



METROPOLIS BRITISH COLUMBIA

Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Diversity

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Policy Briefing Notes

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES AND BRIDGING SOCIAL TIES <i>Sean R. Lauer, UBC Sociology and Miu Chung Yan, UBC Social Work</i>	4
CANADIAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMMIGRATION: INDIVIDUAL AND CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES <i>Rima Wilkes, Neil Guppy, and Lily Farris</i>	5
"IT'S A WAR ON LOVE": INTERMARRIAGE IN VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA'S JEWISH COMMUNITY <i>Sara L. Jackson</i>	6
SURVEYING MULTICULTURALISM RESEARCH: METROPOLIS WORKING PAPERS 1996-2007 <i>Lauren Hunter</i>	8
HOW STRANGERS BECOME NEIGHBOURS: CONSTRUCTING CITIZENSHIP THROUGH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT <i>Val Cavers with Paula Carr and Leonie Sandercock</i>	9
MULTICULTURALISM "ON THE GROUND": THE SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY OF IMMIGRANT AND VISIBLE MINORITY POPULATIONS IN MONTREAL, TORONTO, AND VANCOUVER, PROJECTED TO 2017 <i>Daniel Hiebert, Nadine Schuurman, and Heather Smith</i>	11
CHANGING THE MIND OF THE CITY: THE ROLE OF THE HASTINGS INSTITUTE / EEO IN BUILDING MULTICULTURAL READINESS IN VANCOUVER'S HOST SOCIETY <i>Samara Brock</i>	13

WORKING PAPER 07-07

NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES AND BRIDGING SOCIAL TIES

Sean R. Lauer, UBC Sociology and Miu Chung Yan, UBC Social Work

RESEARCH QUESTION:

Does the participation of newcomers in Neighbourhood Houses contribute to the formation of bridging social ties?

IMPORTANCE:

Bridging social ties – ties with those from different ethnic communities – can provide access to diverse social resources that can help the settlement process. Bridging ties may also contribute to a sense of belonging in a new place. Understanding the role of voluntary associations, and Neighbourhood Houses specifically, in the formation of bridging ties can help improve the settlement experience of newcomers to Vancouver and Canada.

RESEARCH FINDINGS:

We find that Neighbourhood Houses play an important role in integration and settlement by bringing diverse groups of people into contact. We find that targeted, instrumental types of participation can lead to more diverse tie formation and that general, expressive types of participation can lead to homogeneous tie formation.

IMPLICATIONS:

Through further research on association participation and bridging ties, we can help direct policy and practice towards the important task of integrating newcomers through the formation of diverse social ties. We recommend expanding the scope of existing settlement policy and programs to assist newcomers at the neighbourhood level where they confront opportunities and obstacles in their everyday life.

WORKING PAPER 07-08

CANADIAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMMIGRATION:
INDIVIDUAL AND CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES

Rima Wilkes, Neil Guppy, and Lily Farris

RESEARCH QUESTION:

How do individual and contextual characteristics affect attitudes towards immigration?

IMPORTANCE:

Although there are a lot of national and cross-national studies of attitudes towards immigration most studies only consider attitudes at one point in time. In this paper we hold country constant and consider attitudes spanning a 25 year time period between 1975

and 2000. We also use a new methodology (most studies treat attitudes on a continuum ranging from anti to pro-immigration) that treats attitudes as three qualitatively different categories (want immigration levels to decrease, stay the same or increase).

RESEARCH FINDINGS:

The greatest opposition to immigration was in 1982 – which was the largest recession during the past decades. In the most recent period we see the greatest support for immigration. Our results also show that support for immigration increases with education and with minority status (in the form of non-majority first language and religion). We also find that some personal characteristics (such as intending to vote Liberal and provincial region) are associated with pro-immigration attitudes but not anti-immigration attitudes.

IMPLICATIONS:

As long as the economy is strong (or at least improving) we will continue to see people becoming more supportive of immigration. The size of the incoming immigrant population does not seem to matter. However, caution should be exercised about increasing immigration during economic downturns. Policy-makers should also consider whether they are interested in preventing anti-immigration attitudes or whether they want to increase pro-immigration attitudes. Our results suggest that these are not binary opposites.

WORKING PAPER 07-09

"IT'S A WAR ON LOVE":

INTERMARRIAGE IN VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA'S JEWISH COMMUNITY

Sara L. Jackson

RESEARCH QUESTION:

How does intermarriage shape the geographies of belonging in Vancouver's Jewish community?

IMPORTANCE:

The challenges facing Jewish institutions are similar to those facing any ethnic and/or religious community that is for the most part well past the early stages of settlement. Individuals and families are migrating from core ethnic communities to peripheral regions, such as lower mainland British Columbia. Most immigrant groups whose tight-knit communities erode as members migrate from city centres into the suburbs and away from settled communities witness tensions, debates and even battles over individuality, family, community, and nation. How Jewish communities cope with these

changes reflects how all immigrant groups (past and present) in Canada and elsewhere adapt to social boundaries within changing geographies and demographics.

RESEARCH FINDINGS:

The traditional taboo against intermarriage is a powerful institution shaping Jewish demographics and landscapes in Vancouver. It is a marker used for millennia to distinguish Jew from gentile, enshrining the preservation of Judaism in Jewish women's bodies. Despite an ambiguous outlook on the future, leaders are cautiously optimistic as education, conversion and in some cases proselytizing create paths towards the reclamation of the Jewish family. In Vancouver most leaders want to include the intermarried. Even among some of the Orthodox leaders interviewed, the intermarried are not completely excluded. There is an expanding climate of acceptance among most leaders that recognizes the reality of contemporary Judaism, which must include intermarried couples.

IMPLICATIONS:

This study exemplifies how integration, discrimination and cultural maintenance continue to struggle against each other within the milieu of Canadian multiculturalism. Further research on self-racialization is needed not only on Jews, but also on other ethnic and religious groups. The current anti-racism phase of multiculturalism policy demands increased attention and sensitivity to the racial identities of groups that are racialized from both inside and outside their communities. If groups rely on racial definitions to differentiate themselves from other groups, then policy makers must consider how this process may complicate or even interfere with policies designed to eradicate racism.

WORKING PAPER 07-10

SURVEYING MULTICULTURALISM RESEARCH: METROPOLIS WORKING PAPERS 1996-2007

Lauren Hunter

RESEARCH QUESTION:

What are the research findings on multiculturalism produced by the Metropolis Working Paper Series?

IMPORTANCE:

With over 400 working papers available in the Metropolis Series, there is a need to provide a concise reference document that will allow researchers to rapidly access materials relating to multiculturalism and to review major findings.

RESEARCH FINDINGS:

This paper provides a review of major findings in the Metropolis Working Paper Series in an introductory synthesis. This is followed by an extensive annotated bibliography of Metropolis working papers grouped around nine key themes that emerged from the survey of materials on multiculturalism. Each section/ theme area is broken into a detailed review of papers dealing extensively with multiculturalism and a second section referring researchers to further readings. An appendix is also provided, grouping papers in the Metropolis Working Paper Series by ethnic group for easy reference, although it should be noted that not all of these papers deal specifically with multiculturalism

IMPLICATIONS:

Overall, researchers contributing to the Metropolis Working Paper Series are mixed in their reports of the effectiveness of Canadian multiculturalism in promoting social integration and alleviating social justice concerns such as racism and discrimination in the labour market. However, despite these mixed reviews of the policy, researchers are generally strongly in favour of improving rather than abandoning multiculturalism. There is a consistent recommendation from researchers across a broad range of topics relating to multiculturalism that the government should become more active in utilizing the policy to its full potential. This is emphasized particularly in relation to labour market participation, urban planning, community integration and social services access.

WORKING PAPER 07-11**HOW STRANGERS BECOME NEIGHBOURS: CONSTRUCTING CITIZENSHIP THROUGH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Val Cavers with Paula Carr and Leonie Sandercock

RESEARCH QUESTION:

This project explores the possibility that citizenship can be actively constructed through community development at the local level, through local institutions that promote cross-cultural interactions.

IMPORTANCE:

What is the role for public policy in promoting the social and cultural integration of newcomers and minorities into an already multicultural society? Arguably the most direct social and cultural impact of immigration policy is felt at the local level, in streets and neighbourhoods, shops and schools. Perhaps not enough attention has been paid to the potential for local, community-based institutions to develop a sense of citizenship and belonging through an integrated approach to inclusion.

RESEARCH FINDINGS:

This project used the exemplary case of the Collingwood Neighbourhood House (CNH) in Vancouver to demonstrate how community based organisations can do the work of developing a sense of citizenship and belonging anchored in shared values and a shared identity. Building on a documentary by the PI about the role of CNH in the social integration of immigrants, this action research project produced a community development manual to complement the film, and then used the film and the manual in a series of workshops in four Canadian cities (by the PI, with the CI, who is Executive Director of CNH). The Manual documents the vision, values, and relationship building approach of CNH.

IMPLICATIONS:

The workshops (organized through Metropolis centres in each city in 2007) received outstanding evaluations. Attendees (from 3 levels of government, NGOs, faith-and community-based organizations, and educational institutions) responded enthusiastically to the unusual combination of film and Manual, suggesting that these methods are good communicative devices in disseminating knowledge about successful case studies of integration. The case study itself (CNH) shows how it is possible to create a sense of welcome through a local place-based institution, and, through community development processes, to overcome the fear of strangers (in the host society) and help immigrants to become citizens through the process of becoming neighbours. This suggests more federal and provincial policy emphasis on funding such neighbourhood-based initiatives, especially those with an integrated approach to settlement services. Specifically, it is important to support community development approaches as well as services in funding structures, as both bring about different outcomes. If the approaches are used together, they are a powerful tool for settlement and citizenship.

WORKING PAPER 07-12**MULTICULTURALISM "ON THE GROUND": THE SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY OF IMMIGRANT AND VISIBLE MINORITY POPULATIONS IN MONTREAL, TORONTO, AND VANCOUVER, PROJECTED TO 2017**

Daniel Hiebert, Nadine Schuurman, and Heather Smith

RESEARCH QUESTION:

To what degree are newcomers and members of visible minority groups ghettoized in Canadian cities? More precisely, is there a correspondence between the landscapes of immigrant/visible minority groups and areas of poverty in Canadian metropolitan areas? Is the tendency for residential clustering increasing or diminishing? What can we expect to see in the near future?

IMPORTANCE:

Race riots have occurred in the cities of France and the USA, especially in neighbourhoods associated with marginalized visible minority groups. With such a large number of visible minority newcomers settling in Canadian cities, should we worry that the same tensions could emerge in this country? The term ghettoization is increasingly used in Canada; it is important to see whether this is an accurate depiction of the situation.

RESEARCH FINDINGS:

Our analysis corroborates other studies that show higher rates of low income among immigrants and members of visible minority groups than the Canadian population as a whole. Moreover, immigrants and visible minority groups are unevenly distributed in the three metropolitan areas examined in this study. In all three cities, the distribution of these groups is complex and is comprised of a mixture of concentration and dispersion. That is, there are areas that can be identified with relatively high densities of immigrants and/or visible minority groups, but the dispersion of these populations is also striking. We find little evidence of ghettoization, that is, extensive areas dominated by a single ethnocultural group that are also areas of socio-economic marginalization. There are some small areas that share these characteristics, most notably in the inner, older, suburbs of Toronto, but they are few in number. Instead, we find that most areas of immigrant and/or visible minority concentration tend to be socially heterogeneous, with a mixture of low- and medium-income households. We also used estimates of the number of immigrants and members of visible minorities in Canadian cities in 2017 to project future ethnocultural landscapes in the same three metropolitan areas. The patterns identified above are unlikely to change dramatically in this time frame.

IMPLICATIONS:

While this study does not lead to the conclusion that "nothing is wrong", it is clear that the degree of ghettoization in Canada is routinely overstated within the media and, to a degree, scholarly and policy debates as well. This study calls for a more nuanced understanding of the social landscapes associated with immigrants and visible minority groups in Canada.

WORKING PAPER 07-13

CHANGING THE MIND OF THE CITY: THE ROLE OF THE HASTINGS INSTITUTE / EEO IN BUILDING
MULTICULTURAL READINESS IN VANCOUVER'S HOST SOCIETY

Samara Brock

RESEARCH QUESTION:

Do municipally-based cross-cultural training programs like those offered by the Hastings Institute/ EEO offer an effective approach to helping Canadian cities prepare for immigration and greater cultural diversity?

IMPORTANCE:

While immigration helps help to enrich our cities, it can also mean increased ethnic tensions and, in the worst cases, ghettoization or violence. This study looks at ways to engage Canada's current residents or "host culture" in an active multiculturalism, in which they learn to co-adapt with diverse new immigrants. It does so by examining the activities and outcomes of the Hastings Institute, which was established in 1989 in order to carry out intensive diversity and cross-cultural communication training with employees of the City of Vancouver as well as employees of other municipalities, crown corporations, community agencies and the private sector.

RESEARCH FINDINGS:

This study gives an overview of the work of an innovative municipal approach to cross-cultural training and recommends how Vancouver and other cities can better build multicultural readiness. Specifically, it finds that the Hastings Institute was most successful in creating high-profile and intensive training that influenced employees throughout various government, community and private sector institutions. However, the Hastings Institute was not able to maintain an evolving and relevant approach to training when faced with shifting societal and governmental priorities. Key recommendations emerging from this study are that cross-cultural programming should be understood as a core function of municipal government and that multicultural training initiatives should be conceptualized, and thus supported by all levels of government, as long-term, multi-generational initiatives with iterative evaluation and re-visioning built into them.

IMPLICATIONS:

Multicultural policies and programming are largely left to senior levels of government. This case outlines why cities, as the loci of immigration, are key players in creating cohesive multicultural societies and outlines some approaches that local government can take to building multicultural readiness.