



# Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis

Commentary Series

No: 97-01

RIIM: Research, Structure and Dissemination in 1996-97

Don J. DeVoretz, Simon Fraser University

March 1997

West Mall Complex, Room 4653  
Simon Fraser University  
Burnaby, B.C. Canada V5A 1S6  
Tel: (604) 291-4575 Fax: (604) 291-5336

email: [riim@sfu.ca](mailto:riim@sfu.ca)  
<http://www.sfu.ca/riim>

**RIIM: Research, Structure and Dissemination in 1996-97**

First national conference: Metropolis  
Edmonton, Alberta  
March 8, 1997

by

Dr. Don J. DeVoretz  
Co-Director  
RIIM  
Simon Fraser University  
Burnaby, British Columbia V5A 1S6

**voice: (604) 291-4660**  
**fax: (604) 291-5944**  
**e-mail: devoretz@sfu.ca**  
**<http://www.sfu.ca/riim>**

## **Introduction**

The Vancouver Centre in the Metropolis Project - **RIIM** - was designed to meet what David Ley and I felt were the unique challenges and accomplishments of the recent immigration experience in Vancouver. The absolute size, distribution and importance of immigration to Vancouver has made the integration process a focus of continued debate by academics, policy makers and the public. In this milieu of rapid immigration and debate, misconceptions abound. Our four original research domains - economic, education, social and physical - were chosen to reflect the immigration process *circa* 1995. In 1997, we added a fifth and unique domain to the Metropolis Project - religion - to reflect the newest challenge in the immigration-integration process in Vancouver. To further put our research activities and dissemination efforts into context, a few stylized facts about the immigration process will prove useful. First, British Columbia, particularly greater Vancouver and Victoria, is experiencing uncommon rates of population and economic growth. British Columbia's 1995 population growth was 2.6% of over double the Canadian population growth rate. Over sixty percent of this population growth was a consequence of both internal migration and external immigration to the province. External immigration to British Columbia in 1996 was approximately 47,000 with almost 87 percent of the new foreign-born residents moving to greater Vancouver. These recent facts allow three new trends to be tentatively drawn. First, British Columbia is receiving a greater share of the country's immigrants - 24% - than in the past. Secondly, this rising share in the face of declining Canadian immigrant totals indicates that the absolute flow of immigrants to Vancouver and British Columbia is somewhat independent of the total level of Canadian immigration admissions. Finally, British Columbia's 1996 immigration flow consisted primarily of economically assessed immigrants or their immediate dependents and relatively few refugees.

In sum, both the research context and policy framework of the immigration phenomenon in Vancouver is dominated by a numerically large impact of now primarily economically assessed immigrants put in the context of robust population growth. Vancouver's overall population growth leads to both a

unique set of immigration issues, since often internal movement and immigration are intertwined. For example, in the popular mind, population growth and its associated impact on the environment, institutions (universities, local schools), economy (jobs, wages), and infrastructure (transport and schools), is largely - and perhaps falsely - attributed to foreign-born immigration. Thus, any analysis of a contemporary impact of immigrants on Vancouver is complicated by the underlying population dynamics. Is traffic congestion due to migrants from Ontario and Alberta, immigrants from Asia, or just a result of general rising affluence and greater private car ownership? Or, given Vancouver's rapid population growth, do economic winners and losers simultaneously appear in the labour market? For example, do immigrants increase employment opportunities which attract migrants from Alberta who subsequently become unemployed? Given these complications, our research agenda must focus on the impact of immigration on both the resident-born population as well as on earlier arrivals. In short, Vancouver's unique population stock enriches and complicates the research of RIIM in Vancouver.

### **Research Activities: 1996-97**

Table 1

#### RIIM Research Projects

##### The Economic Domain

- S. Akbar & D. DeVoretz. Taxes and use of public services by immigrants in Vancouver and Victoria.
- D. DeVoretz. Immigrant consumption patterns in Vancouver - Victoria.
- S. Globerman. Immigration and the economic impact on the Canadian health care system.
- D. Green. Occupational choices in the Vancouver labour market for immigrants.
- D. Gross. Macro (Un)employment conditions and immigrant employment in Vancouver.

- J. Hayfron. Norwegian language acquisition and labour market performance of Norwegian immigrants.
- J. Hayfron. Immigrant labour force participation rate in B.C.
- S. Laryea. Immigrants and wages in the Vancouver labour market.
- K. Pendakur. Education and immigration.
- L. Pendakur. Income discrimination.
- D. Hiebert & M. Walton. Indo-Canadian entrepreneurship in the Vancouver construction industry.

### The Education Domain

- J. Beynon. Teacher training: Is it effectively preparing visible minority teachers as agents of educational change?
- J. Beynon & K. Toohey. Minority student aspirations and perceptions of the utility of the provincial secondary school career and personal planning curriculum.
- D. Dagenais. Home language and literacy practices of immigrant children in French immersion.
- D. DeVoretz & L. LaRocque. The effects of immigration on school financing, public and private.
- L. LaRocque & D. DeVoretz. The relationship between immigration and educational attainment.
- K. Toohey. The effects of mainstreaming versus culturally specific and heritage language education on immigrant integration and acceptance by the host population.
- M. Wideen. The impact of immigration on school policies, programs and curricula.

### The Social Domain

- J. Anderson. Health services accessibility: Assessing the multicultural change in health services delivery projects.
- G. Creese. Government restructuring and NGO services delivery.
- I. Dyck. Analysis of the National Population Health Survey.
- S. Globerman. Immigration and the economic impact on the Canadian health care system.

- J. Hyndman. Language proficiency and socio-economic mobility of Burmese and Somali refugees.
- D. Ley & H. Smith. Is there an immigrant underclass?

#### The Physical Infrastructure Domain

- G. Creese & D. Hiebert. Immigration and integration in Grandview-Woodland: Settlement in a traditional reception area.
- J. Dyck & A. McLaren. Immigration and integration in the northeast suburbs: Community without propinquity.
- D. Hiebert & D. Ley. Immigration and the 1991 Census: Vancouver profile.
- T. Hutton & A. Kobayashi. Immigration and integration in Richmond: Managing rapid change.
- D. Ley. Immigration and integration in Kerrisdale-Oakridge: The case of business class new Canadians.
- F. Miraftab. Access of low-income immigrants to housing.
- K. Olds. Immigration and urban renewal: Trans-Pacific property investment.
- G. Pratt. Immigration and integration in Surrey: South-Asians in the suburbs.

#### The Religious Domain: TBA

#### Economics

Table 1 outlines the current set of research projects for the original four domains in 1996-97. The topics currently being researched under the economics domain build on the research that was already in progress when RIIM commenced. Three major issues dominate the economic debate in Vancouver. These include: the impact of immigrants on (1) jobs/wages, and (2) taxes and use of public services, and (3) the effect of the immigrant's language, ethnicity and gender on his/her economic performance.

Sam Laryea's dissertation has focused on three possible outcomes on the host population's labour market given the influx of immigrants. He asks: Do recent immigrants raise (or lower) the wages and increase (or decrease) the employment opportunities of the resident-born population? Or is there no significant impact from immigrant arrivals on resident wages and employment? The same set of questions that were formerly being asked in general are now being posed for females and/or specific skill groups and for immigrants working in the unionized sector.

Steven Globerman has initiated a research topic which covers the impact of immigrants on the health care system. He will build on his earlier work, which focuses on the economic impacts of restructuring Canada's health system and the attendant queuing and financial problems that result for the host community.

Krishna Pendakur has reported his earnings differential work by ethnicity and set the stage for the work of Dan Hiebert, who investigated occupational segregation by ethnicity across Vancouver. Both of these research efforts have a direct bearing on questions of discrimination and the efficacy of affirmative action programs.

John Hayfron, a visiting doctoral student from Norway, has presented a foreign perspective on language and earnings in that country. His findings indicate that certain non-Norwegian languages lead to a premium in immigrant incomes while other languages lead to an earnings deficit in the Norwegian labour market.

Dan Hiebert and Margaret Walton are studying Indo-Canadian entrepreneurship in the Vancouver construction industry. This project focuses on the role of Punjabi men in establishing and operating residential construction and construction-related firms. Twenty-five entrepreneurs have been interviewed and a discussion paper is underway.

Finally, Sajjad Akbar and Don DeVoretz have asked the questions: Do immigrants in Vancouver replicate the Canada-wide results of a positive transfer to the federal and provincial treasuries? The initial results confirm the country-wide pattern, but further research now focuses on municipal experiences within

greater Vancouver-Victoria. A more thorough treatment of many of these topics is reported in the relevant discussion papers appearing in Table 3. I should note that all of these papers are available at your respective centres.

## **Education**

The topics currently being investigated under the education domain also continue aspects of the ongoing work of the education researchers. Several investigators have begun data gathering. Through interviewing graduates of Simon Fraser University's teacher education program, June Beynon is investigating the difficulties minority teachers of Punjabi and Chinese ancestry face when working in predominately Anglo-European school systems. Kelleen Toohey is working both in a public school and in an independent Punjabi Sikh school investigating the learning of English as a second language by young children in these two milieu, and examining the utility of adopting a community of practice perspective on the children's learning. Drs. Beynon and Toohey are collaborating on another study in which they are investigating the career decision-making processes of groups of immigrant ESL students who participated in a special federally-funded careers program that provided them with workplace experience.

Diane Dagenais is continuing her research on the transmission of cultural values via literacy events (reading, writing or speaking) in first and additional languages. Marv Wideen's project analyzes educational policy documents with regard to immigrant students at both the provincial and school district levels. Key players in the formulation of immigrant-sensitive educational policy are to be interviewed and the implementation of policy at both district and school levels will be examined.

## **Physical Infrastructure**

Dan Hiebert, in collaboration with David Ley, is overseeing analysis of 1991 Census data on immigrant settlement in Greater Vancouver. Groupings of custom cross-tabulations are exploring the relations between immigrant status and employment, housing, educational attainment, family status, and other dimensions specified at the CMA level, and for ten CMA sub-regions that are the basis of separate study. From a sub-group of these cross-tabulations, Faranak Miraftab is analyzing the access of low-income immigrants to housing. Dr. Hiebert is seeking separate funding for a Mapping Project to display census data related to immigration for the Vancouver CMA over the period 1971-1996. The goal is to produce an interactive atlas to be used in Metropolis research as well as for community educational and planning purposes.

Kris Olds' project on immigration and urban renewal examines the linkages between trans-Pacific immigration and investment flowing into the Vancouver property market. He is considering the development of the Concord Pacific site in downtown Vancouver by Li Ka-Shing, other large developments in downtown Vancouver that involve Asian capital, and the construction of Asian-themed malls in suburban Richmond and Surrey. A comprehensive interdisciplinary project is exploring and comparing immigrant settlements in five contrasting districts in Vancouver.

Tom Hutton and Audrey Kobayashi are beginning a multi-faceted study of immigration and its consequences in the suburb of Richmond. They are emphasizing cultural, land use and service delivery issues in a district that has experienced rapid ethno-cultural changes which are raising problems in the management of immigration and integration. Geraldine Pratt is examining the sizeable South-Asian enclave in suburban Surrey, including internal tensions and relations with the native-born population. Isabel Dyck and Arlene McLaren are considering issues of immigration and integration in Vancouver's north-east suburbs, where limited immigration has occurred in the past so that integration takes place in the absence of ethno-cultural enclaves. Gillian Creese and Dan Hiebert are analyzing immigrant settlement in

East Vancouver, a traditional reception area for poorer immigrants. In this ethnically-mixed district, emphasis will be placed upon service needs and delivery to Latino, Vietnamese and Chinese immigrants. David Ley is studying the settlement of wealthy business class immigrants, predominantly from Hong Kong and Taiwan, in Vancouver's upper middle-class west side neighborhoods, settlement that has been accompanied by a good deal of friction over housing and landscape changes.

## **Social**

Five projects are underway in the social domain. Isabel Dyck and James Dunn are analyzing the National Population Health Survey micro-data file to provide contextual information. A characterization of the sample according to immigration status has begun, and health team researchers are preparing questions and hypotheses for further analysis according to their particular research interests.

Joan Anderson is conducting ethnographic research in three health care agencies selected from 22 in B.C. that are participating in the Multicultural Change in Health Services Delivery Project. This initiative aims to improve health care accessibility to users from different ethnic and cultural communities.

David Ley and Heather Smith's project addresses immigration and poverty. Using primarily census data, they have sought to make operational the American concept of an urban underclass in the Vancouver and Toronto CMAs for 1991. They have found that, when using the format of the American studies, an underclass is scarcely measurable in either CMA at the census tract scale. There is, however, evidence of an association between immigrant status with measures of deprivation, though it is much weaker in Vancouver than in Toronto. There is also a significant difference in the location of deprivation, which is far more suburbanized (as is immigration) in Toronto. The next phase of the work is to extend the analysis to 1971 to see if the same relationships hold at a time when Canadian immigration flows derived from primarily European source regions.

Jennifer Hyndman is comparing English language proficiency and job achievement of two “non-traditional” immigrant groups in two cities, namely Burmese refugees in Vancouver and Somali refugees in Toronto. Qualitative interviews with up to 36 Burmese refugees are scheduled for March to June. For purposes of comparison, information on language achievement has been obtained from the federally-funded Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) from two centres in Ontario: Metro Toronto and the Peel Region. The results of these tabulations (gender, age, nationality, level of English achieved, occupational status before arriving in Canada) will be compared with similar link breakdowns for B.C. that are presently being collected by Margaret Walton using the LINC database in the province. The summer of 1997 promises to be the peak of activity for the project with some very preliminary results available by the fall.

Gillian Creese’s project concerns the impact of government restructuring on settlement service organizations in Vancouver. Research for this project began in the fall of 1996. Phase One involves collecting data on government funding, programs, and immigrant and refugee needs targeted by various levels of government over the last 3 years. Phase Two involves collecting data on the funding sources and services provided for immigrants and refugees by the three main settlement service organizations in Vancouver over the last 3 years.

**Seminars:**

Table 2

Brown Bag Seminars

Kris Olds, UBC: *Developing the Trans-Pacific Property Market: Tales from Vancouver via Hong Kong*. May 13, 1996.

David Green, UBC, and Alan Green, Queen's: *The Economic Goals of Canada's Immigration Policy, Past and Present*. June 10, 1996.

Iris Geva-May, Haifa University: *Recent Immigration to Israel: Some Lessons for Canada?* September 25, 1996.

Krishna Pendakur, SFU: *The Colour of Money: Earnings Differentials Across Ethnic Groups in Canada*. October 16, 1996.

Dan Hiebert, UBC: *The Colour of Work: Labour-Market Segmentation in Canadian Cities*. November 6, 1996.

Heather Smith and David Ley, UBC: *An Immigrant "Underclass"? Some Preliminary Findings*. November 27, 1996.

Rob Gordon, SFU: *Street Gangs and Criminal Business Organizations: Issues of Ethnicity and Immigration*. December 4, 1996.

Daniel Shapiro, SFU: *Language and Earnings in Quebec, 1970-1990*. January 15, 1997.

John E. Hayfron, University of Bergen: *Language Training, Language Proficiency and Earnings: Lessons from Norway*. February 11, 1997.

Sajjad Akbar, University of Victoria: *Immigrants' Tax Contribution and Consumption of Social Goods: Vancouver, 1990*. Tuesday, March 25, 1997.

June Beynon and Kelleen Toohey, SFU: *Do Visible Minorities Want Careers in Teaching? Perspectives from Students in British Columbia*. Tuesday, April 15, 1997.

Abul Shamsuddin, U. of New England (Australia): *The Double Negative Effect on the Earnings of Foreign-Born Females in Canada*. Tuesday, May 6, 1997. Room 1520

Table 2 lists RIIM's past and near future seminars. These sessions are held at Simon Fraser University's Vancouver campus at the noon hour (12:30-2:00 PM). This location and time enables UBC and SFU researchers and students to meet at a more or less equidistant site while still allowing Vancouver-based federal and provincial partners easy access. Attendance to date has averaged approximately 20 academics per session with 3-5 additional off-campus people. We are attempting to expand the latter group via faxed and e-mailed seminar notices. Our web site and electronic mail list informs and reminds our researchers of

the dates, times and titles of the papers up to five months in advance. Papers are made available in some cases in advance on the web site. The aims of these seminars are three fold. First, we as a group review our colleagues' research-in-progress and offer the usual advice. In addition, these sessions provide the initial cross-disciplinary forum. To give the sessions more structured content, I have developed themes: to wit, two success papers on language and two on occupation and wage segmentation. This structure adds continuity and depth to these sessions and encourages collaboration as researchers reflect on each other's work over a two-month period.

Foreign visitors are also encouraged to present their research while in Vancouver. Hence, seminars were (and will be) given by researchers from Australia, Norway, the USA and Israel. This adds to the collaborative nature of the project and involves a Metropolis-type interaction.

### Table 3

#### Discussion Papers

96-01 The Economic Performance of Jewish Immigrants to Canada: A Case of Double Jeopardy?

by James Dean and Don J. DeVoretz

Department of Economics, Simon Fraser University

96-02 Developing the Trans-Pacific Property Market: Tales from Vancouver via Hong Kong

by Kris Olds

Department of Geography, University of British Columbia

96-03 The Colour of Money: Earnings Differentials Among Ethnic Groups in Canada

by Krishna Pendakur and Ravi Pendakur,

Department of Economics, Simon Fraser University (K.P.), and Strategic Research and

Analysis, Department of Canadian Heritage (R.P.)

96-04 The Economic Goals of Canada's Immigration Policy, Past and Present

by Alan G. Green and David A. Green,

Department of Economics, Queen's University (A.G.), and University of British Columbia (D.G.)

96-05 Language and Earnings in Quebec: Trends over Twenty Years, 1970-1990

by Daniel M. Shapiro and Morton Stelener,

Faculty of Business Administration, Simon Fraser University (D.S.), and Department of Economics, Concordia University (M.S.)

96-06 Language Training, Language Proficiency and Earnings: Lessons from Norway

by John E. Hayfron

Department of Economics, University of Bergen

A second major aim of the seminar series is to develop and encourage the discussion paper series (Table 3). In other words, either before or after the seminar presentation, we anticipate that all of our presenters will provide a discussion paper that includes the details of their presentation. This second stage is important since we expect the seminars to be in a narrative form and accessible to all, thus, only at the written stage can we offer the criticisms necessary for scholarship. After the first draft is written, each discussion paper is vetted by the appropriate domain leader, then printed in hard copies (50-75) and hung on our web site. I will discuss these outlets in the dissemination section of this report. Suffice it to note here that the seminar series is part of a larger strategy. Research topics are funded based on an explicit expectation of a seminar presentation with a written product expected shortly thereafter. We feel this is a highly effective means of insuring quality control as well as meeting our research milestones. The success of this type of program requires tight control of the audiences and a well-known set of expectations between the co-directors and researchers.

## **Public Dissemination**

To reach the non-academic audience, we have developed a four-pronged strategy. First, we have developed two Vancouver-based standing committees to interact with the community. Next, we have produced and distributed a written commentary series (Table 4), and through links with other web sites have expanded the reach of the web site. Finally, extensive media contacts through the ethnic and mainstream press are made on a daily basis.

Our first community-based committee is RIIM's Research Consultative Committee, which both initiates and vets new research proposals. This group contains 11 members, 9 of whom are from the Vancouver community. The decisions of this advisory committee are reported to the Management Board for final approval. A Partnership Council has also been formed with nine regional federal partners to discuss their on-going research concerns and the policy relevance of RIIM's current research. The Co-Directors also are members of Citizenship and Immigration's regional NGO advisory board. RIIM's role on this NGO advisory board is to discuss our research output, and receive NGO input on emerging issues.

Table 4

### Commentaries

- 96-01 SFU-UBC Centre for Excellence for the Study of Immigration and Integration
- 96-02 The Political Economy of Canadian Immigration Debate: A Crumbling Consensus?
- 96-03 Immigration to Vancouver: Economic Windfall or Downfall?
- 97-01 RIIM: Research, Structure and Dissemination in 1996-97
- 97-02 Ethics, Economics and Canada's Immigration Policy

Our commentary series has evolved from the Vancouver and national presentations by the Co-Directors in the 1996-97 year. Simon Fraser University's City Programs lecture series and the Canadian Bar Association have featured RIIM, and the resulting formal speeches have been reprinted and made available to the media as background for their immigration stories. The placement of these commentaries on the web site enables quick access by the media and reduces the cost of transferring the information as well as increasing the likelihood of the material being used. To make the discussion and commentary series self-financing, we also sell subscriptions - at cost - to the private sector. Media contact is made through local ethnic and mainstream print media, Rogers Cable, and occasionally the national print and electronic media. Our emphasis is to use Rogers Cable for public forums or speeches since their TV production capabilities are strong and they broadcast multiple times to the entire lower mainland, produce video tapes for RIIM and provide all this service *gratis*. In terms of explaining the mandate of RIIM and providing the public with a sustained and in-depth discussion of Vancouver's immigration issues, the in-depth coverage provided only by cable-TV is preferable to other electronic media. The remaining electronic media contact - usually CBC radio and TV - while national in scope, is considered as primarily an outlet for national awareness since ten-minute coverage is their rule.

Our media contacts prompt additional calls to the Centre from the public, and for specific questions we refer interested listeners to our web site to read the relevant papers or to contact the authors. In short, this mechanism works in Vancouver. The evidence from our web site (Table 5) indicates that for one month (January 1997) 259 papers have been downloaded with 3,888 "hits" from Canada, Europe, Japan and the USA.

Table 5

Summary Statistics for RIIM: January 1997

<b>Period</b>	<b>Hits</b>	<b>Hosts</b>	<b>Papers</b>
29 Dec 96 - 4 Jan 97	366	52	44
5 Jan 97 - 11 Jan 97	739	88	53
12 Jan 97 - 18 Jan 97	572	90	15
19 Jan 97 - 25 Jan 97	1167	109	82
26 Jan 97 - 1 Feb 97	1042	116	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>3886</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>259</b>

These web site contacts range from researchers to print media and private companies.

In sum, this interim report reflects our generally positive research experience, which is a direct consequence of an active set of domain leaders, guidance from my Co-director, and a strong Project Manager. Without their co-operation, this report would have been one-third the size.