



Vancouver as a 'Welcoming Community' – Managing immigration and integration in a globalized world

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Background: international, comparative research projects

- Project: Giving New Subjects a "Voice".
Cultural Diversity in the Health Care
System (2005-2008)
- Project: Cultural Capital in Migration:
Labour market integration of highly-skilled
immigrants (2005-2008)





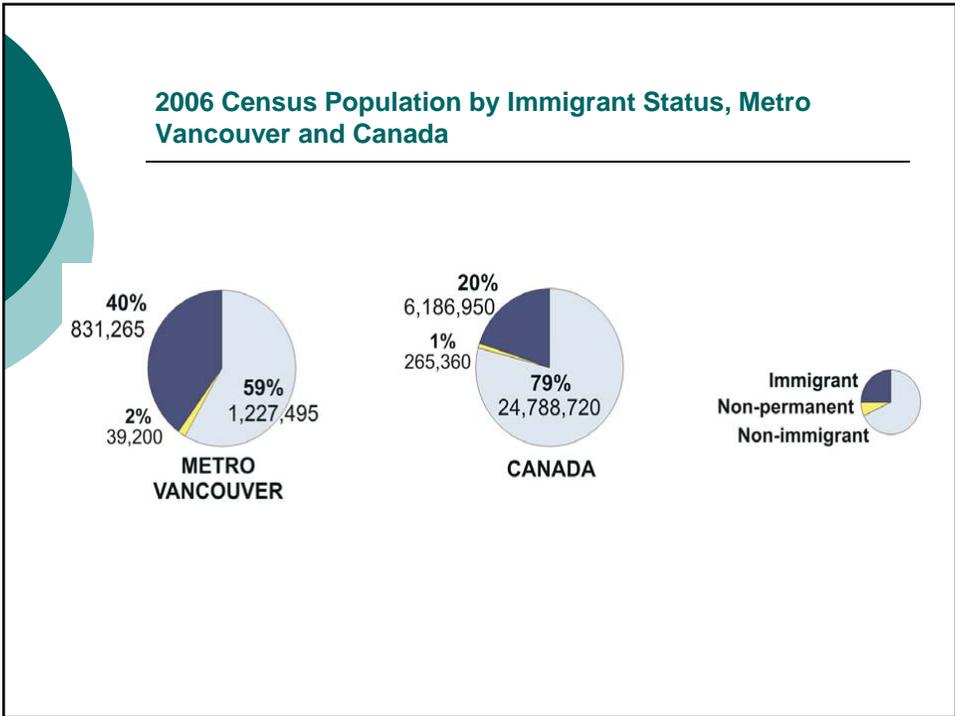
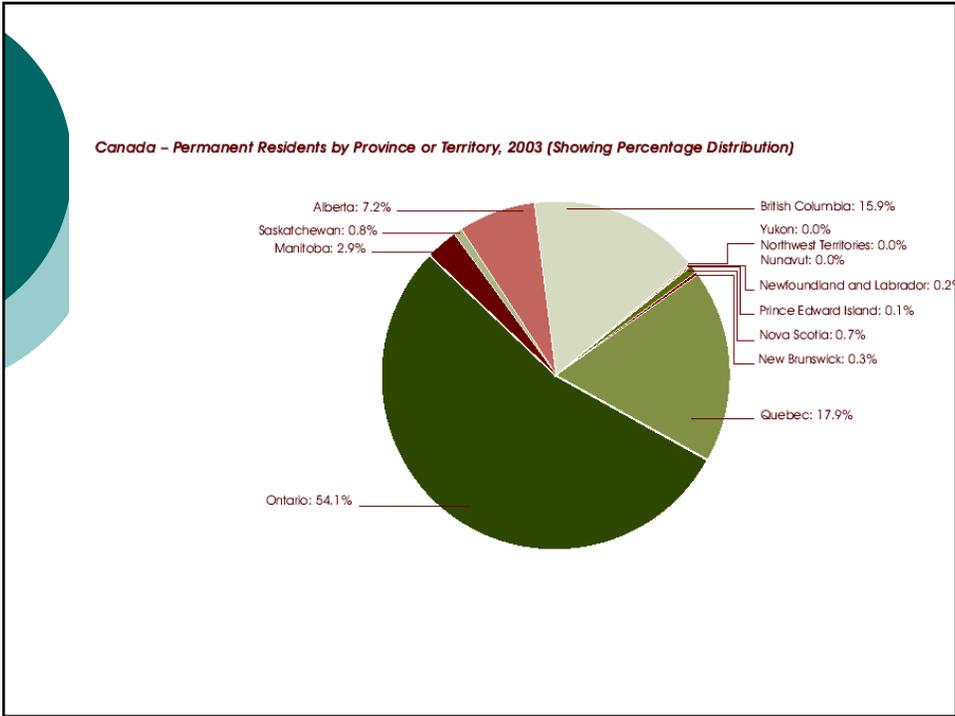
Overview

1. Introduction: Multiculturalism and immigration/ integration policies in Canada's multi-level governance system
2. Vancouver: the urban centre as a laboratory for managing ethno-cultural relations
3. Key challenges to managing immigration and integration at the urban level
4. Conclusions: Policy Implications

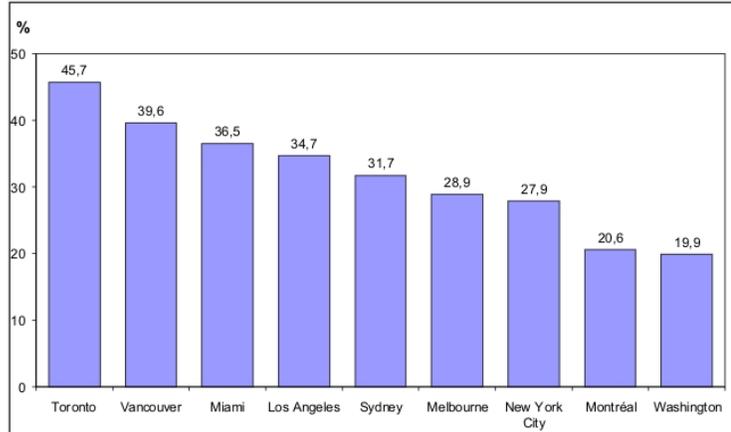


Immigration as a predominantly urban phenomenon (figures based on 2006 census)

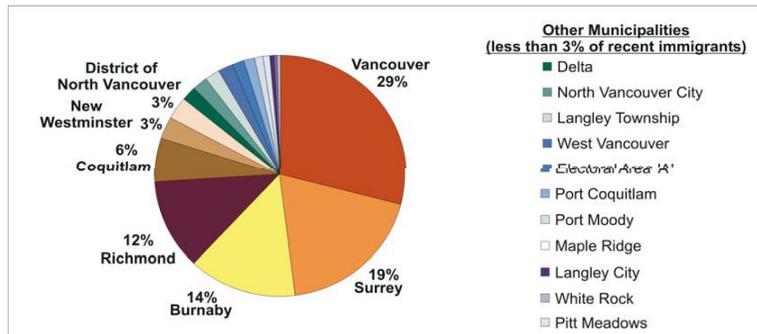
- Proportion of foreign-born highest in 75 years: one in five (19.8%) of the total population.
- In urban centres - Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver are home to 68.9% of the recent immigrants – so-called 'visible minorities' will be the majority by 2017.

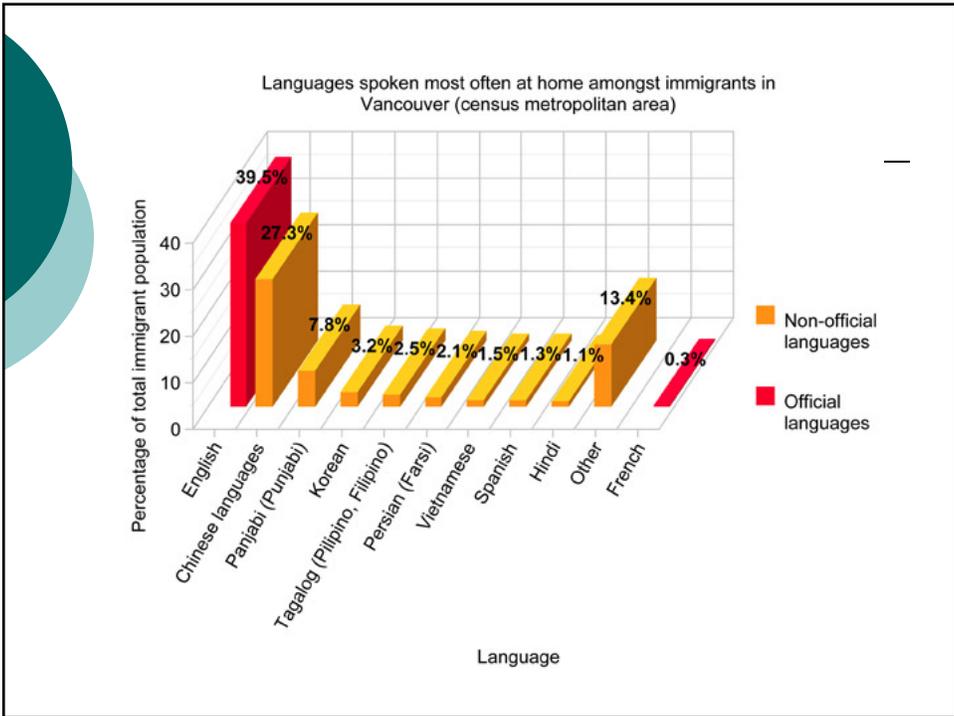
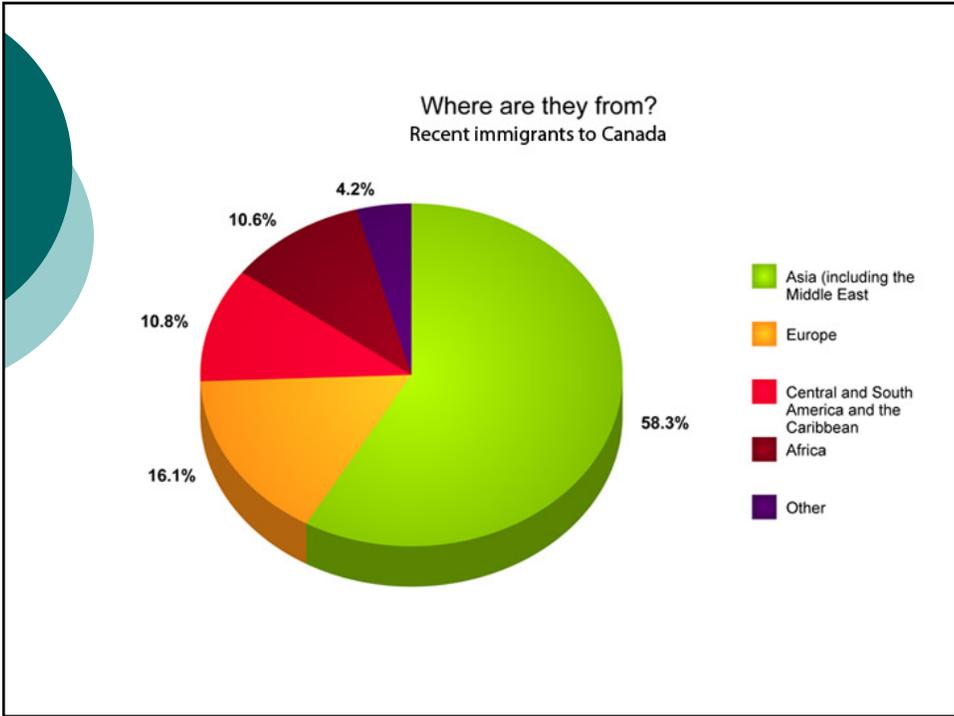


Foreign Born Residents as a % of the Total Population – A Comparison of Selected Metropolitan Centres (2006)



Distribution of Recent Immigrants (1996 - 2006) by Municipality, Metro Vancouver





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- *“Vancouver is home to a multitude of cultures and languages from around the world. The City of Vancouver values this diversity, and considers it a source of our strength, vitality and prosperity.” —*

City of Vancouver



Vancouver's Response To Multicultural and Diversity Issues

- Vancouver Newcomer Guide
- Equal Employment Opportunity Program
- Anti-discrimination, - racism initiatives
- Diversity Communication Strategies (multi-lingual services)
- Encouragement for civic involvement and participation
- 'CityPlan Neighbourhood Visions' (involvement of diverse cultural communities) - Neighbourhood houses
- City's annual 'Cultural Harmony Awards'
- Diversifying police force; training staff



Key challenges to managing immigration and integration at the urban level

- Cultural integration (accommodating cultural, ethnic and religious diversity)
- Social integration (inclusion into educational system and labour market)
- Political integration (allowing for political participation/ advocacy of migrant and minority organizations)



Challenges to social integration

- Widening income and employment gap between Canada- and foreign born population
- Considerable obstacles to labour market and equal opportunities in work force
- Increasing levels of poverty and social marginalization of immigrant communities
- Socio-spatial segregation along ethnic lines at city level



Challenges to political integration

- Migrant and minority organizations are active in civil society but highly dependent on – declining – provincial and federal funding (“fiscal crisis of multiculturalism”)
- Engagement strategies often do not result in *genuine* partnership with grass roots organizations
- Governance of multiculturalism and integration policies often not managed through multi-stakeholder cooperation at local level
- De-radicalizing effect on migrant/minority advocacy groups due to selective cooperation into community outreach/ policy process



Conclusions: Policy Implications

- Multicultural initiatives largely driven by civil society activists; yet severe limitations to gaining significant voice in policy process
- Mismatch between task of managing immigration/ diversity in urban context and limited policy competence and financial resources
- Weak mandate and direction coming from provincial government for municipal authorities
- No coherent policy approaches from three levels of government
- Downloading of responsibilities to develop local multiculturalism and integration policies without proper resources
- Cities are rarely serious partners in provincial or federal government policy and program discussion (top-down approach)