

## **2009-2010 MBC FUNDED PROJECTS**

### **ABSTRACTS**

**TITLE: OPERATION SWAAGATAM: PRE-ARRIVAL COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING**

**P.I.:** Jennifer Hyndman, Department of Geography, York University

Beginning in 2009 between 800-900 Bhutanese government assisted refugees will be settled in BC over a four year period. The Bhutanese have spent 20+ years in refugee camps in Nepal. The first group of Bhutanese will begin arriving between March and June 2009 as part of the Canadian government's new direction in refugee group processing. Immigrant Services Society of BC will destine the first group of Bhutanese to the Tri-Cities. There is no pre-existing Bhutanese community in BC, thus this refugee resettlement movement provides a unique opportunity to document, analyze, and disseminate the comprehensive pre- and post arrival community planning process to be undertaken. This proposed project will address questions such as: What elements are needed to prepare a city for a new refugee population? How do we begin to build a welcoming and inclusive host community? What civic engagement strategies can be used to ensure the Host community is prepared? What can we learn from recent arrivals that can be incorporated into future groups, in particular youth? This project will:

1. Document the pre-arrival planning process;
2. Document the post-arrival settlement implementation plan;
3. Take the findings of the pre- and post arrival process and develop a community readiness pre-arrival tool kit;
4. Take the learnings from this Bhutanese initial settlement experience in BC back to the refugee camp in Nepal so that future Bhutanese refugees arriving in BC are better prepared (in years 2,3 and 4);
5. Compile all findings into a final report; and
6. Disseminate findings to Provincial and Federal governments, future Metropolis conferences, etc.

**TITLE: REFUGEE EXCLUSIONS IN CANADA: 2002-2008**

**P.I.:** Catherine Dauvergne, Faculty of Law, University of British Columbia

This project will investigate patterns of refugee exclusions in Canada from 2002 to 2008. The working hypothesis is that 'exclusions' from refugee protection have increased in the post September 11 security climate (Dauvergne, 2006; Kelley, 2007). This trend has not yet been systematically investigated in Canada. This research will document the extent of the trend towards rising rates of exclusion and it will examine the basis for those exclusions both quantitatively and qualitatively. The central research questions are: who is being excluded from refugee protection and on what bases? People can be excluded from refugee protection in Canada at two junctures in the process. The first is at an eligibility screen, conducted either by CBSA or CIC. The second is as part of a refugee determination before the Refugee Protection Division of the Immigration and Refugee Board. The grounds for exclusion at the eligibility phase include security issues, protection elsewhere and previous claims. The grounds for exclusion by the RPD are those set out in the international Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. These two points of exclusion will be investigated and compared. The data will be scrutinized

for patterns related to country of origin, religious background, gender and age. This will allow conclusions regarding whether the post September 11, 2001 security climate has led to increased exclusions of young Muslim men.

**TITLE: SCHOOL CHOICE AND INTEGRATION: EVIDENCE FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA**

**P.I.:** Jane Friesen, Department of Economics, Simon Fraser University

The substantial ethnic and linguistic segregation of residential neighborhoods in B.C.'s Lower Mainland is reflected in the composition of neighborhood schools. However, the link between neighborhood and school sorting is weakened when students choose to attend schools other than their neighborhood or "catchment area" public school. These school choice decisions may exacerbate or mitigate school-level segregation, depending on the characteristics of schools chosen relative to neighborhood schools. Consequently, policies that increase opportunities for school choice may affect school-level segregation. Our first goal is to examine the effect of school choice policies on the school-level segregation of students by home language and aboriginal identity. Specifically, we will investigate the role of the private school system, magnet programs, and the introduction in 2003 of "open boundaries" for public schools, in shaping school-level segregation. School choice decisions may affect segregation even if students do not purposely avoid out-group members if, for example, students seek schools with high-achieving peers and achievement is correlated with home language and aboriginal identity. Therefore our second goal is to measure the extent to which school choice is directly influenced by the linguistic characteristics and aboriginal identity of school peers. We will measure how parents' school choice decisions are influenced by school composition, conditional on school-level achievement.

**TITLE: INVESTIGATING IMMIGRANT AND NON-IMMIGRANT BUSINESSES IN KELOWNA**

**P.I.:** Lucia Lo, Department of Geography, York University

**C.I.:** Carlos Teixeira, Community, Culture and Global Studies, UBC Okanagan

With immigration projected to account for all population and labour force growth in Canada by 2031 (Statistics Canada 2006), second- and third-tier cities are facing pressure to attract immigrants to counter population aging trends and boost economic productivity. Known as a retirement community and facing huge labour shortage, Kelowna has been active in recruiting skilled labour and small- and medium-size businesses (EDC 2008). Although provincial nominees increased from 36 in 2005 to 120 in 2007, and business establishments increased by 10% between December 2004 and June 2008, a challenge remains: how to retain and integrate the new immigrants which stood at about 10% of the 23,720 immigrants in the Kelowna CMA in the 2006 census. As a pilot study, this proposed research aims to compare businesses owned and operated by immigrants and those belonging to the Canadian-born in Kelowna. We will examine the socio-demographic characteristics of Kelowna's entrepreneurs, the opportunities and challenges facing them, and their coping strategies. In particular, we will explore their perspectives on recruiting and retaining immigrant workers, the barriers they encounter in hiring and supporting the integration of newcomers into Kelowna's labour market, and the strategies they use to resolve labour shortage problems. In addition, we want to know if immigrant firms substitute or complement businesses owned and operated by Canadian-born employers. Drawing on the findings, we aim to suggest policy plans that can remedy any identified issues.

## **TITLE: INTEGRATING NEWCOMERS AS AN URBAN PRACTICE: THE CASE OF GREATER VICTORIA**

**P.I.:** Oliver Schmidtke, Department of Political Science, University of Victoria

**C.I.:** Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria

One of the key questions in immigration research is how the general commitment to making our communities more welcoming and inclusive can drive and promote effective integration policies and practices. This project will focus on the urban context of Greater Victoria and analyze how the 'welcoming communities' initiative as a priority of the provincial government has been taken up by stakeholders in the community. The project's **central research questions** are:

- How does the general commitment to recognizing diversity and protecting claims of immigrants and minorities turn into initiatives, policies and institutional change in Greater Victoria?
- What is the process of forming such policies and practices? What are main arenas for political participation and institutional change? To what degree and in what form are the main stakeholders involved in the political process and what are productive forms of partnership between community groups and government authorities at the municipal and provincial level?

The research will be conducted in close collaboration with the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria and its current attempt to come up with a strategic action plan for making the city more welcoming and inclusive to newcomers. It will study strategies of communal outreach with view to the opportunities and constraints to engage groups from different sectors of civil society and government representatives in deliberating options for making Victoria a more 'welcoming community'. A series of interviews and focus groups will allow highlighting best practices in this field and conceptualizing the urban context as a decisive arena for integrating newcomers.

## **TITLE: SENSE OF BELONGING OF IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR CHILDREN IN CANADA'S URBAN NEIGHBOURHOODS**

**P.I.:** Zheng Wu, Department of Sociology, University of Victoria

This project will utilize a large sample of Canadians nested within several thousand urban neighbourhoods to determine whether immigrant status influences sense of belonging to Canada and to individual ethnic groups. The literature indicates the conventional definition of immigration is problematic because it conflates individuals that immigrated at different life stages. Recent theories on patterns of immigrant adaptation suggest that lumping these generational cohorts of immigrants together could conceal important differences in their propensities and abilities to integrate into their receiving communities. Hence, this project will redefine immigrants in more nuanced terms in order to investigate the relationship between age at immigration (life stage) and differences in sense of belonging. Do immigrants develop a sense of belonging to Canada that is as strong or stronger as their attachment to their cultural origins? What are the implications of age at immigration for sense of belonging to Canada? Are there differences in sense of belonging to one's own ethnic or cultural group between generational cohorts of immigrants? In addition, this project will determine whether place of settlement mediates these relationships, paying close attention to the contextual effects of neighbourhood-level attributes, such as ethnic diversity, racial segregation, and concentration of low-

income households. Does neighbourhood-level ethnic diversity foster a stronger sense of belonging to Canada inasmuch as it reflects the ideals of multiculturalism? What is the relationship between ethnic diversity and sense of belonging to particular ethnic groups? Does the concentration (segregation) of racial minorities represent a pattern of social isolation that weakens sense of belonging to Canada?

**TITLE: ASSESSMENT FOR INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN THE PERINATAL PERIOD: WHEN, WHERE, AND WHAT NEXT?**

**P.I.:** Patricia Janssen, School of Population & Public Health, University of British Columbia

**C.I.:** Sarah Desmarais, School of Population & Public Health, University of British Columbia

Couples new to Canada have few support networks and may be facing unemployment or underemployment. This, in combination with being isolated by language and culture creates vulnerability and isolation, which in turn increase the risk for intimate partner violence. Violence perpetrated by an intimate partner is increasingly recognized as an important determinant of health among women. The risk of a Canadian woman's lifetime exposure to violence from her intimate partner is 25%, but the risk among women of Chinese descent is unknown. Pregnancy offers a unique opportunity to screen for intimate partner violence because it brings otherwise healthy women into contact with health care providers. The best time during the perinatal period (pregnancy, childbirth, or postpartum) to respond to questions about violence, from a woman's perspective, is unknown. As well, controversy exists about screening, as few interventions have been tested for their effectiveness in improving women's safety. In the current study we will evaluate disclosure rates among women attending maternity care services at Richmond General Hospital during the prenatal period, hospitalization for delivery, and a postpartum home visit, as a function of ethnic background and immigration status. Approximately 50% of women in this population are of Chinese descent and are immigrants or first or second generation Canadians. We will interview women who disclose violence to learn about the factors that facilitated or discouraged disclosure, and explore with them acceptable and feasible strategies that they can adopt within their community to enhance safety.

**TITLE: MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN THE CANADIAN CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

**P.I.:** Wendy Chan, Department of Sociology, Simon Fraser University

This project critically examines how the print news media represents immigrants in the Canadian criminal justice system. Media representations of immigrants significantly impact public perception about immigration issues and subsequent policy development. They play a central role in not just shaping public opinion, but as van Dijk (1993) notes, influencing corporate, academic and social elites as well. With a contentious issue such as immigration, where the stakes are high for various groups, media depictions may be crucial in shaping the way the public forms policy preferences. Furthermore, news stories about immigrants involved in the criminal justice system tend to evoke passionate views by the public on issues of culpability. Yet despite its influence, there has not been, to date, a comprehensive study of how immigrants in the criminal justice system are represented in Canada. This proposed project will involve an examination of newspaper articles drawn from three news databases (CBCA Newstand, BC Index and Globe and Mail archives) over a 15 year period (1990-2005) to discover how public understanding of immigrants has been shaped by national and regional papers. Few immigration

topics are as controversial as those involving immigrants in the criminal justice system. Misunderstanding and stereotyping are common reactions. Understanding the role that the news media plays in shaping our views of immigrants is central to developing policies and practices that allow for a fair and balanced view of immigrants in Canada.