting." *American Journal of Public Health*, 92(9) (2002): 1421-1429.
- 34Roberts, K. & W. Young. "Procedural Fairness, Return to Work, and the Decision to dispute Workers' Compensation." *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 10(3) (1997): 1993-212.
- 35Patry, L., S. Gravel, L. Boucheron M. Fournier, B. Vissandjée, M. Kane & J. Beauvais. *Accès à l'indemnisation des travailleurs immigrant(e)s victimes de lésions musculo-squelettiques d'origine professionnelle*. Rapport de recherche. Direction de la santé publique de Montréal, 2005.
- 36Pransky, Benjamin, Hill-Fotouchi, Himmelstein, Fletcher, Katz, Johnson. "Outcomes in Work-Related Upper Extremity and Low Back Injuries: Results of Retrospective Study," *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, 37 (2000): 400-409.
- 37Idem., 30.
- 38Idem., 30.
- 39Stunin, L. & L.I. Boden. "The Workers' Compensation System: Worker Friend or Foe?" *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, 45 (2004): 338-345.
- 40Idem., 27.
- 41Stunin, L. & L.I. Boden. "Family consequences of chronic back pain," *Social Science and Medicine*, 58 (2003): 1385-1393.
- 42Boden, L.I. & M. Galizzi. "Economic Consequences of Workplace Injuries and Illnesses: Lost Earnings and Benefit Adequacy," *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, 36 (1999): 487-503.
- 43Mustard, C. & C. Hertzman. "Relations Between Health Services Outcomes and Social and Economic Outcomes in Workplace Injury and Disease : Data Sources and Methods," *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, 40 (2001): 335-344.

## Notes

- i This indicates that there is no accusation of negligence or of responsibility towards one or other of the parties in the occurrence of the accident or illness. This limits any civil suit connected to the events surrounding the accident or appearance of symptoms of an illness, except in the case of intentional negligence. North American and European compensation systems, although all of the "no-fault" type, are distinguished one from another by type of compensation (income replacement or lump sum payment), by conditions of access to services for recovery (health care, rehabilitation), and by conditions of return to work. Access to compensation is closely linked to access to the health care system. Therefore, in countries where access to health care is free and universal, gaining access to compensation and to reimbursement for medical expenses due to a work injury does not carry the same advantages as in countries where only those with private insurance can receive care.
- ii There are two versions of this statement: that written by the worker, and that produced by the employer. Both appear on administrative forms of the Commission de santé et sécurité au travail (CSST) bearing the numbers 1039 (01-09) for workers and 1940 (98-11) for employers.
- iii There can be several levels of judicial decisions. The first level: the Commission de santé et de sécurité au travail (CSST); the second level: la Direction de la révision administrative (DRA); the third level: the Commission des lésions professionnelles (CLP); and the last level: the Cour supérieure du Québec.
- iv Date of recovery, or when no further improvement is possible.
- v Lightening of tasks, modification of job, finding a different, more appropriate job.

## Authors

Sylvie Gravel, an anthropologist by training, is a researcher at the DSP (Public Health Directorate) of Montreal. She has been conducting research on immigrant populations for the past fifteen years. She is affiliated with the Faculty of Continuing Education and the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine at the Université de Montréal. She is also a member of the research group Immigration et Métropoles.

Laurence Boucheron holds degrees in anthropology and community health. She works as a research assistant at the Public Health Directorate of Montreal, studying the difficulties experienced by immigrant populations.

Michel Fournier is a research assistant at the Public Health Directorate of Montreal. Trained in mathematics and techniques of measurement and evaluation, he is especially interested in research methods and in statistics. He also works as a consultant for various research groups.

Louis Patry is a specialist in occupational medicine. Public Health Directorate of Montreal, Assistant Professor, in physiology of work and ergonomics, in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics and Occupational Health, Faculty of Medicine, McGill University; member of the executive committee of the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH).

# LANGUAGES AND IMMIGRATION

## Raising Awareness of Language and Linguistic Diversity in Schools

### ABSTRACT

In a context of immigration and plurilingualism, language proficiency and the presence of an accent, like other visible markers of difference, can be used for social promotion, but can also give rise to discrimination based on negative representations of the languages and the speakers of those languages.

Like most major metropolises around the world that attract immigrants, Montréal and Vancouver enjoy a vast cultural and linguistic diversity, and there are many students of immigrant origin who are educated in a language other than their mother tongue(s). In 2002, for instance, 34.9% of students in Montréal schools had a first language other than English or French. In total, 189 different first languages were represented, out of the approximately 6,000 languages worldwide (Comité de gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal, 2003). According to the 2001 census, students learning English as a second language made up 53% of school populations in the greater Vancouver area, where many Aboriginal languages, such as Coast Salish, still exist (Shaw 2001).

In a context of immigration and plurilingualism, language proficiency and the presence of an accent, like other visible markers of difference, can be used for social promotion, but can also give rise to discrimination based on negative representations of the languages and the speakers of those languages. Calvet (2002) underscores the existence, in the context of globalization, of a sort of language market wherein languages may depreciate, be devalued or rise in value. According to Moore (1994), languages are substantially more than objective, socially neutral tools for transmitting sound; they are deeply connected to their users, specifically to the prestige that they afford and to the types of contacts that they may provide.

Encouraging and promoting an inclusive Canadian society, underscored by the 1969 *Official Languages Act* and the 1988 Multiculturalism Policy, involves implementing policies, programs and practices that foster intercultural understanding. More specifically, it requires assisting in the creation of positive relationships that value and recognize both cultural and linguistic diversity. In a recent policy paper, *Education in a Multilingual World* (2003), UNESCO states that it “supports language as an essential component of inter-cultural education in order to encourage understanding between different population groups and ensure respect for fundamental rights” (p. 30).

The Québec education department’s Policy Statement on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education (1998) highlights the significance of learning to live together in a francophone, democratic and pluralistic society. It also indicates that all staff must develop an attitude of openness to ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity, as well as skills to include pluralism in the education system. The policy’s sixth guideline suggests that Québec’s heritage and shared values, specifically openness to ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity, must be reflected in the curriculum and school life. Consequently, the creation of citizenship courses and the teaching of third languages in high school are being promoted.

The British Columbia Ministry of Education’s Language Education Policy encourages opportunities for all students to learn languages that are significant within their communities (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 3). Furthermore, the Ministry’s Diversity Framework Policy (2003) highlights the need to develop a curriculum based on social justice that rejects Eurocentrism and recognizes the experiences and contributions of various groups in society. The policy recommends that educational activities take into account the diversity of citizens, improve access to equality, foster civic responsibility and promote antiracism. The province’s professional body responsible for teacher certification requires teachers to be trained in multiculturalism, antiracism, the immigrant experience and the diversity of their students’ linguistic origins (British Columbia College of Teachers, 2002).

**FRANÇOISE ARMAND**  
Françoise Armand is a professor at the Université de Montréal and  
director of the Immigration and Metropolis Research Centre  
(Montréal, Metropolis Project).

**DIANE DAGENAIS**  
Diane Dagenais is a professor at Simon Fraser University and  
a researcher at the Centre for Research on Immigration and Integration  
in the Metropolis (Vancouver, Metropolis Project).

To our knowledge, neither intercultural education nor citizenship education in Montréal and Vancouver have addressed linguistic diversity. In Europe, such methods have been developed through the implementation of programs, including Language Awareness and *Éveil aux langues*.

### **Éveil aux langues**

The purpose of the Language Awareness approach, which appeared in Great Britain in the early 1980s and was developed by Hawkins (1987) and his team, was to foster the development of positive representations and attitudes toward openness to linguistic and cultural diversity, metalinguistic abilities to facilitate the transition from first to second languages, and language-related knowledge, including language status. In the 1990s, that approach was renamed *Éveil au langage*, then *Éveil aux langues*, and was subsequently adopted in Europe under the *Evlang* (Candelier, 2003) and *Eole* (Perregaux et al., 2003) programs. The main goal of these educational activities is to allow students to systematically explore linguistic diversity in order to prepare them to live in linguistically and culturally diverse societies.

### **Éveil aux langues basics**

This approach is based on trends in sociolinguistics, linguistics and ethnography in an effort to address the issue of constructing representations specific to language among students and teachers. The concept of representation has been a heuristic tool for studying children's interactions in situations of plurilingualism and of contact with a number of languages in the school setting. It has helped describe how students position themselves in relation to others in their speech and to identify their representations of languages, of speakers of those languages and of learning those languages (Moore 2001). It requires a close study of the stereotypical representations made in children's speech, as well as an examination of how language awareness activities may change those representations and enable students to become open to diversity and to adequately construct their identity.

Recent studies on the construction of that identity are based on a poststructural theory (Pavlenko, 2001), which stipulates that identity is dynamic and multiple and that learners use speech to establish their social position in the group (Dagenais 2003; Heller 2000; Norton 2000). These studies show how the learner's position in interactions either grants him or her access to or excludes him or her from social networks, depending on the positive or negative representations associated with the learner's identity. The connections between learning languages, linguistic diversity and constructing identities are addressed by the critical study of power relationships between individuals, as well as their representation of themselves and of others.

Research on implementing the *Éveil aux langues* approach strives to describe children's language practices, with a particular focus on representations of bilingualism and/or plurilingualism, language learning, plurilingual iden-

ties and relationships with various linguistic communities developed by students and teachers.

Research in psycholinguistics and cognitive psychology provides the theoretical basis for developing metalinguistic or reflection-based skills in relation to language. According to French researcher Gombert (1992), those metalinguistic skills encompass the subject's ability to consider different units of speech (phoneme, word, phrase, text) as items for analysis and as a reflection that he or she can control through intentional manipulation. Under *Éveil aux langues* programs, attentive listening of linguistic corpora in different languages, reflections on linguistic borrowings between languages and comparisons of types of negation in different languages all help develop such metalinguistic skills. In addition to simply acquiring language-related knowledge, the learner becomes an observer of the mechanics of language and of languages themselves, and, to borrow an expression from Brédart and Rondal (1982), he or she becomes a "linguiste en herbe" [budding linguist]. Many studies have shown that these metalinguistic skills, specifically phonology and syntax, are linked to successful reading and

writing in both the first and second languages and are, therefore, determining factors in educational and professional success (Armand, 2000; Chiappe and Siegel, 1999; Gombert, 1992; Lefrançois and Armand, 2003).

### **Results of implementing language awareness programs in Europe**

European research shows that language awareness fosters positive representations of linguistic diversity and long-term development of metalinguistic skills for teachers and students – especially for the weaker members of the school population – specifically in the areas of memorization and auditory discrimination in unfamiliar languages (Candelier, 2003; Sabatier, 2002).

### **The ELODiL project in Canada**

Based on European research, Armand and Dagenais (2003–2004, study supported by the Metropolis Project and by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) / multiculturalism project)<sup>1</sup> conducted their first comparative study, which led them to adapt these teaching approaches to the Canadian education system and to implement ELODiL [language awareness and openness to linguistic diversity]. A number of autonomous or computer-based (multimedia) activity modules were developed or adapted from the *Evlang* or *Eole* programs for use in grade five and six classrooms. They were then posted on a Web site ([www.elodil.com](http://www.elodil.com)) in order to make the project available to more teachers. The activities were tested in various classrooms in Montréal and Vancouver during the 2003–2004 school year. The basic purpose of that initial study was to determine whether elementary school students develop critical knowledge of linguistic diversity by participating in language awareness activities. That effort is continuing under a new research project subsidized by the SSHRC

The main goal of these educational activities is to allow students to systematically explore linguistic diversity in order to prepare them to live in linguistically and culturally diverse societies.

**Instructions: Try to write “Il ne fait pas froid” in Inuktitut, first in printing and then using the original writing system.**

<b>French</b> Il y a du soleil	<b>Inuktitut</b> Siqinnituq 	<b>French</b> Il n’y a pas de soleil	<b>Inuktitut</b> Siqinningittuq 
<b>French</b> Il fait froid	<b>Inuktitut</b> Qiunnatuq 	<b>French</b> Il ne fait pas froid	<b>Inuktitut</b> (see Web site for correct answer)

(2005–2008; Dagenais, Armand, Lamarre, Moore and Sabatier) and is being developed for preschool students as well (2005–2007, Armand, de Koninck and Kanouté, Montréal Immigration and Metropolis Research Centre).

#### Examples of language awareness activities

In the first activity of the *Bonjour* module, students watch a video in which children say “hello” in 17 different languages. They have to try to identify the language of each of those “hellos” and the country or countries in which that language is spoken. Concepts such as official language and national language are addressed and discussed. The activity’s preparatory phase provides an opportunity to gain a awareness of linguistic diversity worldwide. A number of key figures are mentioned, such as the number of languages spoken in the world, on the Island of Montréal, in Vancouver and in the student’s school. Students may continue their learning on their own through a multimedia activity that uses the same principle but goes into considerably more depth concerning the number of languages and countries.

In one of the activities in the *La fleur des langues* [the language flower] tool, students are introduced to concepts such as mother tongue, second language and foreign language. They study a video montage in which two children tell their linguistic life stories (What languages do they speak? With whom? What is or are their mother tongue(s), second language(s), etc.?). The students then tell their own linguistic life stories using the terms “monolingual,” “bilingual” and “plurilingual.” Afterwards, they illustrate their stories on flower petals and the individual petals are assembled to form the class’s language flower.

In two activities of the *La pluie et le beau temps* [rain or shine] module, students use dialogues recorded in four languages to identify the negation markers and the differences in the formation of that negation in French, Malagasy, Haitian Creole and Spanish (activity A, adapted from *Evlang*, Réunion team, 2002). They then use analysis of those corpora or other corpora to form a negative sentence, such as the Inuktitut sentence below (activity B).

#### Preliminary results of the first test study of ELODiL activities in Montréal and Vancouver

The activities were implemented in 2003–2004 in grade five and six classes in Montréal, an immersion class in Vancouver, and two regular and two newcomer classes (French classes for new immigrants) in a pluriethnic Montréal school. Qualitative data were collected in the form of notes taken on-site, audio and video recordings of classroom interactions and interviews with students.

Preliminary analysis of those data has led to a few observations: students critically discuss the different values given to languages and to their speakers in society; children of diverse linguistic origins are repositioned (and reposition themselves) as language experts in classroom interactions; in group activities, students pool their linguistic knowledge (French, English and heritage languages) to make sense of unknown languages and to build a representation of that language together; children interpret language diversity in relation to their linguistic landscape and their contact with different linguistic groups; and participation in such activities will likely encourage the development of reflective skills in the area of languages.

#### Conclusion

Language awareness programs fall under intercultural and citizenship education practices by fostering the development of civic skills (Lamarre, 2002). Preparing tomorrow’s citizens to take their place in democratic society requires analytical skills and an understanding of current social realities surrounding the issue of languages and of the effect of representations on languages and their speakers. A twinning strategy between language awareness and critical education (Fairclough, 1992) could raise awareness among future citizens of the inequality of languages and speakers of those languages, change their linguistic representations and define the conditions for advancement, in a migrating and plurilingual world, toward equality between men and women in the area of languages and communication.

## Bibliography

- Armand, F. "Le rôle des capacités métalinguistiques et de la compétence langagière orale dans l'apprentissage de la lecture en français langue première et seconde." *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 56(3) (2000): 471–497.
- Bredart, S., and J.-A. Rondal. *L'analyse du langage chez l'enfant : les activités métalinguistiques*. Brussels: Mardaga. Paris: Plon, 1982.
- British Columbia College of Teachers. *Policies of the British Columbia College of Teachers*. Vancouver, 2002.
- British Columbia Ministry of Education. *Diversity Framework Policy*, www.bced.gov.bc.ca/diversity, 2003.
- British Columbia Ministry of Education. *Language Education Policy*. Victoria, 1996.
- Calvet, L.J. *Le marché aux langues : les effets linguistiques de la mondialisation*. Paris: Plon, 2002.
- Candelier, M., ed. *L'Éveil aux langues à l'école primaire – Evlang. Bilan d'une innovation européenne*. Brussels: De Boeck, 2003.
- Chiappe, P. and L.S. Siegel. "Phonological awareness and reading acquisition in English and Punjabi-speaking Canadian children." *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 91 (1999): 20–28.
- Comité de gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal. *Portrait socioculturel des élèves inscrits dans les écoles publiques de l'île de Montréal*. Québec: Bibliothèque nationale du Québec, 2003.
- Dagenais, D. "Accessing imagined communities through multilingualism and immersion education." *Language, Identity and Education*, 2(4) (2003): 269–283.
- Fairclough, N. *Critical Language Awareness*. New York, NY: Longman, 1992.
- Gombert, J.-E. "Activité de lecture et activités associées." In M. Fayol, J.-E. Gombert, P. Lecocq, L. Sprenger-Charolles and D. Zagar, eds. *Psychologie cognitive de la lecture* (pp. 107–140). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992.
- Hawkins, E. *Awareness of Language. An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Heller, M. "Bilingualism and identity in the post-modern world." *Estudios de sociolingüística*, 1(2) (2000): 9–24.
- Lamarre, P. "Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism: An approach from the Canadian perspective." *Kolor: Journal on Moving Communities*, 1(1) (2002): 33–45.
- Lefrançois, P. and F. Armand. "The role of phonological and syntactic awareness in second-language reading: The Case of Spanish-speaking learners of French." *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 16 (2003): 219–246.
- Ministère de l'Éducation and Ministère des Relations avec les Citoyens et de l'Immigration. *A School for the Future. Policy Statement on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education*. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 1998.
- Moore, D. "L'école et les représentations du bilinguisme et l'apprentissage des langues chez les enfants." In C. Allemann-Ghionda, dir. *Multiculture et éducation en Europe*. Berlin, New York: Peter Lang, 1994.
- Moore, D., ed. *Les représentations des langues et de leur apprentissage : Références, modèles, données et méthodes*. Essays. Paris: Didier, 2001.
- Norton, B. *Identity and Language Learning: Gender, Ethnicity and Social Change*. Harlow, UK: Longman, 2000.
- Pavlenko, A. "Access to linguistic resources: Key variable in second language learning." *Estudios de Sociolingüística*, 1(2) (2000): 85–105.
- Perregaux, C., C. De Goumoëns, D. Jeannot, and J.-F. de Pietro, eds. *Education et Ouverture aux langues à l'école*. Neuchâtel: CIP, 2003.
- Sabatier, C. *Éveil aux langues à l'école primaire – Evlang. Bilan et perspectives. Communication*. Colloque des 100 ans de l'Association des professeurs de langues vivantes. Grenoble, September 2002.
- Shaw, P. "Language, identity, language and the land." *BC Studies: The British Columbia Quarterly*, 131 (2001): 39–55.
- UNESCO. *Education in a Multilingual World*. UNESCO position paper. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2003.

## Note

1 We thank the Montréal school assistance program (promising project, 2003) and the Québec department of education, cultural community services directorate (innovative project, 2004), for their support. We also thank the students who made a skilful and dynamic contribution to the project: Erica Maraillet in Montréal, Noëlle Mathis and Nathalie Walsh in Vancouver.



# INTEGRATING NEWCOMERS INTO THE CANADIAN LABOUR MARKET

## ABSTRACT

As the Canadian population is aging, immigration is perceived as an increasingly important component of Canada's strategy to build a durable, internationally recognized economy. Although immigrants arriving in Canada today have never been as educated, they nonetheless experience difficulty with the process and outcomes of integration in the workplace, resulting in an underutilization of skills and experience. In the present document, we describe the education and skills of new immigrants in Canada. We also examine some of the challenges and obstacles to integration in the workplace, and underline examples of measures that governments, employers, unions and immigrant servicing organizations need to face in order to facilitate integration in the workforce.

Immigration is taking on an increasingly important role as a source of labour and skills in the Canadian job market. Canada's growing reliance on immigration as a source of labour and skills is happening at a time when our "near-retirement" population is growing rapidly, with the stage set for a large and potentially rapid exit of retiring workers; when the demand for skills is likely to increase as businesses compete in the knowledge economy;<sup>1</sup> and when 90% of business and labour leaders describe the shortage of skilled workers as either a moderate or serious problem facing the Canadian economy and labour market.<sup>2</sup>

To be sure, there are many actions on many fronts that are required to successfully meet the current and future skill requirements of Canada's economy and labour market. Educational institutions continue to supply large numbers of creative and skilled workers, and workplaces have a role in the on-going learning and skills development of all employees. Immigration nevertheless has an important role, as it has throughout Canada's history, in helping to meet the nation's labour force requirements.

The good news is that highly educated and highly skilled immigrants are coming to Canada, and can make an important contribution to a skilled workforce. The not so good news is that many immigrants are experiencing difficulties with both the processes and outcomes of labour market integration, resulting in an underutilization of skills and experience. In this paper, we describe the education and skills characteristics of newcomers to Canada, examine some of the barriers and challenges to labour market integration, and highlight examples of the ways in which governments, employers, labour, and immigrant servicing organizations are facilitating labour market integration.

## Immigration as a Source of Skills

Immigrants enter Canada through one of three basic categories. Of the 701,000 immigrants to Canada in the three years ending in 2003, more than one-half (59%) entered through the *economic class*. This class includes skilled workers (and their dependents) who are selected on the basis of the knowledge, skills and experience deemed necessary and appropriate for Canada's labour market. It also includes investors, entrepreneurs and self-employed immigrants. About 201,000 immigrants (29% of total) came to Canada to join close family members. Refugees made up about 11% of immigrants coming to Canada between 2001 and 2003.

The mix of education levels among new immigrants in part reflects the selection process and basic goals of Canada's immigration system. To qualify as a skilled worker, for example, principal applicants must have a minimum of one year of full-time work experience in a managerial, professional, technical or other skilled occupation as outlined by Canada's National Occupational Classification system. In addition, skilled worker applicants are evaluated by a point system which takes into consideration level of education, official language proficiency, amount of work experience; age, whether the applicant has arranged employment, and adaptability, which includes such things as spouse's level of education.

Given these requirements, it is not surprising that 90% of applicants under the skilled worker immigration stream have post-secondary educational credentials (Table 1). This is more than twice

### CLARENCE LOCHHEAD

Clarence Lochhead is a principal researcher at the Canadian Labour and Business Centre, a centre for dialogue and discussion between workers' unions and employers. The Centre's mandate is to institute best practices both for employers and for workers' unions in Canada and to offer general advice on the labour market and on such questions as skills and learning.

### PATRICK MACKENZIE

Patrick Mackenzie is a Principal Researcher, Special Initiatives and Outreach Division, Integration Branch, Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Prior to this, he worked for Heritage Canada and for Indian and Northern Affairs.

**Table 1****Percent with Post-secondary Education, by Immigration Stream, Application Status and Gender\***

Immigration Stream	Status and Gender	% with Post-secondary Education
SW (Skilled Worker)	Male Applicants	94
SW	Female Applicants	90
SW	Female Dependents	68
BUS (Business Class)	Male Applicants	62
BUS	Female Applicants	62
SW	Male Dependents	54
FAM (Family Class)	Female Applicants	44
Canadian-born Males		43
Canadian-born Females		43
FAM	Male Applicants	41
BUS	Female Dependents	34
RFG (Refugee)	Male Applicants	33
RFG	Female Applicants	29
RFG	Female Dependents	19
FAM	Male Dependents	18
FAM	Female Dependents	18
BUS	Male Dependents	17
RFG	Male Dependents	13

\* Table based on immigrant landings in 2000, 2001 and 2002.  
Source: Citizenship and Immigration, Facts and Figures 2002.  
Data for Canadian born men and women from 2001 Census.

the proportion observed among Canadian-born men and women. Even the so-called “dependents” of skilled workers possess levels of educational attainment above the average for Canadian-born men and women. Analysis of Census data shows that recent immigrants (arriving in Canada in the last ten years) with post-secondary education are more likely than the Canadian-born population to have majored in the physical sciences, engineering and trades (43% compared to 33% ).

In addition to the skills and knowledge gained through education, many immigrants have practical work experience. Sixty percent of immigrants intending to work upon arrival in Canada have previous work experience. Applying the standards of Canada’s National Occupational Classification System, 84% of newcomers with employment experience had occupations that usually require a university degree, college education or apprenticeship training. Very few immigrants with work experience – just 2% – were in occupations requiring no formal education.

### Newcomers in the Workforce

During the 1990s, Canada’s total labour force increased by 1.4 million, with 70% of this increase attributable to the 978,000 immigrants who arrived in Canada during the decade and joined the country’s workforce.<sup>3</sup> Canada’s reliance on immigration for labour force growth is up sharply from the 1980s, and in the coming decade is expected to account for all of the country’s net labour force growth.

All industry sectors rely on immigration as a source of labour, but the degree of this reliance varies considerably. At the top of the list is the manufacturing sector. Out of 19 major industrial groupings, manufacturing is most likely to employ immigrant labour. In that sector, 27.4% of the employed workforce is foreign-born, while nearly one out of ten (9.4% ) is a recent immigrant (last 10 years). Among more narrowly defined industry sectors such as clothing manufacturing, or computer and electronic products manufacturing, immigrants make up an even greater share of total employment (57% and 39% respectively).

Canada’s reliance on immigration for labour force growth is also notable across industry sectors. In manufacturing for example, newcomers accounted for all of that sector’s net labour force growth between 1991 and 2001. Other sectors such as health and social services, where 75,000 recent immigrants accounted for 24% of that sector’s net labour force growth, the reliance on immigration is lower, but still appreciable. In yet other sectors such as construction, the total labour force actually declined by about 13,000 or 1.4% even though nearly 33,000 recent immigrants joined that sector’s labour force.

Given the growing role of immigration as a source of labour and skills, it is important that newcomers to Canada be able to use their skills and experience to their full capacity in the Canadian labour market. Currently however, newcomers often face barriers which prevent this from happening.

### Barriers to Full Participation

Time and again, in discussions with immigrants, employers, labour, governments and non-governmental partners, three main barriers to labour market integration are identified: assessment and recognition of foreign credentials and experience; the need for higher levels of occupation-specific language skills; and, a lack of complete, coherent and authoritative information on Canada and its labour market.

While Canada’s immigrants are more highly educated than ever, research shows they are also finding it harder than ever to enter into the labour market and those who do are not using the skills and education they acquired abroad to its full capacity. This leaves many newcomers to Canada unable to find themselves a fulfilling place in the economy and the broader Canadian society.

### Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Credentials

Assessing and recognizing the credentials of internationally trained and educated professionals is the process of comparing the education and job experience obtained abroad to the standards established for Canadian professionals. It is a complex task that requires cooperation from federal, provincial and municipal governments, regulatory bodies, post-secondary institutions and employers. Multiply these variables by the sheer volume of degree, diploma and credential granting institutions worldwide that would need to be assessed and the undertaking becomes almost immeasurable. Typically, for regulated professions, this responsibility has been delegated by provincial or territorial legislation to regulatory bodies. This can exacerbate the frustration of immigrants who may be unfamiliar with the governmental

and regulatory workings of Canada and find themselves unable to navigate a perceived jurisdictional quagmire.

### Communications Abilities in Either Official Language

While most newcomers to Canada arrive with some proficiency in at least one of Canada's official languages, 66% of employers<sup>4</sup> cite a lack of occupation-specific language proficiency as an obstacle to hiring immigrants. This can leave immigrants able to communicate in social contexts, but unable to fully exploit the skills they possess in the workforce. It also leaves employers at a disadvantage when trying to acquire the skills and competencies needed for their businesses. Some large enterprises have the capacity to offer enhanced language training to immigrants who already possess the technical skills they need, however, most do not. Many employers recognize that employing immigrants can be advantageous to a workplace – the ability to serve immigrant clients in their native tongue, navigating new export markets, bringing new and diverse perspectives to the workplace are but a few of the advantages employers have identified – but insufficient technical communication skills make integrating them into the workforce a difficult task.

### Need for Accurate, Authoritative Information on Canadian Society and Labour Market

Long before a potential immigrant sets foot on Canadian soil, an accurate picture of what awaits them upon arrival is needed. Many expect that because they were selected based upon the skills they possess, that the labour market will be ready and waiting for them. Unfortunately, all too often this is not the case. The reality of a labour market that may be unable to recognize their credentials, or perhaps no longer need their expertise, can leave newcomers feeling marginalized and impede their integration into the broader Canadian society. Giving prospective immigrants an accurate and authoritative picture of immigration entry requirements, information on where jobs exist, and specific regulated occupational requirements will assist immigrants with their transition to Canada. After the long and difficult process of relocating to Canada, some immigrants find themselves unable to fully participate in the society they have worked so very hard to join.

### Work in Progress

While the Government of Canada has an important role to play in helping immigrants overcome the barriers to entry in the labour market facing immigrants, it cannot do it alone. During a series of consultations organized by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the Canadian Labour and Business Centre (CLBC), it was made very clear that the employers, unions, provinces, territories, regulatory bodies, post-secondary institutions and immi-

grant serving organizations are making progress to overcome the challenges.

The Ontario Division of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exports (CME) released *Take a Look at What's Working*<sup>5</sup> in an effort to help its members share their experiences of hiring and integrating foreign-trained personnel. Companies like 3M Canada have established processes to assess prospective employees. Their comprehensive testing, interviewing and role-playing help to evaluate a candidates' levels of literacy, numeracy and other relevant skills. In addition, they offer support for individuals seeking to upgrade their language skills and education through tuition reimbursement.

While the ultimate responsibility for assessment and recognition of foreign credentials lies elsewhere, the Government of Canada is playing a facilitative role with

Of the 701,000 immigrants to Canada in the three years ending in 2003, more than one-half (59%) entered through the *economic class*. This class includes skilled workers (and their dependents) who are selected on the basis of the knowledge, skills and experience deemed necessary and appropriate for Canada's labour market.

provinces and territories and providing strategic leadership to foster the development of consistent, national approaches to this important issue. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) is the federal department responsible for the Government of Canada's Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) program. The program will work with all stakeholders to enable internationally educated workers to fully use the skills they possess as they contribute to Canada's economic and social development. Improving the processes for recognizing foreign credentials will help immigrants integrate more rapidly into the Canadian labour market and get the Canadian work experience they need to succeed in Canada. At the same time, Canadian employers will gain access to a broader pool of talented workers. The government is providing \$68 million over six years to implement the FCR program and to fund organizations that are aimed at improving FCR processes in Canada. Ultimately, this investment will ensure that FCR processes across the country are equitable, accessible, nationally recognized, transparent and uphold the high standards Canadians expect from their workforce.

Early progress is being made in regulated occupations. Federal and provincial governments are working with key medical community stakeholders to improve procedures for licensing internationally educated doctors so that we can strengthen the health-care system and increase the supply of doctors. And similar work is underway to speed the recognition process for internationally educated nurses and other health-care professionals, including pharmacists, medical laboratory technologists, medical radiation technologists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists. On the engineering front, the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers is developing tools to more quickly and efficiently integrate international engineering graduates into the Canadian labour market. HRSDC is also playing a leading role in facilitating FCR in non-regulated occupations in sectors such as aviation maintenance and tourism.

In 2003-2004, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) launched the Enhanced Language Training (ELT) initiative. The 2003 budget allocated \$5 million per year for this initiative and an additional \$15 million per year was allocated in the 2004 budget for a total of \$20 million per year over five years to help it expand to reach approximately 20,000 immigrants annually through partnerships with provinces, territories, employers, and non-governmental organizations. Permanent residents, accepted refugees and individuals granted temporary resident permits to facilitate their early admission to Canada are eligible for training under this initiative.

ELT funding will help our partners develop and deliver labour market language training, including profession-specific language training. The initiative will provide higher levels of language training to help meet the needs of immigrants who enter the country with basic or intermediate English or French skills but need higher levels of language ability that will enable immigrants to find and retain jobs commensurate with their qualifications and skills. In addition to this, lower and intermediate levels of language training will be developed and delivered in smaller centres that may not otherwise have the capacity to support those services.

The Government of Canada has also committed to working in collaboration with provinces and territories to expand the existing Going to Canada Web. The Going to Canada-Immigration Portal (GTC-IP) will provide seamless on-line information and services from a variety of government and non-government sources to help immigrants make informed decisions about coming to Canada and better prepare them, before they arrive, for integration into the Canadian labour market and society. It will also continue to facilitate their integration after they arrive in Canada.

Citizenship and Immigration, Health, Human Resources and Skills Development, International Trade, Industry and Foreign Affairs Canada are partnering with the provinces and territories to coordinate information and services from national, provincial, territorial and municipal governments, communities, settlement service organizations, learning and educational associations, the employer community, occupational associations, and organizations that assess foreign credentials. The GTC-IP will provide targeted information, services and tools on Canada's labour market; educational system; culture; regions and communities; learning opportunities to meet gaps in qualifications; international credential assessment and recognition; job search and job search training; language assessment and training; Canadian orientation; and immigrant and employer stories. Provinces and territories have already helped develop a plan for the content and structure of the portal. This will allow for a coordinated approach to delivery that will provide a truly global picture of the Canadian labour market landscape.

Labour market integration is a complex issue that requires a coordinated approach from governments, employers, unions, regulatory bodies, post-secondary institutions and immigrants themselves. While there have been successes to date, much work remains to be done. By investing in solutions to the challenges or foreign credential

assessment and recognition, enhanced language needs and a lack of availability of comprehensive information about its labour market Canada will be better poised to compete in the global marketplace. Immigration is a key part of Canada's strategy to build a sustainable, world-class economy by investing in people; policies and programs that help newcomers fully contribute to the labour force benefits immigrants and all Canadians.

#### Notes

---

- 1 Managerial and professional occupations requiring university, college or apprenticeship training account for 74% of new employment over the past decade.
- 2 CLBC Viewpoints Survey: *Skills and Skill Shortages*.
- 3 Canada's reliance on immigration for labour force growth is greater than – but not dissimilar to – that of the United States. Between 1990 and 2000, 50% of U.S. labour force growth was due to immigration. See *Immigrant Workers and the Great American Job Machine: The Contributions of New Foreign Immigration to National and Regional Labour Force Growth in the 1990s*. Andrew Sum, Neeta Fogg, Paul Harrington. Northeastern University, Center for Labor Market Studies.
- 4 From the CLBC Handbook on Immigration and Skills Shortages (p.17).
- 5 [http://www.cmc-mec.ca/shared/upload/on/reference\\_piece.pdf](http://www.cmc-mec.ca/shared/upload/on/reference_piece.pdf)

# INTERSECTIONS OF DUALITY

## The Relationship Between Ethnocultural Identity and Minority Language

### ABSTRACT

What is the importance of minority language in Canada? What measures contribute to its upkeep? The author explores the intersection of linguistic and ethnic identification, as well as the political questions that are affected by it. Data extracted from the 2001 Census (Statistics Canada) as well as from an Environics study are presented throughout the text.

Language is an important vehicle for the transmission of culture and a necessary means for communication to permit state and society to conduct its ongoing business. In 1969, Canada enacted a legislation recognizing English and French as the country's official languages. In so doing, its main intention was to favour greater equality between its two principal language communities by widening the opportunity to offer services in the French language. Establishing official languages did not imply the creation of official cultures; hence in 1971 the federal government introduced a policy of official multiculturalism aimed at widening opportunity for cultural expression and identification. Many Francophones contended that multicultural policy risked putting various minority ethnic cultures on the same footing as French culture and thus substantively and symbolically diminishing the latter. This view was enhanced by the idea that since English was dominant outside of Québec, the minority ethnic cultures would be expressed in that language. Paradoxically, spokespersons for some of the minority ethnic groups insisted that opportunities to preserve their heritage were undercut both substantively and symbolically by the adoption of official languages, thereby assuming other cultures could flourish without support for the corresponding language. Reitz (1974) has observed that: "ethnic language retention is a cornerstone of the ethnic communities themselves. Failure to learn the ethnic language leads to failure to participate in the ethnic community and this to a large extent explains reduced participation in the second and third generations." But ethnic identification can persist without knowledge of the corresponding heritage language (though it might be argued that such ethnic expression is a diluted and/or highly symbolic manifestation of identity).

As a marker of identity there are both vertical and horizontal dimensions to language knowledge and use. Fishman regards language as "a reference for loyalties and animosities, an indicator of social status and personal relationship, a marker of situations and topics as well as the societal goals and the larger-scale value-laden arenas of interaction that typify every speech community." While non-official languages are very often an important part of ethnocultural identity, official language knowledge is deemed critical to citizen engagement in Canada. In effect, knowledge of an official language is increasingly considered essential to successful economic and social integration. Furthermore, knowledge of both English and French-official bilingualism are highly valued by the federal state and its enhancement is viewed as a national priority. While not discouraged, other forms of bilingualism are not attributed the value of official bilingualism. The relationship between ethnocultural identity and minority language status is complex. For the most part it has been held that the adoption of the English language by the vast majority of immigrants outside and an important number within that province has diminished non-official languages and thus reduced ethnic salience amongst longer established groups. Immigrants have provided a significant demographic stimulus to majority language communities as well as the minority language group within Québec. As English is the dominant language of most health and educational institutions outside of Québec (with the exception of organizations for official language minorities), ethnocultural identities are more likely to be given expression in civil society and in the arts and culture domain.

An Association for Canadian Studies-Environics survey asked 2000 Canadians about the most important part of their identity and culture. As observed in the table below, one-third of respondents gave language as their reply, with one-quarter of Canadians giving ancestry and ethnic origin.

**Which is the most important part of your identity and culture?  
Canada and English Language and French Language spoken at home (First Mention)**

	All	English Spoken at Home	French Spoken at Home
Language	33	24	61
Ancestry and ethnic origin	25	29	14
Religion	11	12	8
Political ideology/ orientation	11	12	7
Gender	9	11	4
Social class	7	7	5

Source: Environics Research Group for the Association for Canadian Studies, Survey on Markers of Identity, March 2003

As to immigrants that are neither of British nor French descent, the largest plurality of respondents gave ancestry and ethnic identification as their marker while non-European immigrants were more likely to cite language as their principal marker of identity. Still, this date leaves unanswered the issue of the respective degree of importance attributed to ethnic and linguistic identification.

Comprehending the notion of language adaptation is enhanced by the availability and use of data on ethnic origins. In the table below one observes a close relationship in 2001 between single ethnic origin, the language first learned (mother tongue), the ability to speak the corresponding non-official language and the language most often spoken at home. This is particularly applicable for persons of the Chinese, Greek, Portuguese and Polish origins whereas this is less the case for those of German, Ukrainian, Dutch and to a lesser degree of Italian descent, all of which have been longer established in Canada. In the case of Russian and Arabic, those persons that include identification of ethnic background to those groups within multiple

origins are more likely to have retained the corresponding language than is the case for the more established groups.

**Language Transfers**

The retention of heritage languages is a result of the combination of time of establishment, age and ethnic mixing and the critical mass of the community notably with respect to institutional depth and opportunities to acquire and/or employ the heritage language. But other factors play a role as well, such as the pull or influence of dominant languages on persons whose mother tongue is neither English nor French.

The difference between the number of persons whose mother tongue is French and those who speak the language at home are generally referred to as language transfers. Language transfers vary across the groups, in part arising from when they arrived here, and thereafter, their ability and opportunity to operate in their language of origin (and the ability to operate in the English language in the case of first and second language French-speakers).

The table below focuses on the experience of certain long-established groups (Italian and Greek) and whose members, for the most part, have arrived more recently (Arab and Spanish) in looking at the percentage that no longer use the heritage language most often in their homes. It is persons of Italian mother tongue that are most likely to have shifted to use of an official language in their home followed by the Japanese and Greek mother tongue. Across the age spectrum however the patterns differ somewhat with older Greek speakers, these speakers being more likely to have switched to official language use in the home than Italians. The transmission to the younger cohort remain stronger amongst the Greek group. In the case of mother tongue Japanese it is the older group that is more likely to have shifted than the younger, perhaps due to more recent influx of Japanese immigration offsetting the transfers from the very rooted segment of the group. The importance of transmission on the basis of the respective strength of ethnic attachments may play a role in this regard. In the case of

**Ethnic Origins (Total and Single), Mother Tongue and Ability to Speak the Corresponding Non-Official Language for selected groups in Canada, 2001**

Canada	Total Ethnic Origins	Single Ethnic Origin	Ability to Speak	Mother Tongue	Language Spoken Most Often at Home
German	2 704 760	705 600	494 325	455 540	118 100
Dutch (Netherlands)	923 315	316 220	128 835	133 040	14 345
Polish	817 105	260 415	230 905	215 010	118 340
Russian	336 920	70 895	144 930	96 910	65 050
Ukrainian	1 071 075	326 195	163 260	157 585	31 540
Greek	215 105	143 785	135 310	126 370	71 165
Italian	1 270 370	726 275	523 270	493 990	206 415
Portuguese	357 690	252 835	227 570	222 855	120 650
Chinese Languages	1 094 700	936 210	1 025 540	872 405	721 885
Japanese	85 230	53 175	65 030	36 175	18 900
Spanish (1)	447 825	213 475	610 575	260 785	177 455
Arabic	347 955	238 600	290 280	220 535	147 980

1. Spanish corresponds to the ethnic origins of both Latin Americans and Spanish.

**Percentage that have shifted from the language first learned and still understood to speaking an official language most often at home in Canada for selected groups by age cohort, 2001**

	Italian	Greek	Spanish	Arabic	Japanese
Total	58.2	43.6	36.9	37.8	51.7
0-24	74.7	51.5	36.4	36.7	42.9
25-54	52.0	55.3	38.6	39.3	51.2
55 and over	30.4	22.6	31.3	35.7	59.3

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001

the Spanish and Arab groups lower levels of language shift tend not to be influenced by age in the same way as the European groups.

Where measured on the provincial level, the groups in Québec tend to have the lowest rates of language shift amongst persons of Italian, Greek and Spanish mother tongue with the highest such transfers occurring in British Columbia. This tends to be explained by the mix of French and English not creating as strong a pull to the official language. Yet it fails to explain the discrepancy between

**Percentage that have shifted from the language first learned and still understood to speaking an official language most often at home for selected groups in Québec, Ontario and British Columbia, 2001**

	Italian	Greek	Spanish	Arabic	Japanese
Québec	53.6	32.4	27.2	39.1	45.3
Ontario	58.6	48.4	38.9	33.2	37.0
British Columbia	69.5	55.2	42.0	47.2	42.6

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001

Ontario and British Columbia on the one hand and why amongst Arabic and Japanese groups it is in Ontario where the home use of the corresponding language is the highest.

It is also the case amongst Québec's younger population where the rate of transfer from a language other than English or French as the language first learned in the home to the use of an official language is less likely than it is in either Ontario

**Percentage that have shifted from the language first learned and still understood to speaking an official language most often at home for selected groups in Québec, Ontario and British Columbia, age 0-24, 2001**

	Italian	Greek	Spanish	Arabic	Japanese
Québec	70.9	43.0	27.2	35.6	45.2
Ontario	78.0	59.4	38.9	35.6	36.8
British Columbia	77.9	62.7	42.0	38.7	42.6

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001

or British Columbia though in the case of Arabic the three languages are near equal in the degree to which they are preserved in their homes.

Recent data from the 2002 ethnic diversity survey of Statistics Canada confirms that ethnic identification is valued by most groups with the exception of the most-long standing in the country (i.e. Ukrainian, German and Dutch). Ethnic mixing or intermarriage results in considerable erosion of non-official language knowledge, though in the case of persons with multiple declarations of Greek and Italian descent, the language losses are not quite as steep in Québec and Ontario (Jedwab, 2000). It would be useful to understand in exogenous situations why some choose to preserve the heritage language.

**Immigrant and ethnocultural groups and official language minorities**

Over the course of its history, migration has shaped and reshaped the English-speaking community of Québec over much of its existence and has played a fundamental role in identity formation. As such the Anglophone population is characterized by a significant degree of ethnocultural and ethnoracial diversity. Still there is some debate around whether all such individuals can be considered anglophones. In part this has to do with the different criteria employed by federal and Québec authorities relative to the broader question of who is a Québec anglophone. The federal Treasury Board has tended to use the first official language category in order to estimate the requirements of English-speaking institutions vis-à-vis their constituency. This inclusive definition results in federal authorities crediting Québec's Anglophone population with 300 000 more individuals than do provincial authorities who by employ mother tongue. In the case of the Québec government in the year 2001, the Québec Anglophone population constituted some 600 000 persons whereas by virtue of the provincial definition, there were more than 900 000. Much of the difference is a function of those persons for whom English is their principal official language but not the language they first learned and still understood in other words their mother tongue. Québec authorities are more inclined to consider many of these immigrants and their descendants as allophones and thus ineligible for provincial designation as anglophones.

On the basis of single declarations of ethnic origin, some 37% of persons whose first official language spoken is English are of Canadian, British, French and Aboriginal descent. Another 37% report European backgrounds other than Canadian, British and French and about one quarter report non-European origins. The ethnic composition of the anglophone population differs when contrasting the Montréal region with the rest of Québec. As observed below on the basis of single declarations in Montréal those declaring Canadian British, French and Aboriginal origins represent just over one quarter of the population. Outside the Montréal region 84% of the anglophone population is of Canadian, British, French and Aboriginal descent.

While emotional debate over language issues tends to draw reaction beyond those identifying with English as their mother tongue, clearly the English language does not reinforce minority ethnic cultures (British origin has been

declining in Québec). By no means is identification with the English language unimportant and indeed it is the defining element of the diverse Anglophone group. Rather it is essential to the promotion of non-British expressions of ethnicity. The situation contrasts with that of francophones outside of Québec where with a relatively low share of persons with non Canadian French background the link between language and ethnicity is considerably stronger.

Ethnocultural diversity has become an object of heightened attention in the Francophone communities outside Québec. The vast majority of immigrants that settle outside of Québec adopt English as their principal language. Until very recently the attraction of immigrants from French-speaking parts of the country outside Québec has not been a priority. In the year 2000 some 4.6% of all immigrants settling outside of Québec knew French only upon arrival with another 4.3% declaring knowledge of both English and French. In 2004 the respective shares were 4.5% for French only (1 359 persons) and 7.3% for English and French (5 762 individuals). There was a concern that even if such immigrants settled in the rest of Canada that too would make English their principal language. Still, in light of the demographic vulnerability of French language communities outside Québec, interest has grown in increasing the numbers of French-speaking immigrants. While immigration is not viewed as the single remedy to the demographic challenges confronting Francophones outside Québec it can contribute to enhancing the vitality of minority linguistic communities.

The terms ethnocultural and ethnoracial Francophones are increasingly used to describe those persons outside of Québec that are not of French Canadian descent but for whom French is the principal official language (defined in this case as the first official language spoken). These terms are best described as hybrid categories that emerge from the intersection between ethnicity and/or racial identification with language. Thus individuals who define themselves as ethnocultural and ethnoracial are expressing an attachment to dual or multiple markers of cultural identity.

The classification system that focuses on language knowledge and use is crucial to the determination of the number of members of official language communities in a given territory. Those who question the use of mother

Ontario	Mother Tongue	First Official Language Spoken
Total	493,630	489,910
Non-Immigrant	462,010	452,775
Born in Province	319,490	312,745
Born Elsewhere in Canada	142,520	140,020
Immigrant	29,800	34,725
Carribbean and Bermuda	2,370	3 340
Europe	13,285	14,135
Africa	8 790	10,900
Asia	3,435	4,205
Immigrants Arrived Between 1990 and 2000	9,705	13,060

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001

tongue to make this evaluation prefer the results obtained on the basis of the mixed variable of first official language spoken (hereafter FOLS) first introduced by Statistics Canada in the year 1991. Prior to its introduction, the mother tongue and to a lesser degree the language spoken at home were the barometers used to assess the number of Francophones. When FOLS is used, the size and weight of French-speaking immigrants increases within the francophone community. On the basis of the first official language spoken in the year 1996 some 44,000 Francophone immigrants were settled in Canada outside Québec, a difference of about 4,000 with the number arrived at with the mother tongue variable. As observed below, in the province of Ontario in 2001, there were 5,000 more immigrant Francophones on the basis of the FOLS criteria than by virtue of mother tongue. On the other there are 4,000 less Francophones overall on that basis (the addition of dual declarations for each designation shifts the numbers in favour of the FOLS group).

While the real number of Francophone immigrants constitutes less than 4% of the mother tongue francophone population outside Québec, their share of certain communities is somewhat greater, arising from the heavy concentration of these new arrivals in the major urban centers. For example, in Toronto they account for nearly

#### Selected Single Ethnic Origin Other than Canadian, British, French and Aboriginal for Selected Groups Residing Outside of Québec, 2001

Rest of Canada	French MT	FOLS	Home Language	Knowledge of English and French
German	765	990	665	24,650
Italian	1,720	2,620	1,190	44,360
Chinese	1,375	2,050	770	31,675
Ukrainian	325	365	220	4,110
Dutch (Netherlands)	295	380	255	15,340
Polish	495	830	300	15,225
East Indian	890	1,260	555	29,395
Portuguese	435	1,055	475	13,445
Jewish	1,490	1,685	440	19,010

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001



one out of four persons of French mother tongue and in Vancouver approximately one out of five Francophones are born outside the country. In Toronto on the basis of mother tongue and FOLS the Francophone population is around 33,000. However the FOLS Francophones in Toronto represent approximately 10 900 persons (32.7%) as opposed to mother tongue Francophone immigrants with around 9 400 foreign-born (28.6%).

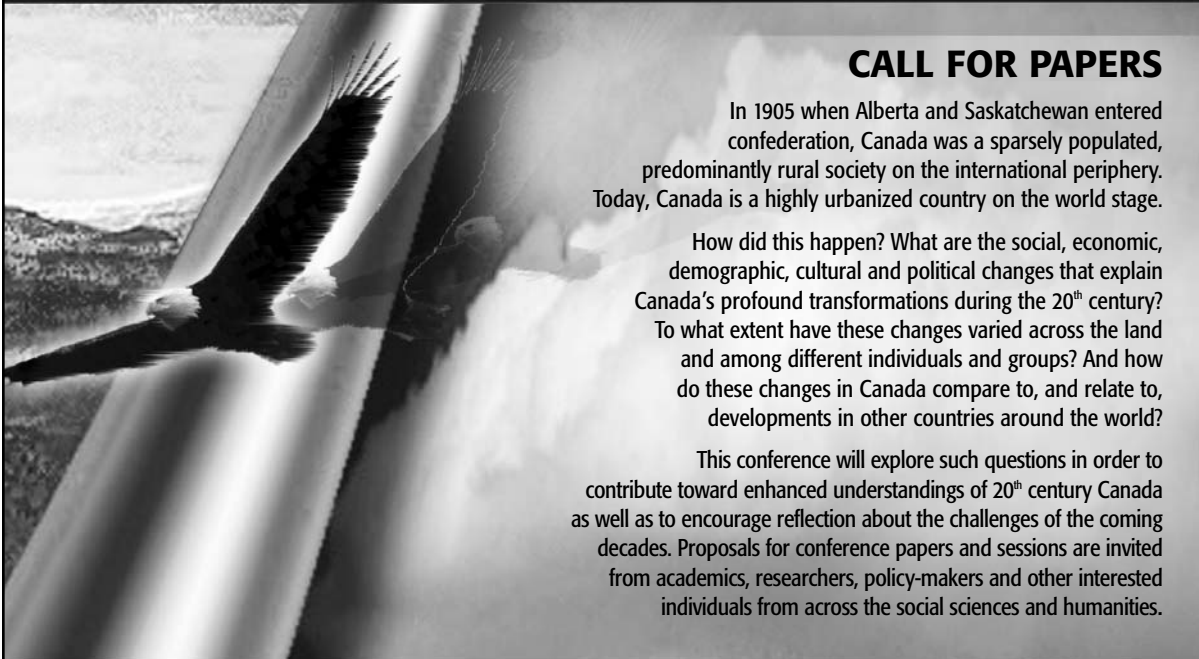
Moreover, the numbers increase when dual declarations are included. Indeed estimating the number of Francophones is further connected to the manner in which such declarations are apportioned – that is, the distribution of persons who give both French and English as their first official language spoken.

Analysts have tended to allot half of those who make such declarations to the English speaking population and the other half to the Francophone communities. There is a considerable difference between the number of immigrants who declare both English and French as their mother tongue and those who declared their first official language spoken to be both English and French. Based on the equal distribution of those who make such dual declarations, there would be another 27,000 immigrants residing in Canada outside Québec whose first official language spoken was French. When mother tongue is the criteria slightly over 2,000 Francophone immigrants would be added to this segment of the population.

Where ethnocultural and ethnoracial Francophones have dual or multiple markers of identity, the notion of community and belonging will evolve. Amongst official language minorities, ethnic ties have traditionally been linked to language. With the presence of Francophones of a variety of ethnic backgrounds, the community becomes increasingly diverse and hence the relationship between ethnicity and language continues to grow and change. Ideally, identity formation will be intersecting as opposed to competing as regards ethnicity and language. It is necessary to examine the process of adaptation of ethnocultural Francophones and their children to acquire greater insight into the nature, salience and interrelationship of their language and ethnic identification. Whatever demographic and identity-based criteria are preferred for defining Francophones, the increased presence of ethnocultural Francophones can have important policy ramifications. The intersection of language and ethnic identification leads to policy intersection in the areas of immigration and settlement, multiculturalism and official languages.

## A Century of Canada, 1905-2005/Un siècle du Canada, 1905-2005

Annual Conference of the Association for Canadian Studies, Edmonton, Alberta. October 29-30, 2005  
Organized in collaboration with the University of Alberta and the Canadian Century Research Infrastructure



**CALL FOR PAPERS**

In 1905 when Alberta and Saskatchewan entered confederation, Canada was a sparsely populated, predominantly rural society on the international periphery. Today, Canada is a highly urbanized country on the world stage.

How did this happen? What are the social, economic, demographic, cultural and political changes that explain Canada's profound transformations during the 20<sup>th</sup> century? To what extent have these changes varied across the land and among different individuals and groups? And how do these changes in Canada compare to, and relate to, developments in other countries around the world?

This conference will explore such questions in order to contribute toward enhanced understandings of 20<sup>th</sup> century Canada as well as to encourage reflection about the challenges of the coming decades. Proposals for conference papers and sessions are invited from academics, researchers, policy-makers and other interested individuals from across the social sciences and humanities.



ACS • AEC

Association for Canadian Studies • Association d'études canadiennes

The deadline for proposals is 15 June, 2005. Please include information about presenters as well as brief descriptions of the planned paper or session. These may be e-mailed to James Ondrick at: [james.ondrick@acs-aec.ca](mailto:james.ondrick@acs-aec.ca) or faxed at: (514) 925-3095.

# IMMIGRATION AND THE CHALLENGE OF REGIONALIZATION

## Francophone Immigration in New Brunswick

### ABSTRACT

In the past few years, Francophone immigration outside of Québec has become a reality of Francophone immigration and regionalization in Canada. This article examines initiatives undertaken by the Acadian community of New Brunswick and its efforts to develop a strategy to attract immigrants to the Francophone regions of New Brunswick. In conclusion, a few recommendations are suggested to develop durable policies to further orient the regionalization of immigration.

In Canada, immigration remains a phenomenon strongly linked to the urban reality of the country. Several studies indicate that the vast majority of newcomers choose the larger urban centres – Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal – as their destination. In 2003, approximately 75% of newcomers settled in the three largest cities : Toronto (97,476/44,0%), Vancouver (30,766/13,9%) and Montréal (33,732/15,2%). Certain observers have underlined the increasing gap between large cities and rural areas: in 2017, Toronto will count more than 7 million residents, with more than 50% of its population of immigrant sources. To raise the question of the regionalization of immigration in Canada therefore amounts to rising to this particular demographic, economic and social cohesion challenge.

From a theoretical standpoint, it seems that the regionalization of immigration flows from the reconfiguration of the traditional roles of the Nation-State in a post-Cold War context. Since the 1990s, major upheavals provoked by globalization have highlighted the increasing openness and mobility of individuals, ideas and goods, as well as a significant increase in migration flows (Castles and Miller, 2003). Globalization has also conferred the legitimacy of the State to new actors in order to engage more freely in questions such as immigration. Furthermore, the evolution of the Canadian federal system toward greater decentralization facilitates the participation of new actors, such as provinces and municipalities. These actors play a greater role in external relations, in specific areas (Belkhodja, 2000).

Canadian provinces are therefore increasingly called upon to play a role in immigration and to adapt to cultural and ethnic diversity. Beyond the accords ratified between the provinces and the federal government – the more comprehensive accord being that signed with the Province of Québec in 1991 – provincial initiatives are defining a general immigration policy.<sup>1</sup> In this context, the Atlantic provinces are trying to position themselves on very competitive terrain and are being confronted with very specific regional challenges. The first is that the region attracts a small percentage of the annual share of permanent residents admitted to Canada. According to the *Annual report to Parliament on Immigration 2003*, the four Atlantic provinces received 2,655 newcomers, or 1.2% of the total 221,352 immigrants in 2003 (CIC, 2004). More specifically, in 2003, Nova Scotia was identified as the province that attracted the most newcomers – 1,476 – and these settled mainly in the Halifax area (80%). New Brunswick welcomed 667 newcomers, while 359 newcomers settled in Newfoundland and Labrador. Retention rates were also deemed quite poor, especially in Nova Scotia (40%) and in New Brunswick (62%). The second challenge is tied to demographics – specifically a poor birth rate, an aging population and the exodus of young adults toward large urban centres. The third challenge is the well-established image of a regional, traditional and conservative culture that's always lagging behind, due to weak economic performance and a high unemployment rate. This image does nothing to entice immigrants to come to the region, as they are looking for satisfying and permanent work and quality of life.

This being said, it seems important to take into consideration two new dynamics. First, the increasing diversity of the Canadian population is more and more evident and is becoming the basis

### CHEDELY BELKHODJA

Cheedly Belkhodja is an Associate Professor at the Department of Political Sciences at the Université de Moncton. Mr. Belkhodja, who holds diplomas from the Université Montesquieu-Bordeaux IV and the Université de Montréal, works on the phenomenon of populism and the democratic deficit in Western societies, as well as on the new modalities of politics.

of a new, pan-Canadian identity. In a study published by the Centre for Research and Information on Canada (CRIC), Andrew Parkin and Matthew Mendelsohn mention the fact that attitudes toward diversity are accepted and that the gap between large cities and regions is relatively small. The Atlantic provinces can profit as much from diversity as metropolitan areas and must resist becoming a homogeneous white region that becomes estranged from the new cultural and ethnic reality of the country.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, in the past few years, the Eastern provinces' growth rate has been steadily rising and have been diversifying their economies in specific sectors, allowing them to attract a highly-qualified workforce from different countries. Cities such as Moncton, Halifax and St. John's (NFLD and Labrador) have been able to capitalize on this new economy and are beginning to develop their newcomer settlement capacity. When faced with budding diversity, public policies must adapt by developing innovative strategies and be able to garner support from all local actors – public and private – who invest in economic and social development.

### Francophone immigration in New Brunswick

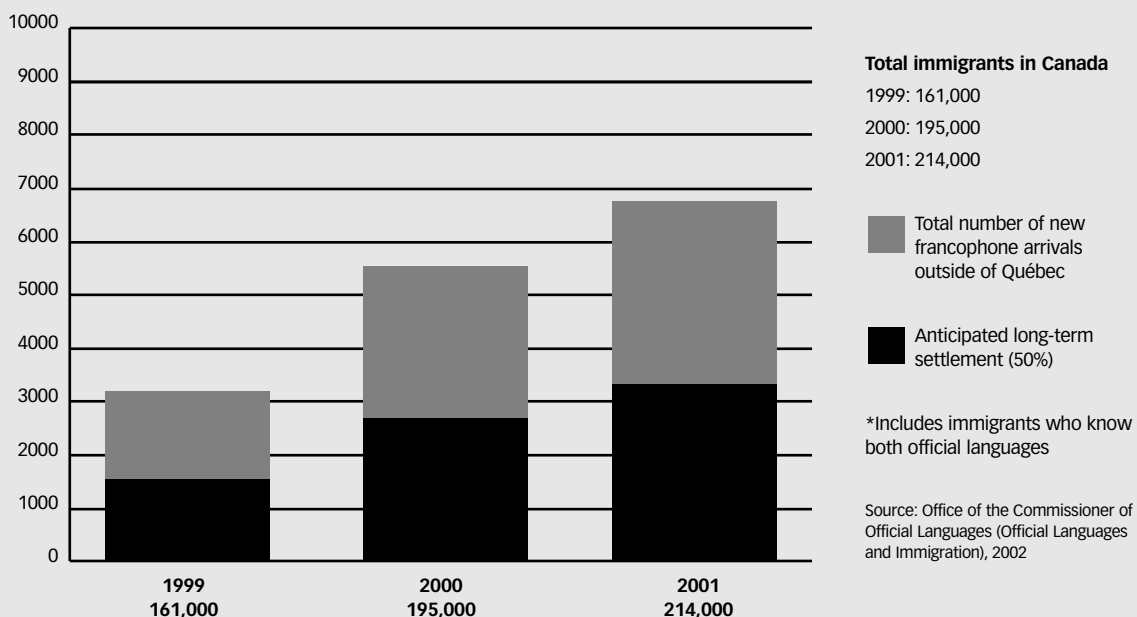
Francophone immigration outside Québec remains, for the moment, a relatively circumscribed phenomenon: only 3.1% of immigrants who settle outside Québec are Francophones (Citizenship and Immigration, 2003). However, it is of note that a new dynamic is emerging, following efforts to redirect newcomers to the regions in Canada. In 2001, Québec launched a three-year workplan pertaining to regionalization, in an effort to increase immigration rates outside Québec to 25% and to triple the number of newcomers in the Estrie region (MRCI, 2002). The other Canadian provinces are also supporting the regionalization of immigration, as proposed by the main federal government agencies (Citizenship and Immigration

Canada, Heritage Canada), to foster cultural diversity throughout the country, and to promote dynamic economic and social development of small communities and a decrease in the demographic pressures that exist in the major urban centres (Krahn, Derwing and Abu-Laban, 2003). Since 1999, a slight rise in the number of Francophone immigrants settling outside Québec is clearly emerging.

In March 2002, Citizenship and Immigration Canada created a committee mandated to examine the situation of Francophone immigration to Francophone minority communities. The committee quickly presented a strategic plan with a clear message: "Francophone and Acadian communities must take ownership of Francophone immigration and recognize its importance for their own development" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Strategic Framework to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities*, Government of Canada, November 2003, 4). Several objectives were put forth: improve the Francophone communities' ability to welcome newcomers, ensure the economic integration of immigrants, ensure social and cultural integration of immigrants, and favour the regionalization of Francophone immigrants outside Toronto and Vancouver.

In New Brunswick, the spokesperson for the Acadian community, the Société des acadiens et des acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick (SAANB), has undertaken a study on the question of immigration, in particular on such questions as integration of Francophone newcomers. This strategy stems from a national and provincial context, wherein Francophone communities outside Québec have launched a vast reflection on immigration and in particular on the question of cultural diversity. Between 1999 and 2001, the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA) du Canada, an organization which represents provincial Francophone associations, launched discussions

**Figure 1 - Francophone Immigrants\* settling outside the Province of Québec**



on the future of Francophone minority communities. Initiatives such as *Dialogue* and *Vive la différence* underscore the importance of immigration and cultural diversity. In its final report, the *Dialogue* group calls for an action plan on immigration (Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, *Parlons-nous ! Rapport du groupe de travail Dialogue*, 2001). *Vive la différence* is presented as the natural extension of the adaptation process of Francophone and Acadian communities to cultural and ethnic diversity. During a meeting in Ottawa held on November 20 and 21, 2003, we were able to observe the various viewpoints of Francophone communities on immigration and diversity. Certain western Francophone organizations, particularly those from Manitoba and from British Columbia, adapt more readily to the diversity discourse, as they recognize the positive impact that newcomers can have on the community. In contrast, Acadian associations in Nova Scotia and on Prince Edward Island remain somewhat suspicious of the idea of a new and plural Francophone identity. It is important to note that these associations base their demands on the discourse of duality; this has allowed them to consolidate the Francophone minority communities since the 1960s.

In New Brunswick, the SAANB is aiming to establish a dialogue between the host society and newcomers. In a document entitled *Plan de développement global de l'Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick*, the integration of newcomers is presented as an important challenge to the Acadian community, which faces the constant assimilation of its population and the exodus of its young Francophones to large urban centres. Consequently, the SAANB would like to develop an immigration strategy in order to [translation] “foster the integration of newcomers, in French and within Acadian culture and community and associative life of Acadia.” It also would like to [translation] “facilitate the integration of newcomers to the community and associative life of New Brunswick’s Acadia” (*Plan de développement global de l'Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick*, 2000). By creating this provincial task force on immigration, the SAANB has initiated a closer collaboration between the various actors of Acadian society and its associations of cultural communities. The task force, composed of government, community and university representatives, was able to publish a study on the key questions surrounding Francophone immigration to New Brunswick (Baccouche and Okana, 2002). The study underscores the fact that the discourse on immigration has a tendency to focus on the two main preoccupations of the Acadian community of New Brunswick. First, the demographic dimension largely dominates this discourse, due to the New Brunswick Acadians’ weak birth rate, to the high rate of assimilation, to the exodus of young Francophones to other regions, and to the poor retention rate of Francophone immigrants. Therefore, immigration is often presented as a demographic solution for the Francophone population. The 2001 Census data are indeed worrisome: the New Brunswick population is constantly decreasing (-1.2%) while the

national population is on the rise (+4%). Second, the economic dimension of this discourse constrains immigration to a question of resources being replenished in specific economic sectors. The positive impact of immigration is all too often reduced to the question of employment.

## Conclusion

At the outset of the 21st century, the regionalization of immigration to Canada in a global context is characterized by a logic of migration flows which are increasingly mobile and diversified. Immigration has therefore also become an important aspect of economic and demographic growth. This is why certain regions of Canada are trying to reap the rewards of immigration and are creating establishment and integration policies. Our research on Francophone immigration in New Brunswick leads us to identify three key elements which should guide all policies dealing with the regionalization of immigration.

First, major research efforts must be directed towards certain representations of identity (Gallant and Belkhdja, 2005). The issue of Francophone immigration has allowed us

to see a new dynamic in Canada’s Francophone communities’ ongoing identity formation. Most actors develop immigration strategies and are now left to face the difficult task of conciling linguistic duality and cultural diversity. In this very different context to the one that characterizes Francophones throughout the country, cultural diversity is received quite differently: it seems to be embraced much more readily by Francophone minority communities used to shared and plural spatial identification, especially in western Canada. This being said, Francophone communities entrenched in duality and biculturalism fear the discourse of diversity and the spectre of being diluted in a bigger group and losing something along the way.

It is important to understand the trajectory of minority Francophones, for whom it has always been a battle to have their linguistic rights, neglected by the Anglophone majority, respected. Since the 1960s, by waging on Canadian linguistic duality, Francophone minorities were able to consolidate their communities. A Francophone milieu was constructed through important gains in several sectors, including linguistic rights, access to employment and a French curriculum. The discourse of Canadian diversity is therefore unsettling because it heralds readjustments in all Francophone minority communities.

Second, it is important to prepare and sensitize host societies to immigration. Recruitment and promotion necessitate a certain openness to diversity on the part of Acadian and Francophone communities. Although the numbers remain low, it is interesting to consider the positive aspects of immigration as an emerging dynamic, particularly in urban contexts.<sup>3</sup> Immigration in ‘regions’ allows us to unveil new integration strategies that are quite different from those geared toward metropolitan realities. In communities too often constrained to the image of collective homogeneity, immigration can help construct

According to the Annual report to Parliament on immigration 2003, the four Atlantic provinces received 2,655 newcomers, or 1.2% of the total 221,352 immigrants in 2003 (CIC, 2004).

public space that is favourable to exchanges between local and immigrant cultures.

Finally, we must not make immigration a strictly utilitarian affair left to immigration entrepreneurs who promote a selective logic resting solely on economic criteria. We must be weary of the subjective definition of 'good immigrants' in the selection process, which tries to recreate the same type of homogeneous and poorly diversified community. This type of selection of immigrants does not necessarily foster cultural diversity, which is why governments must play a role in questions surrounding ethics and citizenship that lay at the heart of durable immigration policies.

## References

- Abu-Laban, Y. & C. Gabriel. *Selling Diversity : Immigration, Multiculturalism, Employment Equity and Globalization*, Peterborough: Brodview Press, 2003.
- Baccouche, N. & S. Okana. *L'accueil et l'intégration des immigrants Francophones au Nouveau-Brunswick*. Société des acadiens et acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick, 2002.
- Belkhdja, C. "Entre la discorde et l'indifférence : Le Québec, le Nouveau-Brunswick et la Francophonie internationale." In Michael Tucker, Raymond Blake & Penny Bryden (eds). *Canada and the New World Order. Exploring the Changing dynamics of Canadian Foreign Policy*. Toronto: Irwin Publishers, 2000, 185-200.
- Belkhdja, C. & N. Gallant. "D'un déficit de diversité... à la production de la diversité : L'expérience immigrante Francophone au Canada et au Nouveau-Brunswick." In J. Gatugu, S. Amoranitis & A. Manço (eds). *La vie associative des migrants: quelle reconnaissance?* Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004, 79-94.
- Castles, S. & M. Miller. *The Age of Migration. International Population Movements in the Modern World*, New York: Guilford Press, 2003.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *Strategic Framework to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities*. Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2003.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *Facts and Figures 2003. Immigration Overview : Permanent and Temporary Residents*. Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2004.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *Regionalization of Immigration*. Metropolis Conversation Series 9, 2003.
- Denton, T. "Canada's Regionalization Challenge." Paper presented at the Ninth International Metropolis Conference, Geneva, September 30, 2004, [www.metropolis2004.ch/en/workshop\\_g.shtml](http://www.metropolis2004.ch/en/workshop_g.shtml).
- Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA). *Évaluation de la capacité des communautés francophones en situation minoritaire à accueillir de nouveaux arrivants*. March 2004.
- Gallant, N. & C. Belkhdja. "Production d'un discours sur l'immigration et la diversité par les organismes francophones et acadiens au Canada." *Canadian Ethnic Studies/Études ethniques canadiennes*, 2005, forthcoming.
- Krahn, H., T. Derwing & B. Abu-Laban. *The Retention of Newcomers in Second and Third Tier Cities in Canada*, Working Paper n° WP01-03, Prairie Centre of Excellence Metropolis, 2003.

## Notes

- 1 Several important initiatives can be cited, such as a provincial conference on immigration in New Brunswick held in June 2004, and the creation of a provincial immigration policy in Nova Scotia. The governments of both of these provinces are referring to Manitoba's policy and the success it has had in balancing the selection of economic immigrants with the unique practice of sponsoring refugees. From now until 2010, that province intends to double the number of newcomers from 5,000 to 10,000 (Denton, 2004).
- 2 Certain articles published by the major newspapers often insist on this dichotomy between a New Canada and an Old Canada, as well as on the community- and folkloric-based regionalistic representation of the culture of Atlantic Canada. In particular, one article, published on August 20, 2004 in the *Globe and Mail* by reporter John Ibbitson, "Why Atlantic Canada Remains White and Poor" was particularly explosive in the region and ignited several reactions on immigration.
- 3 Il faut également considérer des expériences d'intégration en milieu rural comme à Florenceville et Saint-Léonard au Nouveau-Brunswick et dans la région de Truro en Nouvelle-Écosse.

# WESTERN CANADA'S UNIQUE IMMIGRATION PICTURE

## ABSTRACT

Because of its aging workforce, declining birthrate and specific context, the Canadian West must find ways of attracting immigrants. With the Building the New West initiative put forth by the Canada West Foundation, a certain number of immigration trends in western Canada have been identified: problems stemming from cultural proximity; negative impact of media reporting of crime and racial tensions in Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver; a decline in immigration during the last two decades; an increased rate of immigrant activity as well as a high level of refugees; and non-recognition of foreign credentials and foreign work experience, which is exacerbated by the percentage of Asian-born immigrants.

An aging labour force and a declining birthrate represent a much-discussed international challenge. For a majority of western Canada, this concern is particularly acute because of low population growth rates, declining shares of new immigrants a burgeoning Aboriginal youth component of the regional population that has low workforce participation rates.

While immigration represents an important opportunity for the West, there are also substantial barriers to maximizing its positive potential. Improvements are needed in immigration approaches from the various orders of government and in the attitudes of western employers and the public toward immigrants. If the West is going to compete more effectively for immigrants, employers need to be more willing to hire immigrants, professional associations need to reevaluate the appropriateness of their standards and the public needs to become aware of the important role immigrants play in regional economic success. Realistically, changing these attitudes and issues may take several years, but improving today's policies and regulations can play an important role in catalyzing this process.

## Immigration Consultations

For their part, those individuals working in immigration-related fields in western Canada understand the kinds of changes needed to bring about better immigration outcomes in the region. When brought together as part of the Canada West Foundation's Building the New West to discuss immigration concerns in the various provinces, a number of common themes emerged.

While immigration levels vary greatly from big city to small city to rural areas, the basic immigration priorities for the region as a whole were markedly similar. Participants in our consultations saw the need for: increases in the amount and the accuracy of information on the West and its opportunities available to prospective immigrants; more efficient and more flexible immigrant selection criteria; an investment in strengthening the West's settlement and integration resources; greater efforts to make western residents more welcoming of immigrants; and improved workplace transition and skills acquisition opportunities for immigrants in western Canada.

Gaining an advantage in these areas would lead to better immigration outcomes for those immigrants already in the West, and increase the attractiveness of the region to new immigrants.

Beyond the areas of commonality shared by participants, there were of course high priority issues that relate to the wide disparity of immigration levels among western Canada's cities. Participants in Vancouver, Winnipeg and Calgary – cities with proportionately higher rates of immigration – mentioned issues related to settlement and funding as a high priority. Those in Edmonton and Saskatoon – cities that draw less than their share of immigrants – mentioned the need for creating a welcoming atmosphere and making immigration a priority for their communities.

In Winnipeg, the success associated with its rapid increase in immigration over the last three years has created a number of high profile issues related to the funding of settlement services, housing, and wait lists for training. Interprovincial competition for immigrants, climate, and the appeal of other destinations within Canada are recognized as a threat to retaining the positive aspects of immigration. Participants spoke of particular concerns about losing immigrants to Ontario and Alberta. Winnipeg also faces an equivalent need to address the city's Aboriginal employment issues.

For Regina, interprovincial competition for immigrants is described as making it difficult for Saskatchewan to appear as an appealing destination. Participants recognize that increasing

**JASON AZMIER**  
Jason Azmier has been a public policy principal analyst at the Canada West Foundation since 1995. He is considered one of Canada's leading experts in research on gambling.

immigration is difficult because the city has a number of strikes against it, including climate, little or a negative international reputation, historically low immigration levels, and relatively limited economic opportunities. Regina participants indicated that more flexible immigration policies might enable the area to more easily attract immigrants. For example, finding rural immigrant farmers is hindered by high financial qualification criteria. Lowering some standards might encourage more immigrants to settle in rural areas and contribute to rural economies. Another specific community problem mentioned in Regina is that the current low numbers of immigrants make it difficult to develop the critical mass of services which will offer a welcoming place for immigrants. Finally, urban Aboriginal priorities and difficulty in attracting immigrants are also significant barriers for Regina.

Calgary draws a great deal more immigrants than its share of the national population, and participants in this session focused on issues related to concentration. In particular, secondary migration from other provinces was a concern for participants as settlement funding is not as available for secondary migrants. Alberta's low minimum wage was also mentioned as a specific challenge for Calgary immigrants. Many immigrants occupy the lowest paying jobs in the community and may have difficulty meeting their basic needs in an increasingly costly city. Also unique to Alberta, participants felt that immigration suffers from negative perceptions among the public and elected officials, giving the impression of Calgary as an unwelcoming community.

These concerns were largely echoed by Edmonton participants. The low wages and the perception of negative attitudes represented even more of a barrier to attracting and retaining immigrants in Edmonton as it is not a major port of entry for immigrants. Edmonton respondents felt that greater municipal government awareness of immigrants' value to the city would go a long way to making it more attractive.

The priority issues of Vancouver participants reflect the region's experiences with high volumes of immigrants. The concentration of immigrants, particularly from the Pacific Rim, creates tensions with respect to community and social services, increases perceptions of immigrant-related crime, and fosters more racial tension in the community. Further, immigrants must deal with a cost of living in the region that is high; yet the economic opportunities for immigrants are not as bountiful as in some other centres. It is important to note, however, that lowering the concentration of immigrants was not seen as a priority. Rather, the priority issue was better distribution of the benefits of immigration into the surrounding rural areas outside the Vancouver region.

### Unique Immigration Trends in Western Canada

The opinions of Canada West Foundation immigration consultation participants reflect the circumstance of immigration policy, activity, and history in the West. In particular, immigration outside the policy shadow of the "Big 3" destinations (Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver) presents a number of unique circumstances and priorities.

First, public attitudes towards immigration in the West are skewed by the circumstances of the Big 3 – often in a negative manner. New immigrants in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal face the highest employment barriers associated with acquiring language skills, having their foreign work and education experiences rated and recognized, and beginning job searches and networking. The media reporting of crime and racial tensions in the major centres can also negatively influence the populations in areas where immigrant-related crime is negligible.

Second, while Canada's immigration levels remain high, immigration activity to the West has been in a prolonged period of decline for most of the last two decades (CIC, 2005). Buoyed by Manitoba's immigration successes, this trend is creeping back upwards, yet the West's share of immigrants remains below its share of the population. Extended periods of proportionately light immigration will have an impact on labour force needs and on the capacity of the region to attract more immigrants. These data suggest that the West faces a relatively tough road in trying to fill these shortages.

A third trend in the West involves higher employment activity of immigrants. Male immigrants aged 25-54 in western Canada's cities are significantly more likely to be employed full-time than are immigrants in the rest of Canada. The six cities in which immigrant unemployment rates are most closely matched to Canadian-born rates are all located in the West (Chui, 2003).

The stronger immigrant employment situation in the West is reflective of employment activity in the region and lower concentrations of recent immigrants. Combined, these data suggest it

may be easier for those immigrants who settle in the West to enter the workforce. However, it should be noted that these data do not indicate if the employment is more likely to be within the immigrant's area of study or experience, only that immigrants are more likely to have a job.

The problem of the non-recognition of foreign experiences and education is certainly not unique to the West, but its application in the West represents a fourth important trend due to the high number of Asian and Middle Eastern immigrants in the region. The language issues, credential recognition concerns, and the devaluation of immigrant degrees and work experiences relative to Canadian-born workers appears to most negatively affect Asian immigrants.

The priority issues of Vancouver participants reflect the region's experiences with high volumes of immigrants. The concentration of immigrants, particularly from the Pacific Rim, creates tensions with respect to community and social services, increases perceptions of immigrant-related crime, and fosters more racial tension in the community.

Research suggests that Asian immigrants, both with and without credentials, appear to gain the least value from their previous experiences and education, when compared to other immigrant groups (Najm, 2001; Ferrer and Riddell, 2003). So while not only a western Canadian problem, addressing the systemic barriers associated with the under-employment of Asian immigrants is one that is particularly pronounced.

A fifth significant regional trend is the emerging importance of Provincial Nominee Programs (PNP) as provincial population growth and distribution mechanisms. Manitoba's use of the PNP is the most aggressive, with half of all Manitoba immigrants now entering through a provincial immigration procedure as part of a Manitoba population growth strategy. These programs represent emerging policy tools by which labour shortages, business investment, the regionalization of immigrants, retention of immigrants and other local policy issues can be addressed.

A final influencing trend in the West is the high level of refugee immigrants in the West – 38% of government-assisted and private refugees class immigrants in 2004 settled in West compared with only 26% for the immigrant population as a whole (CIC, 2005, preliminary data). Saskatchewan is of particular note, as 27% of all immigrants that settled there in 2004 had government-assisted and private refugees class status, compared to a national average of only 4.5%.

The implications of these data are varied. The prairie region benefits strongly from the humanitarian effects of immigration, such as fostering compassion within communities. Yet the economic contributions of refugee immigrants may be less vibrant than economic class immigrants. Refugee needs also place an additional burden on community supports in the West because the specific circumstances of their compassionate grounds can require social supports that are not easily created or made available. Given the high numbers of non-economic class immigrants in the West, the double impact of employment barriers and additional support needs make refugee assistance programs a high profile western concern.

In conclusion, immigrants in the West provide a host of non-economic, cultural and humanitarian contributions to the region and provide important population growth possibilities, particularly in high need areas. There are a number of immigration successes, particularly in Manitoba, that point to and underline the contributions that immigrants are making to the West in manufacturing, community building, population growth, innovation, development of export markets, and cultural diversity.

## References

---

- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. 2005. Personal communication. March 9, 2005.
- Chui, Tina. 2003. *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada: Process, Progress and Prospects*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada: Cat. No. 89-611-XIE.
- Ferrer, Ann and W. Craig Riddell. May 2003. *Education, Credentials and Immigrant Earnings*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia, Department of Economics.
- Najm, Nabila A. December 2001. *The Devaluation Of Foreign Credentials in Canada*. Strategic Research and Analysis, Strategic Planning and Policy Coordination. Ottawa: Department of Canadian Heritage.



# RESPONDING TO HOUSING INSTABILITY AMONG NEWCOMERS

## ABSTRACT

The growing body of evidence about the economic insecurity faced by recent immigrants to Canada coincides with reports of immigrants and refugees becoming one of the two fastest growing sub-populations among the homeless in Canada. Difficulties with labour market attachment, gaps in the system of integration and discrimination are important risk factors that may contribute to the increased risk of housing instability among newcomers. The article concludes by identifying some key areas for further research and by suggesting some basic principles, derived from current knowledge, which can improve policy and programming responses.

Newcomers to Canada represent an important contribution to the diversity in the social, economic and cultural life of the country, but there is a growing body of evidence that indicates that newcomers to Canada are also at increasing risk of housing instability and homelessness. Homelessness, like most social justice issues, requires a response from many different sectors (private, public, non-profit) and levels (national, provincial, regional, community) of government and society. The response must be multi-faceted because people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, are individuals with diverse backgrounds and characteristics, whose pathways into and out of homelessness reflect the uniqueness of their efforts to manage transitions in their lives and to overcome systemic inequities. New research is beginning to provide information about what contributes to the risk and some of the potential pathways that lead to homelessness, as well as what principles should underlie policy reform.

Results from the 2001 Census indicate that the percentage of foreign-born people in Canada is higher now than it has been in 70 years. In recent years, however, there are indications that newcomers are experiencing greater difficulty in successfully integrating into Canadian society. Published reports have provided evidence of the erosion of economic well-being and increasing risks of homelessness for recent immigrants to Canada:

- between 1980 and 2000, the low income rate for recent immigrants rose from 24.6% to 35.8% while the low income rate for Canadian-born decreased from 17.2% to 14.3%. Less than half of the rise in low income rates can be attributed to the changing characteristics of immigrants;<sup>1</sup>
- between 1980 and 2000, the earnings gap between recent male immigrants and Canadian-born men more than doubled, and the earnings gap between recent female immigrants and Canadian-born females rose substantially;<sup>2</sup>
- between 1984 and 1999, recent immigrants have become more vulnerable to income losses and unexpected expenditures;<sup>3</sup>
- between 1981 and 2001, homeownership rates of immigrants have steadily declined while homeownership rates of Canadian-born have steadily increased;
- in Census Metropolitan Areas, where over 90% of recent immigrants settle, recent immigrant renters were almost 40% more likely to be in “core housing need”<sup>4</sup> than non-immigrant renter households in 2001.<sup>5</sup> The main obstacle for households in need is finding affordable housing; and
- while there is no national data available on the number of newcomers who are homeless, studies from Toronto and Ottawa suggest that immigrants and refugees represent between 13% and 14% of the homeless population that use shelters in these cities.

In general, homelessness is more likely to occur when certain risk factors (such as unemployment, economic migration, marital breakdown, death of a family member, development of a disabling physical or mental condition, dealing with domestic abuse, etc.) are present in such a way that overwhelm the capacity of individuals or families to maintain their socio-economic status. In general terms, these risk factors impact on the capacity of individuals or families to generate sufficient income for adequate housing. When these risk factors are combined with shortages in the supply of appropriate housing and/or inadequate support services, the chances of becoming homeless increase.

## MICHAEL FARRELL

Michael Farrell is a research analyst with the National Secretariat on Homelessness with a background in human rights frameworks for social policy. The Secretariat, through the National Research Program, is currently supporting a number of research projects examining the linkages between homelessness and newcomers to

For newcomers, the challenges of adapting to a different political, economic, social and cultural milieu can introduce additional risk factors. Furthermore, certain groups of newcomers, who may not be represented in large numbers, have additional vulnerabilities due to threats to their security. These groups include:

- refugee claimants, particularly those without work permits;
- women, sometimes with children, who are faced with domestic abuse; and
- sponsored immigrants, sometimes parents of children who have immigrated, who face abuse.

The specific pathways that lead from arrival in Canada to being homeless will vary by individual circumstances (including official immigrant/refugee category or label), but research has demonstrated that problems associated with equity of labour market participation, shortcomings of the settlement process, and overcoming discrimination contribute to increasing the risk of housing instability for newcomers to Canada.

### Labour Market

Employment is an important factor in helping newcomers to settle and integrate into their host country. A number of studies that examine the employment outcomes of newcomers have indicated that current newcomers are experiencing greater difficulty than Canadian-born or previous newcomers in entering the labour market and in finding employment that is appropriate to the level of skill, education and experience. Refugee claimants may be at greatest risk due to documented delays in acquiring work permits.

In general, access to employment is determined by a number of micro- and macroeconomic factors that have both structural and cyclical components. Studies have shown that despite the presence of favourable economic cycles, newcomers tend to benefit less from periods of rapid economic growth. This phenomenon can be attributed to a number of specific barriers that can make labour market integration more problematic for newcomers. These include:

- lack of well-established network of contacts; limited Canadian work experience and less value attributed by Canadian employers to foreign work experience;
- some have limited mastery of Canada's official languages;
- educational certificates and professional accreditation which may not be afforded adequate legitimacy;
- while discrimination and its impact can be difficult to quantify and assess, research suggests that it is a factor in access to, and success in, the labour market.

As a result of difficulties of labour market integration, newcomers are experiencing both declining earnings and deteriorating conditions of work as they more likely to accept 'non-standard' or contingent employment that offers less economic security and poorer protection by employment standards legislation. Recent immigrants, men and women, working full-time have earnings that are considerably lower than Canadian-born. This earnings gap actually increases with higher levels of education.

In the past, the initial earnings gap between newcomers and Canadian-born decreased as newcomers became acclimatized to Canadian social and cultural norms, but the depth of the earnings gap for recent immigrants and refugees, raises serious questions about the capacity of current newcomers to catch up in a reasonable length of time.

The average total income of new immigrants has been steadily losing ground relative to Canadian-born for the last 20 years. Fewer opportunities for higher earnings have led to a trend of rising low-income rates for newcomers; their poverty rate is twice that of families of native-born Canadians. Among some immigrant groups, such as Latin Americans, Africans, Caribbeans, Arabs and West Asians, the low-income rate is approximately three times higher.

The increasing poverty of newcomers is having a significant impact at the municipal level, particularly in larger cities, as over 70% of newcomers settle in Vancouver, Toronto and Montréal. The rise in the low-income rates in Canada's three largest cities is largely the result of the increasing poverty of newcomers.

As a consequence of lack of employment and low-income rates, newcomers are more reliant on income support programs to meet their needs. The percentage of households headed by recent immigrants of labour force age, receiving government transfer payments and the amount of transfer per client household, are higher than for comparable households headed by Canadian-born.

The lack of labour market success, and associated lower incomes, puts newcomers at greater risk of housing instability. The settlement services system includes a number of programs and services designed to facilitate newcomer integration and reduce this risk, but there is evidence that the system may not be meeting its objectives.

### Settlement

A study conducted by Mwarigha<sup>6</sup> has suggested that the settlement process for newcomers typically involves three stages, which can be characterized by the evolution in the needs of newcomers:

1. in the first stage, newcomers are focused on meeting immediate needs for food, clothing and shelter as well as assistance with orientation to their local area and basic language services.

Research has demonstrated that problems associated with equity of labour market participation, shortcomings of the settlement process, and overcoming discrimination contribute to increasing the risk of housing instability for newcomers to Canada.

2. in the second stage, newcomers need to access Canadian systems and institutions including access to the labour market, community services related to housing, health and legal assistance, and more advanced language training.
3. finally, in the third stage, newcomers are focused on becoming full participants in Canadian life and their needs concern dealing with systemic barriers to equal participation in Canadian society.

According to data from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada,<sup>7</sup> approximately 70% of recent immigrants experienced some difficulty in entering the labour market; this supports results of other studies indicating problems with labour market integration. In addition, 76% of recent immigrants needed to look for appropriate housing after arrival (the remainder were satisfied with their housing upon arrival) and of these, 38% experienced difficulty in obtaining appropriate housing. High costs or financial difficulty were most often cited as the reason, followed by the lack of credit history, guarantor or co-signer. In fact, 42% of recent immigrant households are in core housing need compared to 17% for Canadian-born.<sup>8</sup> The observed difficulties with labour market integration and acquisition of appropriate housing has led to a number of calls for changes to the Canadian settlement system within the second stage of the framework above.

Recent immigrants and refugees are experiencing greater difficulties in settling than in the past and the settlement system may lack the capacity to provide the longer-term assistance that is needed. As a result, newcomers are increasingly relying on mainstream support services that are not designed to provide them with services that are appropriate to their needs. Mainstream housing support services, and health and social services that face resource constraints in meeting the needs of Canadian-born, do not have the capacity to provide the multilingual, multicultural, newcomer-specific services that are required. Increasingly, immigrants and refugees turn to other resources to cope with the shortfall in support. In the case of housing, they rely on temporary solutions such as short-term rentals in illegal or unsafe rooming houses, or other types of insecure tenure or living arrangements that make them part of the “hidden” homeless. Some newcomers alternate between these informal arrangements and the homeless shelter system.

Responsibility for integrating and receiving the immigrants is shared between different levels of government, specialized community organizations and the informal networks of family, friends and immigrant communities. Improving the adequacy of support will require improving the coordination and integration of the efforts of these stakeholders. Beyond the extent and quality of services, however, there still remain systemic issues that create barriers that

inhibit newcomers from fully integrating into Canadian society; one of the main barriers is discrimination.

### Discrimination

Although the homeless population in Canada demonstrates significant diversity, one of the common elements of people who become homeless is the existence of characteristics that put them at a higher risk of housing instability. Understanding the relationship between homelessness and diversity in Canada requires analyzing how the various dimensions of marginalization and diversity in the population affect the magnitude, characteristics and causes of homelessness. These dimensions include, but are not restricted to, citizenship status, race, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, gender, family and marital status, mother tongue and language competency, education, presence or absence of a criminal record, socio-economic status, health status (e.g., persons with HIV/AIDS or mental illness), disability, and sexual orientation.

Discrimination on the basis of any of these grounds create formal and informal systemic barriers that restrict access to programs and services, which in turn leads to increased risk of homelessness for members of these groups. These barriers may be found in institutions such as hospitals and clinics, training and education facilities, financial institutions, the justice system, and potential employers’ human resources departments. These barriers may also be manifested in specific practices, such as job applications procedures, applications or appeals for rental accommodation or income support, the attitudes of gatekeepers to support services, and how complaints of discrimination are adjudicated.

Discrimination impacts on Canadian-born as well as newcomers, but newcomers face additional vulnerability to housing instability due to the accumulation of risk factors. Newcomers who arrived in the 1990s are more likely to have been visibly different than the predominantly White population in Canada than those who arrived in previous decades, and newcomers tend to report significant levels of perceived discrimination. Although the validity of perceived discrimination as an objective measure of marginalization is sometimes questioned, it clearly indicates a lack of effectiveness in Canada’s efforts to create an environment wherein newcomers can feel secure. In terms of housing outcomes, at least one study<sup>9</sup> indicates that discrimination can lead to:

- lengthier searches for housing;
- more expensive accommodation;
- living in inadequate housing in a less desirable part of the community;
- substandard educational opportunities;
- fewer and less desirable employment prospects; and
- poorer access to a wide variety of services including health care and transportation.

Mainstream housing support services, and health and social services that face resource constraints in meeting the needs of Canadian-born, do not have the capacity to provide the multilingual, multicultural, newcomer-specific services that are required.

Of course discrimination, just like labour market difficulties and shortcomings of health and social services, are issues faced by Canadian-born as well as newcomers, and these issues cannot be addressed solely by the settlement services system or the housing support system. They require a concerted and coordinated effort by all sectors and all levels of government.

### Coordination, Research Gaps and Policy Implications

There is a growing awareness that newcomers are facing an increased risk of housing instability, but stakeholders, from the national down to the community level, are frequently constrained in responding by focusing on their limited areas of responsibility. Responding to a task where there is a complex web of interrelated factors is challenging, but not impossible. An analogy to building a house may be appropriate; if each trade (plumber, roofer, bricklayer, electrician, etc.) does their job without coordinating their work with the others, the end result will be a collection of plumbing, roofing, bricks and wires, and not a house. Similarly, addressing Canada's social justice issues, whether they relate to settlement and integration of newcomers or reduce homelessness, cannot be adequately accomplished by the different stakeholders simply making improvements in their own area of responsibility. The nature of complex social issues requires all stakeholders to plan and coordinate their activities to create a solid social infrastructure that provides security for all people living in Canada in the short term and for a long time to come.

In terms of research gaps, our knowledge base about the extent, characteristics and causes of homelessness among the different categories of newcomers to Canada (i.e., immigrants, refugee claimants, privately sponsored refugees, government sponsored refugees) is still limited (see box). Studies have indicated that the effectiveness of the intake and integration process, and the associated support services, can be critical in facilitating social inclusion and therefore in reducing the risk of homelessness. However, there are still gaps in our knowledge about how government policies and programs, and the delivery of settlement services, affect the risk of new immigrants and refugees of becoming homeless and how best to remedy these problems.

Existing research has also provided evidence that abuse in domestic and sponsor relationships exists and can lead to instability in the housing situation of new immigrants and refugees, but the most effective approaches to deal with these problems are not yet well-developed. Research has also indicated that patterns of settlement for new immigrants and refugees can be complex and dynamic, sometimes leading to settlement outside of large urban centres or settlement after a number of inter- and intra-provincial moves. There is little known about the impact of these dynamics on risk factors for homelessness and on access to services.

In terms of policy, we do know enough to establish some basic principles in terms of the approach that must be taken:

- ensure that policy-making, program development and service delivery be comprehensive and coordinated between all stakeholders;
- envision that newcomers have the opportunity and power to influence policy-making, program development and service delivery;

- prioritize and integrate anti-discrimination and equity promotion initiatives throughout policy making, program development and service delivery; and

- recognize that although some theories of market behaviour suggest that labour markets are more efficient with less regulatory intervention, in reality labour market equilibriums frequently do not produce optimal economic and social outcomes; more intervention may be required.

These 'principles' may not be the concrete proposals for action that many are looking for, but these themes are constantly repeated by participants in research projects and in public consultations; better coordination, opportunities for meaningful participation, reduction of barriers to access, and a good job that pays a living wage. These basic principles can be the foundation for success in responding to the needs of newcomers and lower their risk of homelessness.

### Notes

- 1 Picot, Garnett & Feng Hou. *The Rise in Low-Income Among Immigrants in Canada*. Statistics Canada, Analytical Studies Research Paper Series No. 198, Catalogue No. 11F0019, Ottawa, 2003.
- 2 Frenette, Marc & René Morissette. *Will they ever converge? Earnings of Immigrant and Canadian-Born Workers over the Last Two Decades*, Statistics Canada, Analytical Studies Research Paper Series No. 215, Catalogue No. 11F0019MIE, Ottawa, 2003.
- 3 Morissette, René. "Families on the Financial Edge," *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Statistics Canada, Catalogue No. 75-001-XIE, 3(7) (July 2002).
- 4 According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, "A household is said to be (...) in core housing need if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, suitability or affordability standards and it would have to spend 30 percent or more of its before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local market housing that meets all three standards."
- 5 Engeland, John, Roger Lewis, Steven Ehrlich (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation) & Janet CHE (Statistics Canada). *Evolving Housing Conditions in Canada's Census Metropolitan Areas, 1991-2001*, Component of Statistics Canada, Trends and Conditions in Metropolitan Areas, Catalogue No. 89-613-MWE2004005, 2005.
- 6 Mwarigha, M.S. *Towards a Framework for Local Responsibility: Taking action to end the current limbo in immigrant settlement-Toronto*, commissioned by the Maytree Foundation, January 2002.
- 7 Chui, Tina. *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada: Process, Progress and Prospects*. Statistics Canada, Catalogue No. 89-611-XIE, 2003.
- 8 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. *Special Studies on 1996 Census Data: Housing Conditions of Immigrants in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area*, Socio-Economic Series 55-12, October 2003.
- 9 Dion, Kenneth L. "Immigrants' Perceptions of Housing Discrimination in Toronto: The Housing New Canadians Project," *Journal of Social Issues* 57(3) (2001): 523-539.

# THE PANEL STUDY ON HOMELESSNESS

## Secondary Data Analysis of Responses of Study Participants Whose Country of Origin is not Canada

### ABSTRACT

This article proposes excerpts of a report prepared for National Secretariat on Homelessness, The Panel Study on Homelessness: Secondary Data analysis of responses of Study Participants Whose Country of Origin is not Canada. This study examines the characteristics of Ottawa homeless individuals as observed, at the time the research was conducted. The authors conclude by highlighting the urgency of creating affordable and safe permanent housing, as part of the revitalization of the social housing sector.

### Main Findings

I do not speak English. I cannot afford to rent a market rent unit. I do not have a job, and I cannot find a job because I do not speak English. (Translated).

– Adult Female in Family, Age 30-39

I don't like my life because I am alone in Canada. My whole family lives in Rwanda. It's very hard to find a job because I can't speak English. It's very expensive to rent an apartment. Social assistance is nothing. I need more money. (Translated).

– Youth Female, Age 20

The reason that I am here is that I couldn't find an affordable place to rent. Also, I am new to this country and that makes things more difficult. I did try to find an affordable private place, but I couldn't find one.

– Adult Male in Family, Age 30-39

Before I had my first child in September 2002, I was having a very difficult time finding an affordable house. I was sharing 3 bedrooms with a family of three, and it was not easy to live in that apartment. There were not enough rooms for everybody.

– Adult Female in Family, aged 30-39

It is scary not having anybody to help you out. Strange city, strange country. They should allow people to work under special circumstances.

– Adult Male, Age 30-39

In Sept 2001, I went to visit my family and husband in Djibouti. After visiting, my husband told me to stay with him in Djibouti. First, I was reluctant, but decided to live with him. After three months he became abusive and I left and came back to Canada.

– Adult Female in Family, Age 20-29

It's hard to get back on your feet in a city where you don't know anyone and you're broke – bad situation. Shelters are helpful – certain rules and policies are unfair but [I] can understand because some people abuse the services.

– Youth Male, Age 20-29<sup>1</sup>

This final section includes a summary of the main findings, conclusions, future directions for research and recommendations.

### Summary of Main Findings

- Characteristics of the Population
- Education, Language Employment
- Family Difficulties
- Physical and Mental Health Status
- Health and Social Service Utilization
- Most Pressing Needs

FRAN KLODAWSKY  
Ph.D., Carleton University  
TIM AUBRY  
Ph.D., University of Ottawa

BEHNAM BEHNIA  
Ph.D., Carleton University  
CARL NICHOLSON  
B.A., Catholic Immigration  
Centre

MARTA YOUNG  
Ph.D., University of Ottawa

## Characteristics of the Population

Generally, the foreign-born population was less diverse than Canadian-born respondents. Seventy-nine percent of all foreign-born respondents were women, including 83% of refugees and 74% of immigrants. In both groups, the majority were female heads of families with children. Indeed, fully 53% of the Panel Study's 'adults in families' subgroup was not born in Canada. Of that group, 87% were women. The foreign-born respondents were also much more likely to be working age adults than was the rest of the sample. However, there were two noteworthy exceptions – about one quarter of the immigrants was less than 20 years of age, and the refugee sample included proportionally more respondents over 50 years of age than any other group.

Refugees constituted just over half of the foreign-born respondents and of this group, over half were women with children. While most of the foreign-born mothers had three or less children living with them, 39% of refugees had four or more children. This greater preponderance of adults in families helps to explain why more foreign-born respondents were married, separated, divorced or widowed than was the case for the rest of the Panel Study respondents. These differences also help to explain why the Phase I report noted that the characteristics of adults in families often diverged from those of the other subgroups (Aubry et al., 2003). Foreign-born respondents were more likely to be homeless because of financial reasons than was true for those born in Canada. While many of them had been homeless only once or twice for a short period of time, others reported experiencing multiple episodes of homelessness.

Diversity did manifest itself in country of origin, date of arrival, and citizenship status. Foreign-born respondents identified about 40 countries of origin, with African countries being particularly prominent for those who came to Canada as refugees. Roughly equal numbers had arrived in Canada throughout the 1990s and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century; however, fully one-third of immigrants (but no refugees) arrived earlier than 1990. More than one third of the respondents were Canadian citizens, including 60% of immigrants and 25% of refugees. Forty percent of refugees still had the status of refugee claimant.

## Education, Language and Employment.

The foreign-born respondents had more education than those born in Canada, with substantial proportions having completed some sort of post-secondary program. Refugees were somewhat more likely to have a low level of education and/or to have interrupted their studies; however, they also were more likely than any other group to be in school at the time of the Phase 1 interviews. Most immigrants and refugees reported written and spoken

proficiency in English. Among some refugees, proficiency in French but not English was reported and finally, a minority of foreign-born respondents lacked proficiency in either official language.

The majority of newcomers were not working for pay, although they were somewhat more likely to be working than their matched Canadian-born counterparts. Among the matched samples, about one-third of foreign-born and Canadian-born respondents reported that they were looking for work; this was slightly less true for refugees than were immigrants.

## Family Difficulties

More foreign-born respondents explained their homelessness as having been caused by family conflict than was the case for Canadian-born respondents. Fleeing abuse also was a significant factor for some households.

## Physical and Mental Health Status

As noted above, based on an analysis of the SF-36 scale, the physical and mental health status of newcomers appears to be substantially more favourable than it is for Canadian-born respondents. Other health status results are consistent with these findings: for example, the only chronic conditions reported equally for both groups are high blood pressure and migraine headaches, likely caused by the stress of being homeless.

## Health and Social Service Utilization

Overall, newcomers were less likely than were Canadian-born respondents to use health and outreach social services, or to indicate that they had unmet health needs. Although their higher physical and mental health status may be part of the reason for this difference, given the integration challenges they face, newcomers' relatively low use of certain social services certainly requires further investigation.

## Most Pressing Needs

Foreign-born respondents appear to be quite distinct from the other individuals who were interviewed for the Panel Study. Their reasons for being homeless appear to be more readily attributable to a series of external barriers, such as insufficient affordable housing, or restrictions on their ability to compete for employment, or inadequate child care supports, than is the case for many of the respondents who were born in Canada. This latter group, on the whole, appears more vulnerable in terms of health status, educational attainment and problems with substance abuse.

## Conclusions and Future Research Directions

It is well to begin this section of the report by recalling that the main goal of the Panel Study on Homelessness was to explore the characteristics of diverse individuals who were homeless in Ottawa at the time of the study. In order to

It certainly appears that a large number of foreign-born homeless individuals in Ottawa are women and especially women refugees with children. These distributions certainly are out of line with the overall profile of newcomers by sex and by citizenship – in 1996, 52% of Ottawa newcomers were women and 23% were refugees (CIC 2000, p. x).

achieve this goal, the Panel Study's sampling strategy was designed to recruit a representative sample from *within* each of five subgroups of homeless individuals (adult men, adult women, youth males, youth females and adults in families). Consequently, different criteria were used for each subgroup, based on extant population data and advice from key informants. Citizenship was used as a stratification criterion in only two of the five subgroups – single women and adults in families. The reason this criterion was not used with the three other subgroups (i.e., single men, male youth, female youth) is that information on citizenship was not available from the shelters serving these populations. It is important to acknowledge that this approach likely influenced the preponderance of female foreign-born respondents among these two groups, while also recognizing that extant data and key informants certainly gave credence to this strategy. An important question for future research is to determine the breakdown of foreign-born individuals across all of the subgroups of the homeless population. Data produced by the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System being used in many shelters now, including those in Ottawa, may help answer this question.

Regardless, it certainly appears to be the case that a large number of foreign-born homeless individuals in Ottawa are women and especially women refugees with children. These distributions certainly are out of line with the overall profile of newcomers by sex and by citizenship – in 1996, 52% of Ottawa newcomers were women and 23% were refugees (CIC 2000, x).

Given their distinctiveness, three issues stand out in considering the policy and program implications of our findings. The first has to do with supports for refugee settlement. As noted in a Refugee Homelessness Prevention seminar in 2001, “refugee claimants are at most serious risk of homelessness” (Murdie, 2001). Clearly, in Ottawa, there is a cluster of homeless refugee women with children who confront a complex set of challenges, having to do with the speed at which they are able to settle their refugee claims, their disadvantaged education and language profiles, and their responsibilities for large numbers of children. An urgent need exists to address their specific settlement issues in a holistic and comprehensive manner. Israelite et al.'s Toronto-based observations about undocumented Somali women refugees are likely relevant in Ottawa too:

Difficulties with English and problems with intercultural communication disadvantaged the women in their dealings with government officials, teachers and landlords. Problems such as unemployment and constant worries about the well-being of their families were other significant factors. More than half the women were functioning as single parents and responsibilities for family finances and decision-making rested on their shoulders for perhaps the first time in their lives. One woman said many Somali women felt worthless primarily because they could not adequately provide for their families. Yet poor English proficiency, the restrictions on

postsecondary education and limited employment opportunities [lack of documentation resulted in severe restrictions on education and employment for up to five years] made it hard for the women to get jobs and integrate into the economic sphere (1999, 19-20).

Nonetheless, questions of settlement also need to address other newcomer groups, especially given the significant proportion of homeless immigrants who arrived in Canada before 1990, and the much greater concentration of women among homeless newcomers than among their housed peers.

A second issue is financial. Given that so many newcomers are homeless primarily because they are unable to afford the rent, it is clear that a combination of first, enhancing the availability of secure, suitable, affordable housing, and second, reducing the barriers to securing decent employment, would go a considerable way in reducing the risk of homelessness. With regard to housing, more attention also needs to be paid to design criteria that meet the needs of extended and multi-generation families. Many newcomers find such living arrangements more attractive and familiar than the typical Canadian nuclear family living arrangement. Unfortunately, very few opportunities exist to find units suitable for multiple family living in the affordable rental housing market. Further research is required to assess the extent to which family conflict caused by a mismatch between living arrangements and house design leads to homelessness on the part of newcomer households.

The third issue that needs attention has to do with the accessibility and suitability of available health and social services for newcomers. The much more favorable physical and mental health status of newcomers suggests that their needs are quite different than those of the Canadian-born respondents. However, it is likely that most services to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are developed based upon the needs of the more numerous Canadian-born homeless populations. While the much lower health service utilization rates among newcomers may be a reflection of their higher health status, it may also have something to do with the way in which these services are promoted or offered.

At one level, newcomers' higher physical and mental health status is unsurprising, given the stringent criteria that Canada specifies before accepting newcomers as landed residents. However, similar results for refugees suggest that something else is also in play, highlighting an area for further investigation. Given the significant challenges associated with re-locating to a new country, we can speculate that the ability for individuals and families to make their way to Canada is a reflection of the presence of significant personal resources. As well, it is quite possible that some newcomers to Canada view homelessness in a different light than Canadian-born individuals and families, given the circumstances, risks, and living conditions they may have faced in their home countries. In light of their different backgrounds, they also may find themselves more optimistic about the future than Canadian-born individuals and families. The significance of “resilience” in the newcomer population, relative to the Canadian-born respondents, will be a

significant point of departure in examining the Phase 2 results, relating to the extent to which various subgroups have been successful in achieving housing stability, two years after the initial interviews. Other questions that further research should address include the following: to what extent do economic factors alone explain immigrant and refugee homelessness in comparison to the Canadian-born subgroups? How significant is the experience of lone parenthood for newcomers relative to Canadian-born women with children? Does visible minority status have a particular adverse impact on newcomers? Finally, it is important to recognize the somewhat distinct but definitely overlapping roles of municipal, provincial and federal government departments in developing policies and programs that are relevant to the needs of homeless newcomers and those at risk of homelessness.

### Recommendations

Very briefly, we highlight policy and program implications in four domains. First, there is a pressing need for involvement by all levels of government because: a) the causes of homelessness are complex, involving numerous pathways, b) some homeless people are very mobile and move from place to place with very little consideration of provincial and municipal boundaries, and c) there are governmental programs and policies in all jurisdictions that might, inadvertently, contribute to some persons' homelessness but might also be an effective conduit for redress. For example, it is clear that the role of the federal government is pre-eminent with regard to immigration policy. Yet, despite its national scope, it is also apparent that the impacts of immigration policy occur very unevenly across the country, with a tremendous concentration occurring especially in Canada's major metropolitan areas (Bourne, 2003). Explicit recognition of this unevenness needs to be incorporated into settlement initiatives that are negotiated with provincial and municipal partners.

Second, there is a need to develop policies and programs that target problems in a manner that is focused, yet also recognizes that various specific problems each overlap with one another and, through complex interactions, raise the risk of homelessness. For example, family conflict, family violence, poverty and the stress caused by inadequate housing, have often been associated with one another (Lenon, 2002). While the resources to enhance the availability of affordable housing (through income and infrastructure related activities) are clearly the joint responsibility of federal and provincial governments, their *effects* are often left to municipalities and non-profit organizations to address.

A third issue is the pressing need to develop safe, affordable permanent housing through a revitalized social housing sector. In their recent report on housing and social policy, Carter and Poleyvychok (2004) asserted that:

First and foremost, it can be argued that there is not enough social housing. The portfolio is too small to be effective in accommodating the many people who are inadequately housed and too small to be an effective support for other social policy initiatives. [...] [P]roportionally Canada has one of the smallest social housing portfolios among the

developed countries. [...] [T]he size of the portfolio provides no "horizontal equity" for the many people facing housing problems. Those able to access social housing units (generally after a long wait) are in a much more advantageous position than those who have to find housing on the private market (2004, 35).

Finally, the support of federal and provincial governments to enhance the range of health and social services that address the unique needs of newcomers is urgently required. It has been a considerable challenge for mainstream services that are themselves caught between declining provincial and municipal budgets and growing case loads, to also address the changing needs of their clientele. Further attention on the part of senior governments in this arena is certainly required.

### References

- Aubry, Tim, Fran Klodawsky, Elizabeth Hay & Sarah Birnie. *Panel Study on Persons Who Are Homeless in Ottawa: Phase 1 Results*. Ottawa: Centre for Research on Community Services, 2003.
- Bourne, L.S. & J. Simmons. "New fault lines: recent trends in the Canadian urban system and their implications for planning and public policy," *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*, 12(1) (2003): 1-27.
- Carter, Tom & Chesya Poleyvychok. *Housing Is Good Social Policy*. Ottawa: Canada Policy Research Networks, Research Report F/50 Family Network, December 2004.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). *Recent Immigrants in the Ottawa Metropolitan Area: A Comparative Portrait Based on the 1996 Census*. Ottawa: Strategic Research and Review, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2000.
- Israelite, N.K., F.A. Herman, F.A. Alim, H.A. Mohamed & Y. Khan. *Settlement Experiences of Somali Refugee Women in Toronto*. 7<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Somali Studies July 10, Toronto: York University, 1999.
- Lenon, Suzanne. "Living on the Edge: Women, Poverty and Homelessness in Canada." In Katherine M.J. McKenna & June Larkin (Eds.), *Violence Against Women: New Canadian Perspectives*, Toronto: Inanna Publications and Education Inc, 2002, 403-408.

### Note

- 1 Selected responses from question asked at the beginning of the Phase 1 interview: "Before beginning to ask you questions, we thought that you should have the opportunity to first tell your ideas about the problem of homelessness and what might help people who are homeless. Is there one specific thing about your homeless situation that you would like to tell us? Don't worry if you can't think of something right now. I will be asking this question again at the end of the interview" (Panel Study on Homelessness, Phase 1 Questionnaire, October 2, 2002).



# IMMIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS AND HOMELESSNESS

## ABSTRACT

Data on the number of homeless individuals and families in Canada are difficult to obtain and precise numbers are not known. The obviously homeless represent only one segment of homeless individuals and households. Broader definitions of homelessness include the hidden homeless, or those that experience core housing need. Counting these individuals is also difficult because many individuals are able to procure substandard housing for periods of time or may seek refuge with friends and families and so are not easily identified. The situation of the obviously homeless represents the most profound example of the failure of current housing policies and market strategies to provide adequate and affordable housing for all citizens but housing policies must also consider the hidden homeless. Recent immigrants are over-represented among the hidden homeless and their situation appears to be worsening due to falling income levels and discrimination. Adequate housing is important for healthy development and action is required to offset the structural disadvantages increasingly faced by recent immigrants.

Information about the extent of homelessness in Canada is often derived from an analysis of the number of individuals that use shelters for the homeless over the course of a year or on a particular day when “snapshot” counts are generated. A staff report to Toronto city council in June 1998 estimated that 28,000 different people had used the emergency shelter system in Toronto during the previous year (cited in Hulchanski, 1998). This number rose to 31,985 people in 2002 including 4,779 children (Mayor’s Homelessness Action Task Force, 2003). The city of Calgary has conducted bi-annual surveys of homeless people since 1992. It counted 2,597 homeless people in 2004, a 23% increase from two years earlier, following 30% increases through the 1990s (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2004). A recently released report card on homelessness in Ottawa indicated that 8,664 individuals used shelters in 2004 (Alliance to End Homelessness, 2005). The one-day snapshot indicated that there were 14,145 people in shelters for the homeless across Canada on May 15, 2001 (Statistics Canada, 2005) and a survey conducted by the Halifax Regional Municipality in June 2003 identified 234 homeless individuals (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2004). Despite difficulties tracking absolute figures on a national level there is growing recognition of the extent of homelessness across Canada.

Homelessness can be situated on a continuum that includes the visibly or absolute homeless at one end and the hidden homeless elsewhere along the continuum. Individuals who need housing but choose not to access emergency shelters, and those who are turned away from shelters or excluded for certain reasons can be included amongst the hidden homeless. Further, individuals in need of housing may utilize a variety of strategies to find shelter and they may remain undetected because of their success in procuring short-term and substandard housing. For example, they may seek accommodation with family, friends or others, or seek shelter outdoors, or in places not meant for human accommodation. Others may direct a disproportionate share of their financial resources into housing and be at risk of eviction, or reside in substandard housing in need of repair or demolition. While largely hidden from official data on homelessness these individuals may also be included in counts of the visibly homeless if they have taken shelter in government- or program-sponsored shelters, if their housing strategy includes the periodic use of shelters, or if other strategies have failed them. The number of visibly or absolutely homeless has been used as a proxy measure for the extent of homelessness in Canada and the success of current strategies to address homelessness. Recent definitions of homelessness include the hidden homeless and represent a truer measure of housing need and housing distress in Canadian society. Measures of homelessness that include the absolute or visibly homeless as well as the hidden homeless provide more accurate measures of the success of Canadian housing policy.

The majority of Canadians are well-housed and historically the housing experience of immigrants has come to resemble the non-immigrant population over 20- to 25-year time periods. However, recent immigrants are more likely to be counted among the hidden homeless than earlier immigrants and they are less likely to overcome their housing difficulties over time. Some immigrant

**RICK ENNS, PHD, RSW**  
Dr. Enns is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Social Work, Edmonton and Access Divisions, University of Calgary, as well as Research Affiliate at the Prairie Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration.

groups appear to face even greater housing challenges. Primary and secondary barriers to housing have been identified elsewhere. Primary barriers are “socially constructed categories of difference” that derive their meaning from the dominant society. Income levels, sources of income and discrimination are included as primary barriers, along with gender, culture, religion, and ethnicity. Secondary barriers are more easily overcome and include language proficiency, knowledge of local housing systems, housing needs, access to guarantors, and familiarity with local institutions and cultures (Chera, 2004, 21). The housing experience of recent immigrants will be considered below with reference to declining income levels and deeper poverty, and discrimination in the housing market. These factors are identified as primary barriers to high-quality, affordable housing.

**Core housing needs and declining incomes**

Approximately 15.8% of all households, or 1.7 million households, are in core housing need (Carter and Polevychok, 2004). Core housing need arises when individuals are unable to find adequate, suitable or affordable housing. Although this represents a decline from recent years the aggregate number of individuals living in core housing need is substantial and lone-parent families, Aboriginal households, seniors, and immigrants are most likely to experience core housing need.

The increase in core housing need is related to housing affordability problems, rather than a decline in new housing starts or high quality housing stock. Housing affordability problems have increased over the past two decades, even though housing prices have remained relatively stable and the cost of borrowing has approached record lows (Moore and Skaburskis, 2004). From 1982 to 1999 the proportion of households spending more than 50% of before-tax income on housing rose sharply. Renters appeared to be particularly vulnerable to housing affordability problems through this period with the number of renter households paying more than 50% of their income increasing fourfold. Renters were also least able to cushion themselves against disproportionately high housing costs since they were more likely to be young and less likely to have saved a down payment in order to benefit from government-sponsored home ownership plans such as the 5% down-payment plan for first time homebuyers introduced in the 1990s. Moore and Skaburskis concluded that housing affordability problems through this time period were related to a decline in incomes and affordability problems have affected households at the lowest end of the income scale most dramatically.

Moore and Skaburskis (2004) noted the situation is especially perilous for households that spend more than 50% of their pre-tax income on housing and who fall below the low-income cutoff.<sup>1</sup> From 1991 to 1996 the number of households in this situation increased by 28%, from 6.4% of all households to 8.5%. These households faced increased housing costs and declining incomes particularly between 1991 and 1996 as governments withdrew from the social housing sector and cut programs in order to reduce deficits and debts. Average rents for households in this category increased by 3.5% and owner payments increased by 17.4% during this period, while income levels for these households in 1996 declined to 88% of their 1991 values. The decline in household incomes arose as a result of marginalization in the workforce and a decline in government transfer programs. Government transfers to these households declined by 10% from 1991 to 1996 while government transfers to households overall increased by 20%. Declines in government transfers affect the lowest income households in a profound manner since they typically derive a significant proportion of household income from government transfer programs. Households headed by young adults and seniors, lone-parent families, and immigrants were most likely to experience housing affordability problems as a result of declining incomes.

Recent immigrants have been particularly hard hit by the decline in incomes described above. Much of the decline in earnings can be attributed to difficulties finding suitable, full-time employment and greater wage disparities entering the labour force. Fewer recent immigrants were able to work full-time in 2000 than their counterparts 20 years earlier, and the gap between the wages of immigrants and Canadian-born workers entering the workforce full-time increased between 1980 and 2000. In addition, the return on years of schooling and foreign labour market experience has also declined for immigrants in recent years. The earnings gap reported at the end of the 1990s widens when recent immigrants are compared to Canadian-born workers with similar education and professional standing. Immigrants arriving in the last 20 years have not been able to close the earnings gap with Canadian-born workers and the chances of recent immigrants achieving parity are considerably smaller (Picot, 2004, 30).

Declining incomes and diminished employment opportunities have contributed to an increase in the number of immigrant households living in extreme poverty. Picot (2004) noted that the incidence of low income fell for Canadian-born citizens through the 1990s but increased

A recently released report card on homelessness in Ottawa indicated that 8,664 individuals used shelters in 2004 (Alliance to End Homelessness, 2005). The one-day snapshot indicated that there were 14,145 people in shelters for the homeless across Canada on May 15, 2001 (Statistics Canada, 2005) and a survey conducted by the Halifax Regional Municipality in June 2003 identified 234 homeless individuals (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2004).

for immigrants, regardless of age and education, and that immigrant groups accounted for most of the increase in low-income rates in major Canadian cities through the 1990s. Approximately 25% of immigrant families fell below the low-income cutoff in 1980. This number rose to 35.8% in 2000 even as the number of Canadian-born with household incomes below the cutoff declined from 17.2% in 1980 to 14.3% in 2000. The increase in immigrant households below the low-income cutoff occurred despite successful attempts to increase the number of highly educated immigrants and the number of economic admissions, and despite a resurgence of the Canadian economy in the latter half of the 1990s. Notably, the increase in low-income rates among recent immigrants was highest for immigrants holding a university degree. Low-income rates for degree-holders rose 44% from 19.1% in 1990 to 27.5% in 2000. Low-income rates amongst immigrants with less than high school education rose 13.1% over the same time period, from 34.3% to 38.4%.

Declining incomes and deeper poverty have affected recent immigrants more profoundly than earlier immigrants and have made it more difficult for recent immigrants to obtain adequate, suitable, and affordable housing. Consequently, many recent immigrants experience core housing needs that are greater than the housing needs of non-immigrant citizens or than immigrants who migrated in the 1970s, and they appear less likely to overcome these disadvantages over time. According to 1996 census data, 39% of immigrant households that arrived in Canada between 1991 and 1996, or 91,000 of 231,000 immigrant households, experienced core housing need. This rate is noticeably higher than the 28% rate for immigrants who had arrived just a few years earlier, between 1986 and 1990, and the current 16% rate for immigrant families that arrived in Canada before 1976. In comparison, 17% of all non-immigrant families experienced core housing need between 1991 and 1996 (Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), 2000). Similar to the general population, the situation of lone-parent immigrant families is especially perilous. According to data from the 1991 Census and prior to the deterioration of housing conditions through the 1990s noted above, 65.1% of lone-parent immigrant families experienced core housing need, compared to 39.7% of lone-parent non-immigrant households (CMHC, 1997).

#### **Core housing need and discrimination**

Immigration patterns have shifted dramatically over the past quarter-century and there is growing evidence that recent immigrants from non-traditional source countries are likely to experience greater difficulties obtaining adequate employment and housing than previous immigrants, or than recent immigrants from other countries. These difficulties appear to arise as a result of systemic constraints as well as more blatant forms of discrimination. In the former case,

factors such as wage differentials, poor returns on previous education or workplace experience, government housing and income-transfer policies, and municipal zoning bylaws result in the segregation of low-income and immigrant households in particular neighborhoods with lower-quality housing stock. In the latter case, landlords may refuse to rent to certain families, or claim there are no vacancies, and developers may cater to high-income households rather than develop mixed-housing projects or new housing stock for low-income families.

Recent immigrant households from non-traditional source countries such as Black immigrants from Africa have experienced particular difficulties accessing affordable high-quality housing as a result of both systemic and interpersonal discrimination. Danso and Grant (2000) interviewed 103 Black Africans in Calgary in 1991 who were identified using multiple sampling strategies. Participants were highly educated, with almost two-thirds reporting some university education. Seventy-three percent were also employed although most were under-employed and worked part-time. Participants earned only 58% of the average annual household income for Calgary in 1991 and the majority was defined as being in core housing need. Although the housing situation of participants was affected by their low incomes and insecure positions in the workforce, participants also reported that they experienced discrimination in their efforts to secure adequate housing; indeed the authors identified discrimination as the most formidable barrier faced by African immigrants in Calgary.

Murdie (2003) described the housing careers of Jamaican, Polish and Somali immigrants to Toronto. Three groups of approximately 60 participants were purposively chosen to examine the experiences of Jamaican and Somali newcomers as members of visible minorities and Polish immigrants as members of a non-visible minority group. Housing careers were examined over three moves, including the participants' first and current places of residence, in order to examine whether recent immigrants were able to change accommodations to meet changing life cycle needs over time. Murdie reported that, on virtually all measures of housing success, Polish immigrants fared best and Somali immigrants fared worst. Seven to eight years after settling in Canada one-half of all Somali households paid more than 50% of their household income on rent and 71% paid more than 30%. Approximately 15% of Polish immigrants paid more than 50% of their household incomes for rent and 61% paid more than 30%. While Polish households were similar to the general population Somali households reported significantly greater core housing need even though one in five Somalis had been employed as managers or professionals prior to migrating and one-third had completed university, compared to 23% of the general population in Toronto. Somali household income was also less than the average. Sixty percent of Somalis reported

Approximately 25% of immigrant families fell below the low-income cutoff in 1980. This number rose to 35.8% in 2000 even as the number of Canadian-born with household incomes below the cutoff declined from 17.2% in 1980 to 14.3% in 2000.

annual household incomes below \$20,000 and only 2% reported annual incomes above \$40,000, compared to 19% and 57% respectively for all Toronto households. In addition to income disparities, Somali and Jamaican immigrants perceived more discrimination than Polish newcomers. Somalis scored highest on eight out of nine measures including discrimination based on source of income and discrimination based on immigration, status, race and ethnic background. In addition, Somali and Jamaican immigrants were most likely to describe personal experiences of discrimination and racism.

The housing experience of immigrants and refugees in Canada has not been extensively researched but, even though the study results reviewed above may not be generalizable to entire populations or different cities, the results provide an interesting glimpse into the housing experiences of particular immigrant groups in Canada. The experience of racism in the housing market, as well as the disparities in income and opportunities that emerge, are sobering. These results reinforce earlier findings that Blacks and Whites are treated differently when searching for housing (Hulchanski, 1997) and that the housing market tends to direct ethnic groups into separate and poorer neighborhoods (Skaburskis, 1996).

### Conclusion

Access to affordable, high-quality housing is essential to the healthy development of children and adults alike and should be seen as one element of a comprehensive social policy package to promote the health and welfare of all citizens (Carter and Polevychok, 2004). Housing for immigrants acquires additional significance because, in addition to promoting healthy development, it is seen as a measure of post-migration integration and inclusion. Although immigrants have historically achieved housing status comparable to Canadian-born citizens, recent immigrants are less likely to achieve such housing success and are over-represented amongst those identified as being in core housing need. This need has emerged despite relatively stable housing prices, low borrowing costs, and a healthy economy in recent years. Housing affordability is the greatest problem for recent immigrants, and their insecure position in the workforce and dependence on government transfers place, along with discrimination in the housing and job markets, place them at a particular and serious disadvantage. It is likely that the number of immigrants in core housing need, and those counted among the homeless, is likely to increase unless these issues can be addressed.

### References

- Alliance to End Homelessness. *Experiencing homelessness: The first report card on homelessness in Ottawa, 2005*. Ottawa: Alliance to End Homelessness, 2005.
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. *Special studies on 1996 Census data: Housing conditions of immigrants*. Research Highlights: Socio-economic Series 55-3. Ottawa: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2000.
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. *The housing and socio-economic conditions of immigrant families: 1991 Census profile*. Research and Development Highlights: Socio-economic series 33. Ottawa: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1997.
- Carter, T. & C. Polevychok. *Housing is good social policy*. Research Report F50, Family Network. Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks, 2004.
- Chera, S. *The making of 'home': Housing as a vehicle for building community among newcomers to Edmonton*. Edmonton: Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, 2004.
- Danso, R. & M. Grant, M. Access to housing as an adaptive strategy for immigrant groups: Africans in Calgary. *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 32 (2000): 19-43.
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities. *Quality of life in Canadian communities: Incomes, shelter and necessities*. (Theme Report #1). Ottawa: Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2004.
- Hulchanski, J.D. *Homelessness in Canada: 1998 report to the United Nations*. Toronto: Rupert Community Residential Services, 1998.
- Hulchanski, J.D. *Immigrants and access to housing: How welcome are newcomers to Canada?* Presented at Metropolis Year II Conference, Montréal, 1997.
- Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force. *The Toronto report card on housing and homelessness, 2003*. Toronto: City of Toronto, 2004.
- Moore, E. & Skaburskis, A. (2004). Canada's increasing housing affordability burdens. *Housing Studies* 19 (2004): 395-413.
- Murdie, R. Housing affordability and Toronto's rental market: Perspectives from the housing careers of Jamaican, Polish and Somali newcomers. *Housing, Theory and Society* 20 (2003): 183-196.
- Picot, G. (2004). The deteriorating economic welfare of Canadian immigrants. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 13 (2004): 25-45.
- Skaburskis, A. Race and tenure in Toronto. *Urban Studies* 33 (1996): 223-252.
- Statistics Canada. *Population in collective dwellings by provinces and territories (2001 Census)*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. Retrieved 28 March 2005. <http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/famil62a.htm>

### Note

- 1 Households falling below the low income cutoff and paying more than 50% of pre-tax income for housing were excluded if they were headed by a full-time student or by a homeowner who did not hold a mortgage.

# IMMIGRATION AND THE INTERSECTIONS OF IDENTITY

## Theme-Related Sessions Planned at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences University of Western Ontario, London, May 28<sup>th</sup> to June 5<sup>th</sup> 2005\*

\*N.B. All information is based on either the preliminary or the final conference program submitted by participating associations on or before April 29, 2005. Please check for accuracy by contacting the organizers or, commencing mid-May, by consulting the Federation's online programme at [www.fedcan.ca/Congress2005](http://www.fedcan.ca/Congress2005).

### **Canadian Association of Geographers / Association canadienne des géographes**

<http://www.cag-acg.ca>

Valerie Preston, (Session Organizer), Immigration (I): Geographies of Exclusion: Immigrants and Housing, June 4, 8:30-10:30, Room: SS 2032

- Daniel Hiebert, University of British Columbia, Silvia D'Addario, University of British Columbia, "Sleeping on the Margins: Exploring Hidden Homelessness Among Immigrants and Refugees in the GVRD"
- Robert Murdie, York University, "Pathways to Housing: The Experiences of Sponsored Refugees and Refugee Claimants Accessing Housing in Toronto, Canada"
- Lisa Oliveira, York University, "'Homeownership,' a Coping Strategy: A Case Study of Sikh Housing Trajectories in Toronto"

Valerie Preston, (Session Organizer), Immigration (II): Space, Place and Racialization of Immigrants, June 4, 10:30-12:00, Room: SS 2032

- Sutama Ghosh, York University, "We're NOT the Same: Exploring the Differential Migration of Indian Bengalis and Bangladeshis in Toronto"
- Minelle Mahtani, "Tuning in or Tuning Out? Perceptions among Immigrants of English-Language Canadian Television News"
- Suzanne Huot, University of Western Ontario, "Transcending Boundaries – The Lived Experiences of South African Health Professionals in London, Ontario"
- Robert Lidstone, Simon Fraser University, "Queering the Geography of Asylum: Sexuality and Place in Canadian Refugee Determination Discourse"

Margaret Walton-Roberts, Wilfrid Laurier University, "Services for Immigrant Women in Small Urban and Rural Regions in BC: Building Safe Networks under Conditions of Neo-Liberalism," June 1, 13:30-14:45, Room: UCC 315

Fran Klodawsky, Carleton University, "Homeless Women's Experiences of Violence: Some Geographical Reflections," June 1, 15:15-16:30, Room: UCC 315

Geraldine Pratt, University of British Columbia, "Resisting Bare Life: Filipino-Canadian Youth Organizing," June 2, 10:30-12:00, Room: SS 3018

Madeleine Wong, University of Wisconsin – Madison, "Out of Place in Multicultural Canada: Ghanaian Experiences of Exclusion and Claims-Making," June 2, 10:30–12:00, Room: SS 3018

Carlos Teixeira, Okanagan University College, Robert Murdie, York University, "Canadian Ethnic Geography in Transition: Present Trends and Future Research Directions," June 2, 13:00-13:30, Room: SS 2032

David Ley, University of British Columbia, "Mistaken Identity? Re-Thinking Canadian Chinatowns," June 2, 13:00-13:30, Room: SS 2032

Cecilia Xhuang, University of Waterloo, "Ethnic Retail, Transnational Communities, and Implications for City Planning," June 2, 13:00-13:30, Room: SS 2032

Valerie Preston, York University, "Transnational Toronto: Immigrants Transforming Urban Space," June 2, 13:00-13:30, Room: SS 2032

Eugenia Wang, University of British Columbia, "'Alien,' 'Non-Citizen,' 'Other': National Surveillance and the Status of Separated Youth Asylum-Seekers in Canada," June 4, 13:00-14:45, Room: SS 2028

Julia Hieber, Oxford University, "Muslim Youth in Europe and Their Multiple Identities," June 4, 13:00-14:45, Room: SS 2028

Cynthia Jones, Wilfrid Laurier University, "Outcomes and Opportunities: A Generational Study of Two Russian-Mennonite Diasporas and Their Contributions to the Niagara..." June 4, 14:45, Room: SS 2032

Karen M. King, McMaster University, K. Bruce Newbold, McMaster University, "Who Stays and Who Goes? A Comparison of Canadian Immigrants," June 4, 14:45, Room: SS 2032

**Canadian Sociology and Anthropology  
Association / Société canadienne  
de sociologie et d'anthropologie**

<http://www.csa.ca/>

Lorne Tepperman (Session Organizer) and Erin Tolley, Metropolis Project. Immigrants and Their Children, June 1, 2:15-3:45, Room: SH 3345

- Richard Alba, University of New York, Albany, "Boundary Concepts and the Comparative Study of Immigrant-Group Incorporation"
- Paul Anisef, York University, "The Integration of Newcomer Youth in Canada: Challenges and Concerns"
- Alan Simmons, York University, "Immigrant Origin Minority Youth in Canada: Focus on Latin Americans in Comparative Context"
- Monica Boyd, University of Toronto, "At the Starting Gate: Immigrant Offspring in Transition"

Susan McDaniel (Session Organizer) and Howard Duncan, Metropolis Project. Immigration and the Aged, May 31, 2:15-3:45, Room: SH 3345

- Neena Chappell, University of Victoria, "Aging Among Chinese Immigrants"
- Doug Durst, University of Regina, "Diversity Among Immigrant Seniors: Issues for Policy and Practice"
- Parin Dossa, Simon Fraser University, "Living Internationally: Aging Muslim Women's Quest for Citizenship and Belonging"

James Frideres (Session Organizer), Immigration and Ethnicity, June 2, 9:00-10:30, Room: SH 2316

- Linda Gerber, University of Guelph, "Ethnicity, Immigration and Voting Patterns"
- Livianna Tossutti, Brock University, "Religiosity, Familism and Social Capital: General Differences in Selected Ethnic Communities"
- Madeline Kalback, University of Calgary, "Increasing Ethnic Diversity and the Integration of Canada's Urban Immigrant Labour Force"

Evangelia Tastsoglou and Brian Ray (Session Organizers), Gender and Migration Intersections: Immigrant Women and Men Building Lives, Livelihoods, Communities and Institutions in Canada, June 3, 9:00-10:30, Room: TH 3102

- Kinga Pozniak, University of Western Ontario, "Gender, Immigration and Refugeeess: Columbian Men and Women in London, Ontario"
- Maria Wallis, King's University College, "The Racialization and Feminization of Poverty Among Migrants on a Global Context"
- Guida Ching-fan Man, York University, "Transnational Migration and Women's Experience in Chinese Immigration Communities in Canada"
- Hongxia Shan, University of Toronto, Yuzhen Liu, York University, "Problematizing the Public and Private Divide: Work and Life of Immigrant Women in the Garment Industry"

Kara Somerville (Session Organizer), Transnationalism among Migrant Communities, June 3, 9:00-10:30, Room: TH 3350

- Monica Boyd, and Diana Worts, University of Toronto, "Who Do I Marry?: Immigrant Offspring and the Impacts of Transnational Links, Ethnic Embeddedness and Gender"
- Ho Leung, State University of New York College at Oneonta, "Meaning of Settlement Among some Chinese Immigrants in the U.S."
- Lloyd Wong, University of Calgary, Connie Ho, Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary, "Chinese Transnationalism: Class and Capital Flows"

Maria Wallis (Roundtable Organizer), Racialization of Poverty: Focus on Women of Colour, June 3, 10:45-12:15, Room: 3M 3250

- Habiba Zaman, Simon Fraser University, "From Stroller to Wheelchair: Women of Colour in Commodified Social Sectors"
- Maria Wallis, King's University College, "Women of Colour and Poverty: Social Exclusion and the Rights of Citizenship"
- Jo-Anne Lee, University of Victoria, "Using Popular Theatre Within a Feminist Participatory Action Research Framework with Racialized Minority Girls: Issues for Transnational Feminisms"

Lisa Kaida, University of Toronto, Monica Boyd, University of Toronto, "Foreign Trained and Female: The Double Negative at Work in Engineering Occupations," May 31, 9:00-10:30, Room: TH 3101

Cristi Masuch, University of Calgary, Liza McCoy, University of Calgary, "Finding a Job in Calgary: The Experience of Immigrant Women in Non-Regulated Professions," May 31, 9:00-10:30, Room: TH 3101

Elke Winter, York University, "Constituting the Multicultural Nation or A Particular Case of Social Closure," May 31, 10:45-12:15, Room: SH 2316

Eve Haque, University of Toronto, "Multiculturalism and the Organization of Differential Canadian Citizenship through the Technology of Language, May 31, 10:45-12:15, Room: SH 2316

Leonard Chow, University of Calgary, "Immigration, Difference, and Place: "Chinese" Student Organizations in Vancouver," May 31, 12:30-2:00, Room: SH 2316

Lilyane Rachedi, University de Montréal, "Trajectoires migratoires des écrivains maghrébins au Québec et construction identitaire," May 31, 12:30-2:00, Room: SH 2316

Cécile Poirier, "La gestion municipale et locale de la diversité: gouvernance urbaine et modèles d'intervention," May 31, 12:30-2:00, Room: SH 2316

Christiane Harzig, University of Erfurt, "Carriers of Modernity? The Migration of Domestic Workers in Global Perspective," May 31, 4:00-5:30, Room: SH 3345

Elena Chou, York University, "Constructing Canada: National Identity, Immigration and the 1911 and 1921 Canadian Censuses," June 1, 9:00-10:30, Room: SH 2316

Kenise Kilbride, Ryerson University, "Portrait of Immigrant Children and Youth in Homeless Families," June 1, 9:00-10:30, Room: TH 3101

Maria Adamuti-Trache, University of British Columbia, Robert Sweet, Lakehead University, "The Economic Integration of Immigrants: Does Field of Study Matter?" June 1, 9:00-10:30, Room: SH 2355

Rita Henderson, Dalhousie University, "Boundaries of Community and Economies of Giving: An Ethnographic Reading of Migrations and Remittances" (Roundtable), June 1, 12:30-2:00, Room: Great Hall

Pilar Riano-Alcala, University of British Columbia, "Politics of Memory, Social Fears and Public Representations of Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees from Canada" (Roundtable), June 1, 12:30-2:00, Room: Great Hall

Chantal Goyette, University of Saskatchewan, "Labour Market Adaptive Strategies for Immigrants" (Roundtable), June 1, 12:30-2:00, Room: Great Hall

Carmen Lavoie, McGill University, "Participatory Action Research in a Diverse Neighborhood: Reflections from a White Researcher" (Roundtable), June 1, 12:30-2:00, Room: Great Hall

Michael Rosenberg, Concordia University, "Ethnocultural Identity and Public Space: Modes of Participation of 2nd Generation Immigrant Young People in Canadian Society" (Roundtable), June 1, 12:30-2:00, Room: Great Hall

Kisrene McKenzie, University of Toronto, "The Politics of Race, Space and Citizenship in the Making of Canada's First Black Radio Station: Flow 93.5" (Roundtable), June 1, 12:30-2:00, Room: Great Hall

Josh Greenberg, "(RE)framing Homelessness: An Inquiry Into the Construction and Contestation of Public Policy and Media Discourse" (Roundtable), June 1, 12:30-2:00, Room: Great Hall

Sandy Welsh, Jayne Baker, Barbara MacQuarrie, Jacquie Carr, Audrey Huntley, University of Toronto, "Why Women Don't Report: Legal Consciousness and the Intersection Race and Citizenship with Women's Decisions to Report Workplace Harassment," June 2, 9:00-10:30, Room: TH 3102

Philippe Couton, University of Ottawa, "Patterns of Immigrant Mobilization in Canada," June 2, 10:45-12:15, Room: TH 3102

Caroline Keenan, Vicky Maldonado, Bill O'Grady, University of Guelph, "Working the Streets: An International Comparative Analysis of Income Generation Amongst Marginal Youth," June 2, 12:30-2:00, Room: TH 3101 (part of a session on "Immigrant and Refugee Families, Children and Youth")

Kara Somerville, University of Toronto, "Intergenerational Relations Across National Borders: An Exploration of First and Second-Generation Indo-Canadians," June 2, 12:30-2:00, Room: TH 3101

Cynthia Levine-Rasky, Queen's University, "Will They Stay or Will They Go?: White Middle-Class Parents' Responses to Cultural Diversity in Their Children's School," June 3, 9:00-10:30, Room: SH 2317

## **Canadian Society for the Study of Education / Société canadienne pour l'étude de l'éducation**

<http://www.csse.ca/>

*(N.B. All Sessions take place in the Althouse Faculty of Education)*

Jazira Asanova (Chair/Discussant), Migrant and Immigrant Students, Multi-Paper CIESC/SCECI Session, May 28, 15:00-16:15, Room: 1163

- Jazira Asanova, Independent Scholar, "Education of Immigrant Students From the Former Soviet Union: A Case Study of an Ethnic School in Toronto"
- Daphne Heywood, University of Toronto OISE, "Making Space for the Other: Accommodating and Affirming Religious Identities in the Public School system"
- Steve Sider, University of Western Ontario, "Language as Identity: The Experiences of Mennonite Migrants from Mexico in rural Southern Ontario"
- Lantana Usman, University of Northern British Columbia, "Unpacking the Phobia of Learning: Africa War refugee Students in Canadian K-5 Public Schools"

Catherine Burwell, University of Toronto OISE, "Reading Nafisi Together: Book Clubs and the Discussion Difference," GASWE/ACEFE Panel, May 28, 15:00-16:15, Room: 2040

Cynthia Grant, McMaster University, "Negotiating Meaning and Identity in Multiracial Multi-Faith High School Drama Classrooms," GASWE/ACEFE Panel, May 28, 15:00-16:15, Room: 2040

Lisa Taylor, Bishop's University, "Developing Self-Subversive Self-Reflection on Questions of Cultural Difference and Empathetic Reading Practices in a Homogeneous College Course," Panel GASWE/ACEFE, May 28, 15:00-16:15, Room: 2040

Hans Smits (Chair), University of Calgary, "Creating a Curriculum of Cross-Cultural Understanding: Lessons from a Collaborative Action Research Project in Teacher Education," CACS/ACEC Panel with George Richardson, University of Alberta, Ingrid Johnston, University of Alberta, Terry Carson, University of Alberta, Mijung Kim, University of Alberta, Dwayne Donald, University of Alberta, John Plews, University of Alberta, Charlene Hay, Northern University of Alberta Race Relations Foundation, and Emily De Corby, Edmonton Public Schools, May 28, 15:00-16:15, Room: 2054

Karleen Pendleton Jimenez, York University, "Latina Identity Quests Inside the Toronto Queer Village," Symposium CACS/ACEC, May 29, 13:15-14:45, Room: 2054

Alana Butler (Chair), University of Toronto OISE, "Fostering Educational Excellence in Diverse School Environments: Challenges for Educators, Parents and Students," CIESC/SCECI Panel with George Dei, Anne Wagner, Sandra Newton, Bathseba Opini and Roslyn Thomas-Long, University of Toronto OISE, May 29, 15:00-16:15, Room: 1163

Reva Joshee, University of Toronto, "Citizenship and Diversity: The Canadian Struggle," Interactive CIESC Symposium, May 29, 16:30-17:45, Room: 1141

Andrew Okoli (Chair), University of Toronto OISE, "Exploring Issues of Difference and Diversity in Education: Narratives from Africa and North America," Interactive CIESC/SCECI Symposium with George Dei, Riyad Shahjanhan, Alireza Asgharzadeh and Sharen Eblaghie-Bahador, University of Toronto OISE, May 29, 16:30-15:45, Room: 1163

Jorge Ginieniewicz (Chair), University of Toronto OISE, Adult Immigrants' Political Engagement and Citizenship Learning, Multi-Paper CIESC-CERN/SCECI Session, May 30, 8:30-9:45, Room: 1141

- Douglas Fleming, University of British Columbia, "Nation, Citizen, and Identity: A Study of Immigrant Learners in Canadian Adult ESL Programs"
- Neyda H. Long, University of New Brunswick, Daniel Schugurensky, University of Toronto, "Civic and Political Engagement Patterns of Latin American-Canadians"
- Gisela Vanzaghi, University of Toronto OISE, Jorge Ginieniewicz, University of Toronto OISE, and Daniel Schugurensky, University of Toronto, "Multiculturalism Policies, Citizenship Learning and Political Participation of Immigrants: The case of Latin Americans in Toronto and Montreal"

Erica Mohen and Carolyn Shields, University of British Columbia, "The Construction of Identity among Multi-Ethnic Students," Multi-Paper CIESC-CERN/SCECI Session, May 30, 8:30-9:45, Room 2046

Sunah Choa and Stephen Carey, University of British Columbia, "How do Korean Immigrant Families Use Technology as a Means of Maintaining/Acquiring Heritage Language and Culture?," Discussant: Bill Dunn, University of Alberta CCSE/CCEE Roundtable #23-2, May 30, 10:00-11:15, Room: Gymnasium and Mezzanine

Rachel Heydon (Chair), University of Western Ontario, Second Language and Literacy Teaching and Learning, CACS-LLRC/ACEC Multi-Paper Session, May 31, 11:30-1:00, Room: 2013

- Elaine Chan, University of Toronto OISE, "First Generation Canadian Students' Experiences of Curriculum: Balancing Home and School Cultures"
- Luigi Iannacci, University of Western Ontario, "Selective Mutism and Silent Period: A Critical Examination of Pathological and Deficit Constructions of Early Years Students Learning ESL"
- Chao Jia, University of Toronto OISE, "Developing Openness to Otherness: A Personal Case Study in Intercultural Communication"

### **Canadian Women's Studies Association / Association canadienne des études sur les femmes**

<http://www.yorku.ca/cwsaacef/cwsaacef/cwsa.htm>

Habiba Zaman, Simon Fraser University, "Social Justice and Citizenship: Asian Immigrant Women in a Multicultural Society," May 29, Room: SSC 9430

Hijin Park, University of Toronto OISE, "The Stranger that is Welcomed? Female "Foreign Students" From Asia, Racialized Sexual Violence and the English Language Industry in Canada," May 31, 10:45-12:15, Room: SSC 9430

### **Canadian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies / Association canadienne pour l'étude des langues et de la littérature du Commonwealth**

[www.kwantlen.ca/CACLALS/](http://www.kwantlen.ca/CACLALS/)

Terri Tomsy, University of British Columbia, "Jewish Like Me: Transcultural Allegiances and Hybrid Communities," May 28, 2:45-4:00, Room: PAB 36

### **Film Studies Association of Canada / Association canadienne des études cinématographiques**

[www.filmstudies.ca/FSAC\\_congress05.htm](http://www.filmstudies.ca/FSAC_congress05.htm)

Boulou E. de B'beri, University of Ottawa, Identity and Event in Contemporary Canadian Cinema, "Indy Cinema in Canada: Exploring New Practices of Identity in the Margins of Institutionalized Citizenship," May 29, 9:00-10:30, Room: UC 30

### **Canadian Association of Slavists / Association canadienne des slavistes**

[www.ualberta.ca/~csp/cas/](http://www.ualberta.ca/~csp/cas/)

Anna Makolkin, CREES Toronto: "Paradoxes of Postmodern Citizenship: Europassport, Global Freedom and Parochial Identity," May 29, 2:45-4:15, Room B&G 337

Nandor Dreisziger, Royal Military College of Canada, Issues of Citizenship: Canadian, Russian, Ukrainian, "Worthless Scraps of paper?: Naturalized Canadians, Enemy Aliens and Friendly Aliens From Eastern Europe in Canada During Wartime (1914-1918, 1939-1945), May 30, 2:45-4:15, Room: B&G 122

Peter Waisberg, Carleton University, Issues of Citizenship: Canadian, Russian, Ukrainian, "Citizens into Taxpayer: The Construction of Economic Subjects in the Russian Citizenship Regime," May 30, 2:45-4:15, Room: B&G 122

Viktoriya Topalova, University of British Columbia, Issues of Citizenship: Canadian, Russian, Ukrainian, "Cultural Aspects of Ukrainian Citizenship: Traditions, Identity, and National Reconciliation," May 30, 2:45-4:15, Room: B&G 122

Sogu Hong, University of Alberta, Ukrainian Ethnicity and Religion, "Four Types of Ukrainian Canadian Weddings in Edmonton: Expressions of Ethnic Identity," May 31, 1:30-3:00, Room: B&G 116

### **Canadian Industrial Relations Association / Association canadienne des relations industrielles**

<http://www.cira-acri.ca/>

Rupa Banerjee, University of Toronto, "Career Progression of Immigrants in Canada: Evidence from SLID," Sunday, June 5, 8:30-10:30, Room: Ivey 1B02



**Canadian Population Society /  
Association canadienne de population**

<http://www.canpopsoc.org/>

Immigration and Ethnicity (Part 1), June 2, 13:15-14:30, Room: SH 3317. Erin Tolley, Metropolis Project Team (Chair)

- T.R. Balakrishnan, Paul Maxim and Rozzet Jurdi Salah, University of Western Ontario, "Social Class Versus Cultural Identity as Factors in the Residential Segregation of Ethnic Groups in the Metropolitan Areas of Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver-2001"
- Alain Bélanger and Eric Caron-Malenfant, Statistics Canada, "Projection of the Future Diversity of the Canadian Population: The Case of Toronto"
- Monica Boyd and Deanna Pikkov, University of Toronto, "Black Immigrant Offspring: Stepping Back or Getting Ahead?"
- Eric Fong and Kingshan Cao, University of Toronto, "The Bridge Across Racial Digital Divide"

Immigration and Ethnicity (Part 2), June 2, 15:00-16:15, Room: SH 3317. Kareem Sadiq, Multiculturalism Program, Canadian Heritage (Chair)

- Ann H. Kim, Brown University, "Ethnic Resources and the Social Context: Residential Integration in Canada and the United States"
- Margaret Michalowski and Joe He, Statistics Canada, "Emigration of Asian-Born Immigrants From Canada During the 1981-2001 Period"
- J.D. Han and Peter Ibbott, University of Western Ontario, "Korean Migration to North America: Some Prices that Matter"
- Alan Simmons, York University; Victor Piché, Université de Montréal, Dwaine Plaza, Oregon State University at Corvallis, "Migrant Remittances: A Study of Haitian and Jamaican Immigrant Communities in Montréal and Toronto"

Immigration and Ethnicity (Part 3), June 4, 14:45-16:00, Room: SH 3317. John Biles, Metropolis Project Team (Chair)

- Paul Anisef, York University, Kelli Phythian, University of Western Ontario, Robert Sweet, David Walters, Brock University, "The Economic Integration of Canadian Immigrants: A Decomposition of the Impact of Individual, Situational, Structural, and Human Capital Characteristics on Immigrant Earnings"
- Monica Boyd, University of Toronto, "The Earning Attainments of Canada's Immigrant Offspring"
- Heather Dryburgh, Statistics Canada, "Social Structures and the Occupational Composition of Economic Immigrants to Canada"
- Lisa Kaida, University of Toronto, "Employment Experience and Economic Performance of Foreign-Trained Engineers in Canada Using the Longitudinal Surveys of Immigrants to Canada"

**Canadian Historical Association /  
Société historique du Canada**

<http://www.cha-shc.ca/>

Angelika E. Sauer, Texas Lutheran University, "Migrating and Belonging: Transcultural Visions of Canadian Identity in the Immigration Work of Elise von Koerber, 1873-1883," June 1, 10:15-11:45, Room: SSC 3006

Stacey Zembrzycki, Carleton University, "I Have Killed! Ukrainian Immigrants and Criminality in Sudbury, 1910-1945," June 1, 15:15-16:45, Room: SSC 3014

**Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work /  
Association canadienne des écoles de  
services sociales**

<http://www.cassw-acess.ca/>

Carolyn Gorlick, Cheryl Forchuk and Rick Csiernik, "Defining Poor: From the Voices and Lives of the Homeless," May 31, 12:30-13:00, Room: W 173

Uzo Anucha, Mary Medcalf, Kizzy Bedeau and Tamara Ferron, "A Community-University Research Collaboration on Social Capital and the Welfare of Immigrant Women," May 31, 13:30-14:00, Room: W 166

Delores Mullings, "Older Caribbean Canadian Women in Feminist Research: Where Do They Stand?," June 1, 8:30-9:00, Room W 166

**Canadian Political Science Association /  
Association canadienne de science politique**

<http://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/>

(Please consult the Association's program for locations)

Keith Banting, Queen's University, "Canada as Counter-Narrative: Multiculturalism, Recognition and Redistribution," June 2, 9:00 – 10:45

Richard Johnston, University of British Columbia, Stuart Soroka, McGill University, Keith Banting, Queen's University, "Ethnicity, Ethnic Context and Trust," June 2, 11:00-12:45

Melissa Marschall, Rice University, Dietlind Stolle, McGill University, "Seeing or Living Diversity-Contact with Diverse Others and the Development of Generalized Trust," June 2, 11:00-12:45

Alexandra Dobrowolsky, St. Mary's University, "Social Exclusion and Changes to Citizenship in Britain: Women and Children, Minorities and Migrants," June 2, 13:45-15:30

Daniel Rubenson, Université de Montréal, "Racial Diversity, Out-Group Presence and Political Participation in American Cities," June 2, 13:45-15:30

Martin Papillon, University of Toronto, "Canadian Contributions to the Study of Federalism as a Mechanism to Accommodate Ethno-cultural Diversity," June 2, 15:45-17:15

Ethnicity, Diversity and Immigration, June 3, 9:00-10:45

- Phil Triadafilopoulos, University of Toronto, “Global Norms, Domestic Institutions and the Transformation of Immigration Policy in Canada and the United States”
- Antoine Bilodeau, Australian National University, Neil Nevitte, University of Toronto and Stephen White, University of Toronto, “Regional Environment or Socio-Structural Position? The Origins of Immigrants’ Political Attitudes”

Representing Diversity: The Electoral Participation of Newcomers, Women and Minorities in Canadian Cities, June 4, 9:00-12:45 (double session)

- Brenda O’Neill, University of Manitoba, Jared Wesley, University of Calgary, “Winnipeg”
- Karen Bird, McMaster University, “Hamilton”
- Joseph Garcea, University of Saskatchewan, “Saskatoon and Regina”
- Leslie Dickout, University of British Columbia, “Vancouver”
- Shannon Sampert, University of Alberta, “Calgary and Edmonton”
- John Biles and Erin Tolley, Metropolis Project, “Ottawa”

Alexandra Flynn, University of California-Berkeley, “Out of Bounds: The Shifting Jurisdiction of Homeless Policies in Canada,” June 4, 13:45-15:30

### **Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education / Association canadienne pour l’étude de l’éducation des adultes**

[www.oise.utoronto.ca/CASAE/](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/CASAE/)

Tara Fenwick, Joan Schiebelbein, “Negotiating Hope: Immigrant Women’s Work and Learning in the Garment Industry,” May 29, 9:30-11:00, Room: SSC 4105

Catherine Luo, Daniel Schugurensky, Bonnie Slade, “The Informal Learning of Volunteer Workers: The Experience of Immigrants in Canada,” May 29, 9:30-11:00, Room: SSC 4105

### **Canadian Society for the Study of Religion / Société canadienne pour l’étude de la religion**

[www.ccsr.ca/cssr/](http://www.ccsr.ca/cssr/)

David Seljak, St Jeromes University of Waterloo (Session Chair), Religion and the State. May 28, 10:45-12:15, room: DENTAL 2016

- F.V. Greifenhagen (Regina) “‘Sharia’ and ‘Multiculturalism’ Discourses: Exclusion and Equities in the Controversy Over the Use of Muslim Personal Law in Ontario”
- Jasmin Zine (Toronto) “Negotiating religion and the Secular State: Muslim Women and Shariah Law Tribunals in Canada”
- Ali Galestan (Toronto) “From Secularism to Alternative Secularities: Islamic Formulations of the Secular in the Thoyught of Abdolkarim Soroush and Seyyed Hossein Nasr”

Peter Beyer, Rubina Ramji and Shandip Saha (Ottawa) “Religion Among Second Generation Immigrant Youth in Canada: Preliminary Results from an Investigation in Progress” May 28, Room: MEDSCI 341 15:30-17:00

Faydra Shapiro, Wilfrid Laurier University (Session Chair), Transitions: Religion and Immigration (1), May 29, 15:30-17:00, Room: MEDSCI 270

- Christopher Cutting, Wilfrid Laurier University, “Muslim Social Capital: Canadian Community and Identity among Muslim Student Immigrants of Waterloo”
- Alexander Soucy, St. Mary’s University, “The Re-invention of Vietnamese Zen”

Mark Juergensmeyer “Religion Terror and Globalization” May 30, 12:15-17:00 McKellar Room in the University Centre

Paul Bramadat, University of Winnipeg (Session Chair), Transitions: Religion and Immigration (2),” May 30, 13:45-15:15, Room: DENTAL 2016

- Steven Lapidus, Concordia University, “A Tale of Three Synagogues”
- Tony Lovink, University of Ottawa, “When Worlds Collide: Immigration, Culture and Religion”

Religious Diversity in Canada 1: Responses to Religion and Ethnicity in Canada. Harold Coward (Victoria) (Chair). May 31, 10:45-12:15, Room: MEDSCI 341

- Paul Bramdat (Winnipeg) “Challenges and Opportunities: Reconsidering the Relationship Between Religions, the Multiculturalism Program, and the Government of Canada”
- David Seljak (St Jerome’s Waterloo) “The Privatization of Religion and Ethnicity in Canada”

Respondent: John Biles (Metropolis Project Team)



PROGRAM OF  
**Migration and Diversity Studies**

The Program of Migration and Diversity Studies was officially launched in the Fall of 2002. Based on academic knowledge and policy/community experience, the program is available to civil servants from the three levels of government and to leaders of NGOs. Drawing on proven knowledge transfer techniques, these courses put employees in contact with experts, valuable learning material and learning opportunities.



[www.institut.metropolis.net](http://www.institut.metropolis.net)

ICAL COURAGE  
REFUGEES



ATION DIVERSITY

AN TENTH EQUITY

DGE INTERNATIONAL

SECURITY METROPOLIS

EUROPE CONFERENCE

CA PLANNING

AL PARTICIPATION

**Our diverse cities:  
migration, diversity  
and change**

CITIES DIVERSITY

**17-21 October 2005  
Toronto, Canada**

LAVES CITIES ADVICE

ARKETS RESEARCH

**For more information:  
[www.international.metropolis.net](http://www.international.metropolis.net)**

URITY LAW

UROPE SOUTH AMERICA