Immigration, Diversity and Social Inclusion in Canada's Cities

Martin Papillon
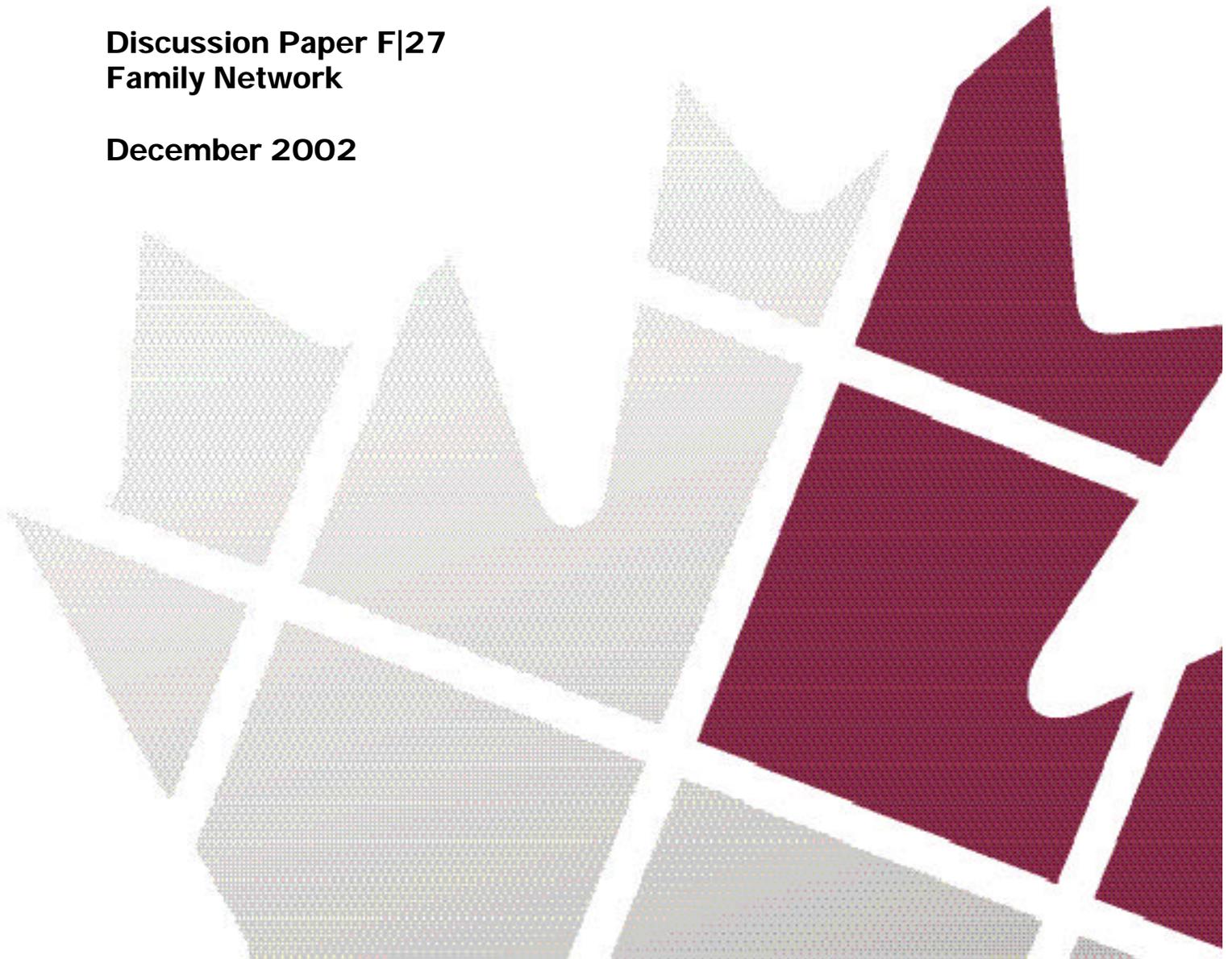
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By

Martin Papillon

December 2002

Foreword

It is now widely acknowledged that Canada's cities need help if they are to reach their economic potential and offer a high quality of life to their citizens. Indeed, there is growing evidence that social and economic conditions have deteriorated for many urban citizens, the most vulnerable being single-parent families, Aboriginal people, recent immigrants, visible minorities, elderly women, and the disabled.

Major questions remain as to what kind of help the cities need and from whom. And here much attention has turned to the federal government, even though the constitution says that municipalities are the "creatures" of the provinces, and most provinces guard this role jealously.

To help clarify the potential roles for Ottawa, CPRN commissioned four papers. The first four focus on urban poverty, immigration, Aboriginal people, and housing. A fifth provides an overview of the ideas in the first four papers, and includes the reflections of a diverse group of Canadians from many sectors who participated in a Roundtable. Each of the papers provides a summary of the state of knowledge in their area and then sets out possible actions for the federal government.

All four papers point to the challenges of governance of our cities. And, despite the constitutional division of powers, there is no question that the federal government is one of the key actors in Canada's cities by virtue of the fact that so many people live in cities and so much economic activity takes place there. The government is an actor as an employer, as a regulator, as a source of transfer payments to individuals, and as a taxing authority which sets many of the incentives with respect to social and economic behaviour. However, the federal government is only one of many actors. None of the policy actors – federal, provincial, municipal, corporate or voluntary – is in a position to function effectively on its own. The actions of all the actors are part of a densely woven fabric of governance which shapes the economic and social sustainability of cities.

This paper, by Martin Papillon, explores the federal role in promoting sustainable ethnic and cultural diversity in Canada's urban communities. I would like to thank the author for his excellent survey of the literature, his thoughtful proposals and his active participation in the Roundtable, as well as Leslie Seidle, who ably conceived, organized, and edited all the papers during a six-month assignment with CPRN. I also wish to thank the funders, listed at the end of the document, who provided essential financial support for the project.

Judith Maxwell
December 2002

Executive Summary

Canada is facing a great challenge, but it is in many ways a positive challenge: that of creating the best possible conditions for ethnic and cultural diversity to become a great asset in the new economy. Diverse cities, where different cultures, languages, world-views and life experiences meet, are spaces of *métissage* highly conducive to creativity and innovation.

To be an asset, however, diversity must be sustainable. Central to the process of creating sustainable diversity is the capacity of institutions at the national, provincial and local levels to counter patterns of exclusion and facilitate the integration of new immigrants into the labour market and guarantee access to social services, language training and education. Also essential is the creation of an urban space where newcomers can build social networks and participate in the cultural and political life of the city without giving up their own cultural and communal ties.

The current portrait of urban diversity is one of greater concentration of newcomers in a few urban centres and increasing diversity in skills, linguistic abilities, personal experiences, and cultural and religious backgrounds. The path to sustainable diversity will therefore vary greatly from one place to another, and from one group to another.

Skilled immigrants with significant levels of human capital may experience a relatively straightforward inclusion process. There are, however, growing concerns about the systemic exclusion of certain groups. The lower human capital of certain categories of immigrants may contribute to the problem. However, immigrants have a higher average level of education than Canadians. Research suggest that systemic factors, such as the lack of recognition of foreign credentials, racial discrimination and prejudices in the work environment, as well as lack of access to affordable housing and suitable language training may contribute to the social exclusion of more vulnerable newcomers.

The spatial concentration of immigrants, often portrayed as fostering exclusion, may not be a problem in itself. On the one hand, it seems to contribute to the creation of social networks and may facilitate access to employment. On the other hand, when combined with poverty, spatial segregation can become an explosive mix, leading directly to the social exclusion of future generations. Lessons should be learned from the fact that Canadian cities do not share with their American counterparts the same degree of association between deprivation and ethno-racial segregation. Access to services such as public education, language training, housing, job training and health seems to play an important role in this regard.

The current interest of governments in fostering the economic and social well-being of Canadian cities is an opportunity to be seized. Important choices need to be made in relation to our approaches to the social inclusion of immigration. Currently, federal and provincial programs are generally focused on short-term transitional settlement services through core and project funding for non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Municipalities are often faced with the longer-term effects and costs of lack of support for crucial services, most notably access to housing and the labour market. There is a need to invest in medium- to long-term settlement services for certain immigrants more at risk. More generally, strengthening the sustainable diversity of Canadian cities requires a high degree of collaboration among governments and the

numerous non-governmental agencies and community groups involved in the integration process of new immigrants.

The greatest problem for municipalities, as for NGOs, seems to be a lack of access to the larger policy-making process at the federal and provincial levels. Municipal governments, which often work closely with the various agencies that deliver services to immigrants, are frequently not included when it is time to review programs or redefine priorities. This creates a situation where confusion, rather than coordination, becomes the rule. There is, consequently, a strong argument to be made for more consultation and more resources being transferred to municipalities for the development of programs that are responsive to the specific needs of the local population. Outright decentralization is not necessarily a solution, however. What is needed is greater intergovernmental collaboration, including with the governments of Canada's larger cities, in defining priorities and sharing resources.

Key Words: Immigration, diversity, integration, visible minorities, urban politics, governance.

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By

Martin Papillon[1]

I. Introduction

As we witness a renewed interest in urban policies and politics in Canada and elsewhere, it comes as no surprise that diversity and the inclusion of immigrants occupy an important place in discussions about the sustainability of cities. Canada is one of the most urbanized countries in the world.[2] Canadian cities are also among the most ethnically diverse. While immigrants constituted 18.4 percent of Canada's population in 2001, immigrants made up to 44 percent of the population of Toronto's Census Metropolitan Area.[3] As Ley and Germain (2000: 29) note, this is the largest proportion in North America: the corresponding numbers are 35 percent for Vancouver, 18 percent for Montreal and 16 percent for the Ottawa-Gatineau region.

This influx of people moving to Canada has created deeply multicultural cities where people from various ethno-cultural backgrounds live together, work and share space relatively successfully in comparison to the experience of many American or European cities. Canada has not yet experienced the deeply divisive anti-immigration movements witnessed in other countries with a high concentration of immigrants in urban centers, such as France, the United Kingdom, or more recently the Netherlands.

Obviously, the picture is far from perfect. As this paper will argue, there are reasons to be concerned about the "success" of Canadian cities at maintaining a socially sustainable environment for an increasingly diverse immigrant population. As we will see, visible minorities, which now constitute the majority of immigrants to urban Canada, face greater systemic barriers to social inclusion than earlier groups of immigrants.

Diversity is not simply a challenge, however. While the risks of increased tensions resulting from exclusion and segregation are real, ethnic and cultural diversity are also great *strengths* for Canadian cities. In the literature on the new economy, there is a growing understanding of the value and importance of a culturally diverse population. As Sir Peter Hall (1998: 7) suggests, "while no one kind of city, no one size of city has a monopoly on creativity or the good life, the most cosmopolitan cities have throughout history been the place that ignited the sacred flame of the human intelligence and imagination."

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[1] Department of Political Science, University of Toronto and CPRN Research Associate.
[2] According to the latest census results, close to 80 percent of Canadians live in cities or metropolitan areas, up from 54.5 percent in 1941 (Statistics Canada, 2002).
[3] According to the most recent data by Statistics Canada (2003).

Canada is facing a great challenge, but it is in many ways a positive challenge: that of creating the best possible conditions for ethnic and cultural diversity to become an asset in the new economy. As this paper will demonstrate, improving the social sustainability of diverse cities requires significant collaboration among the various actors involved in the process of social inclusion of immigrants. Governments at all levels thus have a central role to play. Because of the variations in context among cities, neighbourhoods and groups, there is no single recipe. Choices must be made and priorities defined with a specific focus on the local level.

This paper provides an overview of the key dimensions of sustainable diversity, with a focus on the new challenges facing Canadian cities in socio-economic terms. The first section presents a conceptual framework to help explain the current challenges and key dimensions of social inclusion. The second section provides a profile of immigration in Canadian cities, with a focus on its diversity and the variations across the major urban centers.[4] The third section reviews the literature about successes and failures in efforts to promote the socio-economic inclusion of newcomers in Canadian cities. The fourth section discusses the current roles of the federal, provincial and local governments in creating the conditions for sustainable inclusion of newcomers. Strengths and limits of existing policies as well as the challenges of multi-level governance are identified. The paper concludes by outlining possible avenues for the federal government to contribute to the sustainable diversity of Canadian cities.

II. Toward Sustainable Cities: The Challenges of Social Inclusion

While globalization was expected to reduce the relevance of the local, a growing body of literature suggests that, more than ever before, "place matters" (Dreier *et al.*, 2001). As Meric Gertler (2001: 3) aptly puts it, "a central paradox of our age is that, as economic processes move increasingly to a global scale of operation, the centrality of the local is not diminished but is in fact enhanced." Joining a growing number of analysts (for example, Glaeser, 2000; Florida, 2000; Dreier *et al.*, 2001), Gertler suggests that the key to a city's capacity to create a comparative advantage lies not only in its economic attractiveness (low taxes, infrastructure, etc.) but perhaps more importantly in its social and cultural qualities. As Florida (2000) argues, environmental quality as well as cultural dynamism and a sense of public safety, among other things, are what make a "livable city" with a comparative advantage. Similarly, Neil Bradford (2002: 1) sees the relevance of urban policies in the following terms: "knowledge-based innovation, critical for success in the global economy, thrives in those local places that cluster economic producers, value diverse ideas and culture, and involve all residents in learning opportunities."

In other words, diversity can clearly be a strength. Immigration not only contributes to the human capital of a city, a central dimension of the new economy, but can also create what Kotkin (2000) calls "cultural capital." Diverse cities, where different cultures, languages, world-views and life experiences meet, are spaces of *métissage* not only in the cultural or culinary spheres where this phenomenon is most visible, but also in the social and economic realms. Again, this creates an environment highly conducive to creativity and innovation.

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[4] I would like to acknowledge the background information Eric Fong provided CPRN on the profile of immigration in Canadian cities.

While immigration clearly may have a positive impact on urban vitality, certain conditions must be met in order for newcomers to contribute to the economic, social and cultural life of the city. In other words, to be an asset, diversity must be sustainable (Andersen and van Kempen, 2001). As Bradford (2002: 8) points out, the new economy also ushers in profound structural changes in the labour market, creating further polarization between the highly-skilled, mobile population and increasingly marginalized sectors confined to low-paid, unstable service jobs or even exclusion from the labour market. Immigrants and refugees with limited human capital are particularly vulnerable.[5]

Creating an environment that fosters innovation and attracts highly skilled workers therefore goes hand in hand with policies aimed at reducing the risks of exclusion, especially for new immigrants. Indeed, balancing diversity and inclusion is central to the definition of social sustainability developed by Mario Polèse and Richard Stren (2000: 15):

> Development that is compatible with the harmonious evolution of civil society, fostering an environment conducive to the compatible cohabitation of culturally and socially diverse groups while at the same time encouraging social inclusion, with improvements in the quality of life for all segments of the population.

Creating a socially sustainable environment is a multi-faceted and complex process that involves a range of policy fields, from education to health, housing, urban planning and job creation. Central to the process is the capacity of institutions at the local level to facilitate the integration of new immigrants into the labour market while also ensuring access to social services, language training and education. Also essential is the creation of an urban space where newcomers can build their social networks and participate in the cultural and political life of the city.

A number of authors rightly insist on the inclusion/exclusion dichotomy as the central aspect of social sustainability. It is important, however, not to limit sustainable diversity to a one-way process of integration, as the old assimilationist paradigm, still dominant in some quarters, suggests.[6] Full participation in a society should not be confused with assimilation. Inclusion is a two-way process.

The extensive theoretical literature on diversity and citizenship reminds us of the importance of the recognition of difference as an integral part of inclusion. Different identities, cultural and religious practices, and world-views should not simply be *tolerated* as part of individuals' choices, as classic liberal theorists and republican ideology suggest. For diversity to be sustainable, it must be part of the public life of the *polis*. Norms, rules and practices of the citizenship regime must acknowledge difference and allow its full expression in the public realm.

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[5]   Human capital refers to qualities such as education, age, work experience and health that directly affect one's economic status (Kazemipur and Halli, 2001: 1134).

[6]   Theorists promoting assimilation focus to a large extent on culture. Early century American sociologists defined assimilation as a "process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments and attitudes of the dominant group (…) and are incorporated in a common cultural life" (Park and Burgess, 1924: 735).

In the Canadian context, striking a balance between unity and diversity has always been a complex challenge that has met with relative success. Policies and institutional mechanisms were developed to respond to the specific situation of minorities, such as multiculturalism or the recognition of Aboriginal and official language minority rights.[7] Fundamental to such measures is the notion that it is possible to build a political community without requiring everyone to share a single cultural, social or even political space.

While such policies are well developed in Canada at the national level, there is an increasing understanding that, to a considerable degree, diversity is expressed and lived at the local level – in neighbourhoods, schools, parks and playgrounds. It is also experienced differently according to the forms of inclusion and exclusion present in different contexts. Patterns of inclusion vary from one neighbourhood and another, and between one city and another. This is why, as Polèse and Stren argue, the social sustainability of cities is affected not only by aspatial policies such as health care, education, immigration and multiculturalism, but also by policies and practices defined locally in response to specific conditions and needs. In other words, the local also matters in the recognition of difference.

The Immigration Process: From Settlement to Social Inclusion

For immigrants, inclusion is more a process than a fixed moment. Starting in the early stages of settlement, inclusion in the economic, social, political and cultural life of the city is an ongoing challenge. In many ways, the challenge is also transmitted to subsequent generations that seek to strike a balance between their Canadian roots and their parents' origins.

It is, however, in the early stages of settlement that immigrants face the greatest challenges. Finding a job and housing, obtaining access to public services, and developing a social network for support and cultural expression are all part of this phase. Because of its specific focus on the socio-economic dimensions of inclusion, this paper does not discuss in great detail the multiple challenges immigrants face at the cultural, social and political levels. Such dimensions are by no means unimportant, however. As we will point out, ethno-cultural and racial discrimination, as well as the lack of cultural, linguistic and religious recognition, can contribute to socio-economic exclusion in very significant ways. Access to governance processes and institutions is also a central dimension of an inclusive democratic society. It is thus difficult to separate the socio-economic aspects from the broader political and cultural dimensions of inclusion. In the subsequent discussion, while the focus will be on socio-economic factors, the latter dimensions will be taken into account when necessary.

Research on the socio-economic dimensions of inclusion focuses particularly on timely access to the labour market and stable income. Access to jobs necessarily depends on the general conditions of the labour market in a given city at a given time.[8] Economic inclusion is not simply a question of timing, however. Access to the labour market will also vary according to the specific skills of immigrants and the degree to which these are recognized. Restrictive rules

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7   On the constant search for balance in the Canadian diversity model, see Jenson and Papillon (2001).
8   Although data are still partial, longitudinal analysis suggest that immigrants who came to Canada in the early 1990s, in the midst of a recession, fared worse in the long term than previous cohorts and more recent ones (Ley, 1999).

regarding work permits and lack of recognition of credentials are frequently identified as barriers to inclusion. Moreover, as the Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues notes in its interim report (Sgro, 2002: 23), because immigrants with higher levels of human capital will generally integrate more easily into the labour market, it is important to invest in skills training and education for newcomers who lack skills and recognized credentials. Otherwise, many find themselves dependent on government support for a lengthy period.

Access to the labour market is not the whole story. An important dimension of inclusion is the degree to which immigrants participate in the daily life of their community, neighbourhood and society more broadly (Weinfield and Wilkerson, 1999). The "social capital" thesis popularized by Robert Putnam (1994; 2000) suggests that participation in community-based networks will enhance the capacity of immigrants to build relationships and strengthen the general cohesion of the community. Social networks and voluntary organizations are thus seen as key agents in promoting sustainable diversity.

Much attention has recently been given to the impact of the spatial concentration of immigrants in certain neighbourhoods, especially according to country or region of origin. The 2001 riots in Northern England were to a large extent attributed to the pervasive ethnic walls within communities.[9] On the one hand, as Fong (2000) and others suggest, a high degree of residential segregation may limit the potential for immigrants to participate fully in the broader society. On the other hand, spatial concentration also facilitates the creation of social networks, and therefore social capital, among newcomers of the same origin (Ley and Germain, 2000). As we will see in the next section, evidence on the question is mixed in the Canadian context.

To sum up, as Polèse and Stren (2000: 15) suggest, urban policies conducive to sustainability will help build bridges among people of diverse origins and create conditions for the full inclusion of immigrants into neighbourhood life, the labour market and the cultural life of the city. But they must do so by fully recognizing difference and its various expressions.

Summary: Key Dimensions of Sustainable Diversity and Inclusion

- Timely access to the labour market
- Recognition of human and cultural capital of newcomers
- Access to skills training and education programs
- Culturally sensitive access to social services
- Strong community-based and neighbourhood-based social networks
- Inclusive public spaces for leisure and activities that allow the expression of difference
- Access to quality services and affordable housing
- Recognition of cultural differences in planning and policy-making
- Anti-discrimination measures in employment and housing

[9] See http://society.guardian.co.uk/regeneration/story/0,7940,616893,00.html.

III. The Changing Patterns of Immigration in Canada: A Brief Overview

As noted at the outset, immigration in Canada is essentially an urban phenomenon. This section presents the main characteristics of recent urban immigration and the challenges posed by such patterns.

Greater Diversity

Prior to the 1967 *Immigration Act*, more than 80 percent of immigrants to Canada came from European countries, mostly from the United Kingdom and Southern Europe (Ley and Smith, 2000). With the introduction of the point system and the removal of explicit discrimination based on country of origin, the portrait of immigration changed dramatically. By 2001, the proportion of immigrants of European origin had fallen to 17 percent. While immigration from Asia accounted for less than 10 percent of all immigrants in 1966, it is now by far the largest category, with more than 63 percent of all newcomers coming from the region (see also Figure 1). The vast majority of immigrants are thus, according to Canadian discourse, "visible minorities."[10]

Figure 1
Immigration by Source Area
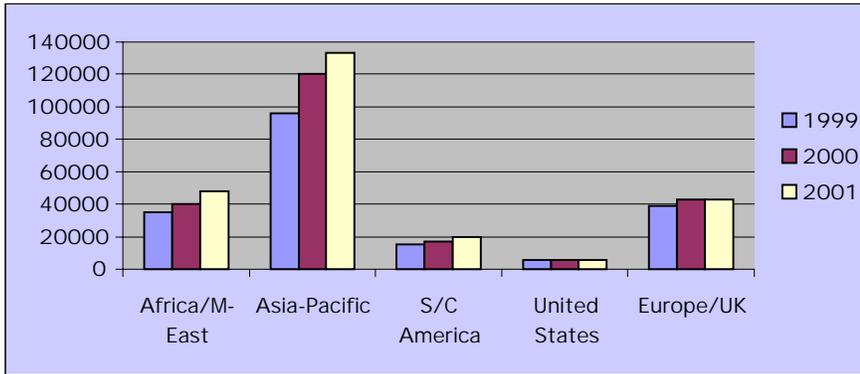
Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, "Facts and Figures 2001: Immigration Overview."

The socio-economic background of immigrants has also become more varied. In 2001, skilled workers accounted for 54 percent of all newcomers, immigrants under the family class 27 percent, refugees 11 percent and business class immigrants six percent.[11] This variety of economic and social backgrounds creates disparities in needs and expectations during the settlement process.[12] This diversity also creates challenges to governments and communities that

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[10]   According to the Employment Equity Act, visible minorities are defined as individuals who are non-white in colour and non-Aboriginal or non-Caucasian by "race." In practice, this means people who have origins other than European.

[11]   Citizenship and Immigration Canada, "Facts and Figures 2001: Immigration Overview."

[12]   Immigrants under the business class had on average declared assets of over a million dollars in 1999 (Ley, 1999).

provide services to newcomers. Policies and services must be adapted to an array of cultural, religious, socio-economic, educational and linguistic backgrounds.

Differences Among Cities

The distribution of immigrants within Canada's major cities varies considerably (see Figure 2). In 2001, 48 percent of immigrants and refugees settled in Toronto, 15 percent in Vancouver, 12 percent in Montreal, and only eight percent in the following cities combined: Calgary, Ottawa-Carleton, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Hamilton, London, Quebec City, Halifax, Regina, Saskatoon, and Victoria.[13] The tendency of immigrants to concentrate in the three largest cities, especially Toronto, continues to increase.

Figure 2
Immigration by Census Metropolitan Area
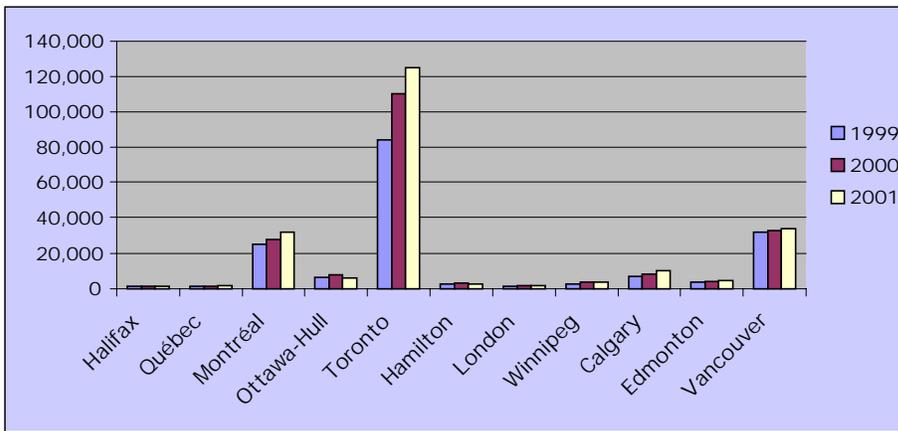
Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, "Facts and Figures 2001: Immigration Overview."

Toronto has become the destination of almost half of all newcomers, making it one of the most multicultural cities in the world. According to the 2001 census data, 44 percent of Toronto's population was not born in Canada.[14] This high concentration of immigrants creates very specific challenges for Canada's largest city – in services, urban planning, infrastructure and other fields. In a city such as Toronto, education and health services, for example, must be adapted to the linguistic, cultural and religious diversity of the population. Adapting such services often requires additional financial resources and professional expertise.

As shown in Figure 3, the nature of immigration also varies considerably from one city to another. While Toronto receives the largest number of immigrants, it receives a lower proportion of immigrants from the wealthier business class than Montreal and Vancouver. Montreal receives the highest proportion of refugees. The experience and needs of newcomers will vary considerably depending on the reasons for and conditions of their arrival in Canada. Refugees often come from their country of origin under difficult conditions, leaving relatives in

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[13]   Citizenship and Immigration Canada, "Facts and Figures 2001: Immigration Overview."
[14]   According to some projections, the proportion will soon be more than 50 percent (Statistics Canada, 2003).

precarious, if not dangerous, situations. Their needs, in terms of socio-economic and psychological support, are often greater than those of immigrants from the skilled workers or family categories who planned their settlement in Canada and have greater resources to rely on once in the country. The diversity of experiences is an important factor to consider when planning services and coordinating action to foster sustainable inclusion.

Figure 3
Categories of Immigrants, Distribution Among Cities
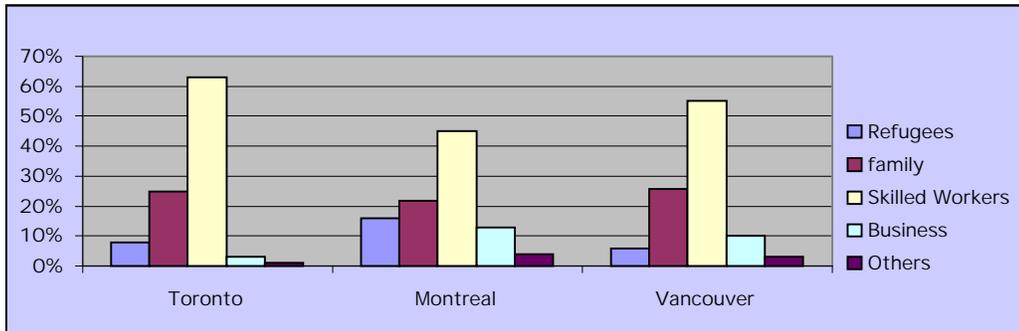
Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, "Facts and Figures 2001: Immigration Overview."

As to ethno-cultural distribution, Vancouver and Toronto receive a high proportion of immigrants from Hong Kong and Asia as a whole, while Montreal, partly because of Quebec's policy of giving preference to French-speaking immigrants, receives a significant number of immigrants from Haiti, Lebanon, Vietnam, France and, more recently, Algeria (see also Figure 4).
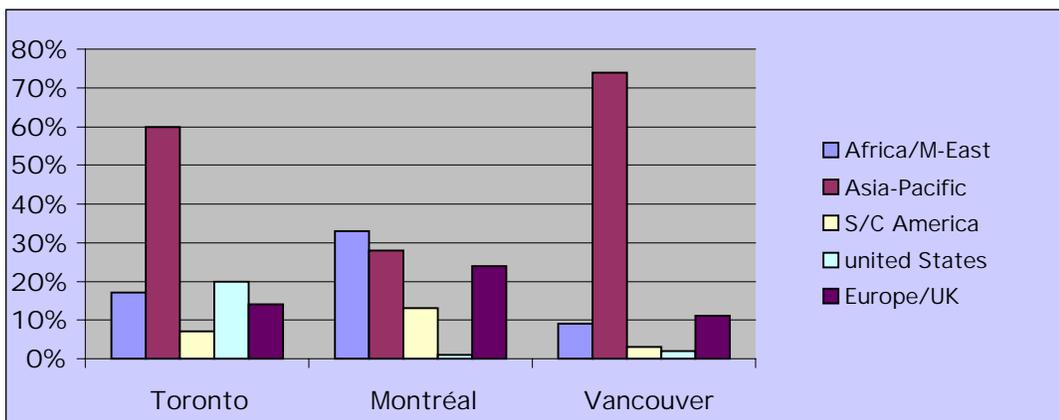
Figure 4
Regions of Origin, Distribution According to City

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, "Facts and Figures 2001: Immigration Overview."

This variation in the nature of immigration in the three largest cities is significant because the expectations and needs of new immigrants vary according to their place of settlement. The higher number of refugees in Toronto and Montreal means that basic socio-economic support will be necessary during the early stages of settlement. The high concentration of immigrants from Asia in Vancouver creates a particular social and cultural dynamic found in no other Canadian city. These variations have consequences for policy planning and governance. There are, however, some common trends in the patterns of inclusion and exclusion of new immigrants throughout the country. The next section provides an overview of the current debate on this question.

IV. Patterns of Socio-Economic Exclusion in Canadian Cities: Where are the Faultlines?

Thanks in large measure to the Metropolis project, the research on socio-economic inclusion of immigrants in Canada is quite rich. Indeed, it is impossible to offer a complete review in a few pages. I will instead review briefly some of the key debates about the social sustainability of cities, with a focus on the major patterns of exclusion identified in the literature. It should be noted that exclusion is often a cycle and it is difficult to isolate its specific dimensions. Economic deprivation is often associated with poor neighbourhoods and may be linked to low levels of participation and social capital. While different dimensions of exclusion are often considered separately, in fact they intersect with one another. In this regard, the objective of the following discussion is not to determine causal links but to identify the key faultlines outlined in the literature.

Economic Performance: Are New Immigrants Worse Off?

The central debate in the literature about the economic performance of immigrants is whether recent immigrants are worse off than earlier cohorts. While the overall immigrant population does comparatively well in terms of employment and income, the data point to sharp differences when the focus is on more recent immigration (generally defined as those in Canada for 10 years or less). In a recent study of urban poverty in Canada, Lee (2000) found that the poverty rate among recent immigrants is significantly higher than the Canadian average (52.1 percent compared with 24.5 percent for all city residents).[15] This is especially true for visible minorities, who comprise the majority of recent immigrants. Using 1991 census data, Kazemipur and Halli (2001) found a significantly higher poverty rate for newcomers from South-East Asian (30.8%), Arab (40.9%), Latin American (38.8%) and Black/Caribbean (29.4%) countries than for the Canadian average.

Similar results are found in studies comparing employment rates of recent cohorts with previous ones (Verma and Chan, 2000). Using 1991 census data, Verma and Chan (2000) showed substantially higher unemployment rates for visible minorities (up to 17 percent for certain groups). Studies on the economic performance of visible minorities consistently show that Black

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[15]   Taken from Gertler (2001). The poverty rate in Lee's study was developed by applying Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-Off measure to the 1996 census data.

adults, both immigrant and Canadian-born, have a higher unemployment rate than the Canadian average (10% to 15% higher according to Torczyner (1997)).

Nonetheless, evidence does not support the view that immigrants and refugees have come to rely disproportionately more on the social safety net. In 1990, the net contribution (all taxes paid minus all social programs used) of a "foreign-born" household was $11,970, compared to $10,157 for a Canadian-born household. In essence, each "foreign-born" household transferred on average $1,813, or an aggregate of $2.6 billion, to the Canadian-born population.[16]

Variations Across Cities

In addition to the fact that economic performance varies among immigrant categories and ethnic origins, there is variation across cities. Kazemipur and Halli (2001: 1142) found that the highest poverty rates for immigrants were in Montreal (31.4) and Quebec City (29.4), while the lowest were in Victoria (13.1) and Halifax (12.6). Toronto (17.1) and Vancouver (20.9) fell in the middle of the list of the 19 largest Census Metropolitan Areas. It might be suggested that these findings reflect the overall level of poverty in those cities. However, their study found that the difference between the poverty rate of immigrants and non-immigrants is also the highest in Montreal.

A number of factors could explain such variations. Kazemipur and Halli (2001) suggest that the linguistic burden faced by many immigrants in francophone Quebec may explain why Montreal and Quebec City are at the top of the list. While linguistic barriers might be a factor, another aspect to be considered is the origin of immigrants. As we saw earlier, Vancouver and Toronto receive a disproportionate number of immigrants from Asia, especially Hong Kong, while Montreal receives immigrants from Haiti, Lebanon and Algeria who may have lower incomes and lower levels of human capital when they arrive. Montreal also receives a higher proportion of refugees, and this could partly explain the initial income gap between these cities.

Declining Human Capital?

As noted in the introduction, immigrants arriving in Canadian cities today face a new economic context that presents both challenges and opportunities. As diversity becomes a strength in the global economy, greater strains can result if immigrants do not have the education, skills and other knowledge to participate in the local economy. There is a growing sense that human capital is of central importance to the positioning of cities in the world economy. In this regard, as immigration becomes more diverse, not only in cultural but socio-economic terms, the human capital of newcomers will necessarily be more diverse.

This is the subject of much debate in Canada. As Figure 5 suggests, immigrants do bring in considerable human capital. Skilled workers – those with the highest level of education – represent 54 percent of all immigrants.[17] Immigrants are, on average, more highly educated than

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16 Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (1995: 3-4).
17 According to data from Statistics Canada, recent immigrants made up one-third of the 39,000 new computer engineers, system analysts and programmers working in Canada between 1991 and 1996 (see Statistics Canada, 2000; Gertler, 2001: 5).

Canadian-born. Moreover, in cities such as Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, the diversity of recent immigrants is strongly felt in the publishing, film-making, food and other industries. This "cultural capital" is often not taken into consideration in studies based on traditional indicators of human capital such as levels of education, professional training and linguistic proficiencies.

Figure 5
Levels of Education of Categories of Immigrants, 2001
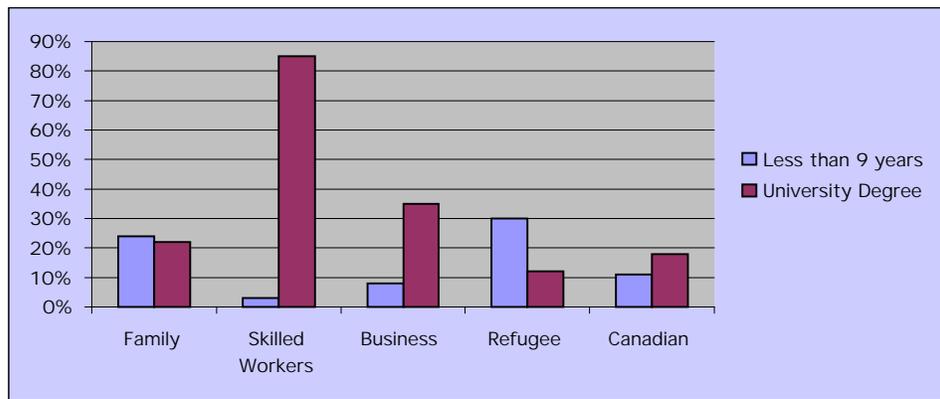
Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, "Facts and Figures 2001: Immigration Overview."

Some suggest that the lower economic achievement of recent immigrants is not attributable to their lower human capital but to the diminishing returns from it for income and access to skilled jobs (Zong, 1998). According to one study, the lack of recognition of foreign credentials seems to be a key factor in explaining the lower income of recent immigrants (Kazemipur and Halli, 2001: 1134). Another study (Li, 1988) showed that visible minorities have greater difficulty capitalizing on their education levels than other immigrant groups. However, those studies are based on small samples of interviews with specific groups in specific cities.

In conclusion, if human capital seems to play an important role, Reitz (1998) demonstrates that despite their higher education and entry-level income overall, immigrants in the United States do much worse than their Canadian counterparts after the initial years of settlement. He suggests the difference can be explained by the greater access to institutional support for low-income immigrants in Canada in the early stages of settlement. This would suggest that, while low human capital might be an important factor affecting economic integration, active measures to provide skills to participate in the economic life of the community can help overcome this obstacle.

The Role of the "Ethnic Economy"

Another factor affecting economic integration is the prominence, for certain groups of immigrants, of networks providing rapid employment opportunities in what is defined as the "ethnic economy" (Fong and Ooka, 2002; Pendakur and Pendakur, 2002). Such employment opportunities can have a positive effect on integration, helping immigrants acquire experience and consolidate their social networks and social capital. The ethnic economy is an important

source of employment, mostly in services (specialty stores, restaurants, telecommunications, money transfer businesses); but it provides minimal potential for upward mobility and tends to confine immigrants to low-skilled jobs (Pendakur and Pendakur, 2002). In this regard, Fong and Ooka (2002: 125) argue that "while the ethnic economy may be an alternative avenue for immigrants to achieve advancement in a new country … its social costs may be substantial."

The portrait is thus not a simple one. While immigrants fare well in economic terms over time, recent cohorts, mostly composed of immigrants from non-European countries, have much lower income levels. When categories are broken down further, we see that variations among groups and categories of immigrants are also important. Visible minorities are seriously disadvantaged, and poverty seems to be associated not so much with lack of human capital but with the incapacity to capitalize on it or to create the conditions to build it during the early years of settlement. This important finding should guide future policy directions regarding economic integration.

Spatial Concentration and Integration

Closely linked to the debate over economic well-being of immigrants is the urban concentration of immigrants and its consequences. As discussed earlier, immigrants are increasingly concentrated in a few urban centers where they often settle in particular areas. While there are notable exceptions, newcomers, especially those with few resources, have a tendency to settle in neighbourhoods where it will be easier to establish their social networks and maintain the cultural identity of their country of origin. What are the consequences of such urban separation, which is often associated with segregation and, in the worst cases, ghettoization? To what extent does spatial concentration create exclusion?

Research on this question in the American context has generally associated high levels of ethnic segregation with low levels of integration into the host society and the emergence of an immigrant underclass (Borjas, 1994; Huges, 1990). In this context, "success" is often associated with geographical dispersion of immigrants throughout the city's neighbourhoods. However, this thesis has come under criticism. Recent analysis shows that the American debate about spatial segregation and "urban ghettoes" cannot simply be transposed to the Canadian context.

Obviously, concentration of ethnic groups in poor neighbourhoods does exist in Canada. Neighbourhoods such as the Downtown Eastside in Vancouver, Regent Park in Toronto and Côte-des-Neiges in Montreal combine a high density of immigrants with many of the characteristics of urban deprivation. Murdie *et al.* (2000) documented the emergence of pockets of poverty in suburban Toronto neighbourhoods largely populated by visible minorities. However, while there is definitely ethnic segregation in Canadian cities, there are major differences with American cities.

As Ley and Germain (2000: 31) reminds us, there can be "good" and "bad" segregation. A high concentration of a particular immigrant group in a neighbourhood can help build social ties and support networks through family links, cultural and religious organizations, and clubs. Such neighbourhoods "provide a nurturing and welcoming community by helping newcomers find shelter and employment … while sustaining homeland culture through language, religion and

diet" (Ley and Germain, 2000: 31). In other words, spatial concentration can foster social and economic inclusion, as well as social capital and community networks, two essential dimensions of social sustainability.

In an attempt to provide a better picture of the patterns of urban deprivation among immigrants, Ley and Smith (2000) used indicators developed in American studies to draw comparisons with the three largest Canadian cities.[18] Using data from the 1971 and 1991 census, they found that while in 1971 Canadian patterns of urban deprivation matched American ones, in 1991 the portrait was significantly different: "Deprivation both shallowed out and had also dispersed from its initial inner-city location" (Ley and Smith, 2000: 59). They identified only two areas, one in Toronto and one in Montreal, and none in Vancouver, that followed the American pattern of multiple deprivation. This suggests there is a greater spatial distribution of poverty in Canadian cities.

In a similar vein, the distribution of immigrants in Canadian cities differs from that of their American counterparts. While Canadian cities have experienced the rapid growth of low-density suburbs typical of American cities, this process has not resulted in the spatial dichotomy of white affluent suburbs versus poor central cores populated by visible minorities, as often observed south of the border. As Bourne *et al*. (2000) note in a study of Greater Toronto, immigration has become an increasingly suburban phenomenon. One possible explanation is the construction of social housing outside the downtown core in the 1970s (Bourne *et al*., 2000). In Vancouver, immigrants from Hong Kong and India have also settled in suburban neighbourhoods. This phenomenon is not nearly as important in Montreal, where immigrants still tend to concentrate in the inner city (Ley and Germain, 2000: 30).

The third distinction is the greater diversity of ethno-cultural groups in poorer neighbourhoods in Canadian cities. As Annick Germain (2000: 11) notes in a study of Montreal neighbourhoods, recent immigrants tend to share residential space with others of different origins, and with people of French or British origins, creating a much more cosmopolitan landscape where diversity, rather than ethnic or racial concentration, is the rule. This phenomenon is also evident in Toronto, Vancouver and smaller centers such as Calgary and Ottawa-Gatineau. As Ley and Germain put it, contrary to general beliefs, immigrant settlement patterns reflect "not so much a mosaic of little 'homelands' as a more subtle model of ethnic diversity."[19]

To sum up, poverty is less concentrated in Canadian cities, and so are immigrants. Even in poor neighbourhoods, there is not the same degree of segregation found in American studies. One must therefore be careful in drawing conclusions about the correlation between poverty and immigrant neighbourhoods.

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[18] Levels of unemployment, education, single-parent families and importance of government income support in given urban areas.

[19] They use the example of Park Extension in Montreal, which was two-thirds Greek 30 years ago. Today, Greeks still form a third of the population, but Haitians, Sri Lankans and Latin Americans have settled in the same neighbourhood, sharing the space with the older immigrant group (2000: 32).

It seems evident that the concentration of certain people in poorer neighbourhoods is the result of broader structural factors such as lack of employment, systemic discrimination and lack of access to social services. As Graham and Peters (2002) note, it is not because Aboriginal people live in poor neighbourhoods that they are poor. One should not confuse the result and the cause. The same conclusion is equally valid for immigrants. It is not their concentration in certain neighbourhoods that creates poverty. In fact, a number of predominantly Italian, Chinese and Jewish neighbourhoods are among the wealthiest in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal.

As Dreier *et al*. (2001) point out, poverty in American inner cities is associated with lower-quality public and private services, most significantly public education. Part of the explanation lies in the highly decentralized structures for urban services and taxation in many American cities. There is often a lack of resources where they are most needed. The result is a vicious circle: the poorer the neighbourhood, the less resources there are to provide public services and the more difficult it is to obtain resources to reduce the patterns of exclusion for future generations. The comparison between the Canadian and American experiences demonstrates the importance of access to quality public services and redistributive measures to create *positive,* rather than negative, neighbourhood effects – including from social networks and institutional supports that facilitate inclusion.

Access to Housing

The relationship between access to housing and inclusion is obviously important. Given that recent immigrants often have low incomes, finding affordable housing in large urban centers is a major concern during the early stages of settlement. According to Ley and Germain (2000: 32), in 1996, 21 percent of all immigrant households suffered "core housing needs," compared with 17 percent for the overall population. Among more recent newcomers (those who have been in the country less than five years) the proportion rose to 39 percent. It is often difficult for newcomers to access subsidized housing programs due to long waiting lists. Moreover, Hulchanski (2002) reminds us that the lack of social housing is not the only explanation for the current housing crisis in Canadian cities. The cost of privately-owned housing has increased dramatically in recent years, affecting primarily lower-income groups. Hulchanski (1997) also suggests that immigrants, especially visible minorities, often face discrimination from landlords, which further contributes to the problem in tight housing markets such as those in Toronto, Vancouver and Ottawa, and increasingly Montreal.

Racial and Ethnic Discrimination

The literature surveyed above suggests that, much more than immigrant status as such, it is the ethno-cultural origin of immigrants and non-immigrants that is most highly correlated with exclusion. On levels of income, urban segregation and housing, visible minorities are systematically at the bottom of the scale. Various hypotheses have been presented to explain this discrepancy. First is the human capital factor. Visible minorities often come from countries with lower education standards. There is, however, some evidence that many immigrants in the most recent cohorts are in fact over-qualified for their employment in Canada. Another possible explanation lies in the linguistic and cultural integration process that could be more difficult for

immigrants coming from non-European backgrounds. Adapting to a radically different lifestyle may indeed take more time. Again, however, evidence is scarce.

Surprisingly, the influence of systemic discrimination, as a result of prejudice based on cultural, racial or religious difference, on the process of integration has not been thoroughly studied. While often cited as a possible explanation, there is little analysis of the actual influence it may have on the experience of immigrants. Nonetheless, while it is difficult to document acts of racial discrimination, hate or bias, there are a few studies that confirm the significance of the phenomenon. For example, in a study of hate-related crimes in Canada, Julian Roberts estimates that 60,000 such crimes are committed annually, with 61 percent of those directed at racial minorities.[20] Indications are that such crimes are on the rise in major Canadian cities. While it is not evident that an increase in reported acts signifies an overall increase in the number of acts committed, the Toronto Hate Crime Unit reported a 22 percent rise of hate crime between 1997 and 1998.

Systemic discrimination takes many subtle forms. In a study published by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, Kunz, Milan and Schetagne (2002) used focus groups to obtain a portrait of discrimination and racism in education, employment and income in Canada. They conclude that Aboriginal peoples and foreign-born visible minorities are the groups facing the greater discrepancies between their income and education levels. They also point to the difficulty in measuring more subtle forms of discrimination such as "stereotyping, invisible walls in access to job promotions and exclusion from social circles in the workplace" (Kunz *et al.*, 2002: 2). They conclude that while employment equity legislation has been effective in increasing access to the job market for visible minorities, it has been less successful in promoting access to higher-level positions or even job retention. In their view, "legislation may alter the behaviour of employers, but it has a limited impact on the workplace culture and individual attitudes" (Kunz *et al.*, 2002: 3).

Prejudice and racism are also perpetuated by a certain denial of their pervasiveness in public discourse. In recent research on media and racial attitudes, Henry and Tator (2002: 3) point to the role of the media in reproducing prejudice and racial bias through a "discourse of denial and colour blindness." Refusing to acknowledge the problem may well contribute to its perpetuation.

Further research is needed to examine the potential impact of systemic discrimination as a factor contributing to lower economic achievement and greater marginalization of visible minorities. The economic, social and cultural inclusion of such groups may be hindered by prejudices that have complex ramifications. As the UK Home Office report on the riots in Northern England in 2001 suggests, racial tensions are the product of misconceptions often themselves rooted in deep structural inequalities reflected in the education system, housing and local governance practices.[21]

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[20] This study is reviewed in a document on Hate and Bias Activity in Canada by the Department of Canadian Heritage's multiculturalism secretariat (www.pch.gc.ca/progrs/multi/evidence/series4).
[21] The report is available at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/reu/community_cohesion.pdf.

Conclusion: Key Patterns of Exclusion

This section provided a review of some of the faultlines identified in the literature in relation to the socio-economic integration of immigrants. It is clear that the greater diversity and higher density of immigration in major Canadian cities have created new challenges to urban sustainability. Chief among them is the growing poverty among certain groups of recent immigrants, particularly visible minorities. While the lower human capital of certain categories of immigrants may contribute to the problem, racial discrimination and prejudices in the work environment and housing are also explanatory factors. Closely related to this is the risk of concentration of poverty in certain neighbourhoods, which may limit access to social capital.

Lessons should also be learned from the fact that Canadian cities do not share with their American counterparts the same degree of association between deprivation and ethno-racial segregation. Access to services such as public education, language training, housing, job training and health care seem to play a major role in this regard. The next section surveys the current role of the different levels of governments in fostering inclusive cities through programs aimed at facilitating the settlement of new immigrants.

V. Who Does What? Federal-Provincial-Municipal Roles

The challenge of maintaining socially sustainable diverse communities lies in the creation of an environment that facilitates inclusion through an institutional network capable of responding to the specific needs of those requiring greater support during the settlement process. Strengthening the sustainable diversity of Canadian cities will necessarily involve collaboration among the three orders of government and the numerous non-governmental agencies and community groups involved in the integration process for new immigrants.

Under the Canadian constitution, immigration is a shared federal-provincial jurisdiction, with federal paramountcy. The federal government retains primary responsibility for admission and selection of newcomers. However, provincial and local governments are increasingly involved in all stages of the settlement process. Although health and social services are provincial responsibilities, municipal governments, especially in Ontario, have been asked to play an increasing role in administering and in some cases paying for certain social programs. As we have seen, access to affordable housing and urban development in general also help create the conditions for sustainable inclusion. Given that housing and its impact on social sustainability are discussed in a separate discussion paper (Hulchanski, 2002), this section focuses on federal-provincial agreements and programs explicitly aimed at facilitating the inclusion of immigrants.

The Federal Government

In addition to the Canada Health and Social Transfer, which provides payments to provincial governments for health and social assistance, the federal government provides settlement services through Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). Along with information about government services provided to newcomers in CIC's local centers, there are two main programs: Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and the Immigrant

Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP). The former provides language training in one of the two official languages and the latter aims at facilitating the adaptation, settlement and integration of newcomers to Canadian society and institutions. The funds are generally channeled directly to local NGOs that deliver settlement services.

The federal programs deal primarily with the early stages of the settlement process. CIC defines settlement services covered under ISAP and LINC as "the economic and social services designed to help newcomers adapt to Canadian society. They include orientation, reception, adult language training, settlement counseling, labour market preparation and referral to other services."[22]

NGOs involved in settlement services have made a number of criticisms of these programs (see Mwarigha, 2002; Germain and Reichhold, 2001). First, not everyone is eligible for such services. In addition to refugee claimants awaiting a decision on their status, landed immigrants who have been in Canada more than three years or have acquired Canadian citizenship are not eligible to receive the funded services. Agencies and NGOs providing the services to the communities are faced with a difficult dilemma between refusing such clients, despite their obvious needs, or providing services without receiving the financial resources to do so. For this reason, they have increasingly turned to alternative sources to complement government funding.[23]

As discussed earlier, settlement is a long-term process, especially for immigrants with limited resources and with cultural backgrounds and values that are markedly different from those of the Canadian majority. Needs based on personal profile vary at least as much as the length of stay in the country. In limiting access to services to recent immigrants, the government may in fact contribute to the difference observed in the integration of certain groups facing greater burdens, mostly visible minorities and immigrants with limited social and human capital. It is precisely these groups who rely most on settlement services and may require longer-term attention.

As Mwarigha (2002) notes in a recent study of settlement services in Toronto, while such services are essential at an early stage, they do not cover some of the critical dimensions of the settlement process. Funded services generally do not include essential long-term settlement services such as community development initiatives, access programs for housing, health and other social services or market-oriented skills development programs.

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[22] http://integration-net.cic.gc.ca/e2f_gene.htm.
[23] As we will see, provincial governments have their own programs and many private organizations, such as the United Way, have programs for immigrant settlement and integration.

In addition to its role in facilitating the settlement process, the federal government plays an important role in fostering sustainable diversity through its multiculturalism programs. In the 1990s, the multiculturalism program of the Department of Canadian Heritage was reoriented to respond to growing concerns about discrimination and racism faced by visible minorities. It now focuses more on anti-racism campaigns and the promotion of cross-cultural understanding.[24]

Increasing Provincial Government Role

The federal government has entered into a number of agreements to share with provincial governments certain responsibilities in the field of immigration.[25] The *Canada-Quebec Accord* of 1991 is the most comprehensive of these agreements. It gives Quebec selection powers and control over its own settlement services, while the federal government retains responsibility for defining immigrant categories, setting targeted levels of immigration and enforcement.[26] More recently, agreements have been signed with British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Yukon and Prince Edward Island. For example, the agreement signed in 1998 with British Columbia gives that province funding and responsibility for settlement services as well as a greater say in planning immigration selection to attract business immigrants. Manitoba has also reached an agreement on delivery of settlement services. The other agreements consist mostly of Provincial Nominees Programs, which allow provincial governments to select a small number of immigrants in light of specific labour-market needs. Those agreements generally include guarantees for federal funding of settlement services but do not transfer responsibility for such services to the province.[27]

Provinces that have entered into an agreement for the provision of settlement services generally offer similar services as under the federal programs. There are, however, some variations. For example, Quebec's *Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'immigration* (MRCI) provides extensive French-language training and has developed access to employment programs. Despite having no agreement with the federal government on settlement services, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship also funds community agencies working directly with newcomers and umbrella organizations that provide project support to the settlement sector.[28]

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[24] The multiculturalism program objectives are, among others: Assist in the development of strategies that facilitate full and active participation of ethnic, religious, and cultural communities in Canadian society; increase public awareness, understanding and informed public dialogue about multiculturalism, racism and cultural diversity in Canada; facilitate collective community initiatives and responses to ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural conflict and hate-motivated activities; and improve the ability of public institutions to respond to ethnic, religious and cultural diversity by assisting in the identification and removal of barriers to equitable access and by supporting the involvement of these communities in public decision-making processes. See http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/multi/program/guide.

[25] The *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* allows the minister to enter into agreements with provinces and territories on sharing responsibility for immigration.

[26] Under the *Canada-Quebec Accord*, the province of Quebec has sole responsibility for selecting all independent immigrants and refugees abroad who wish to settle in Quebec. People who are selected receive a "Certificat de sélection du Québec" and the province advises the visa office responsible. CIC then issues immigrant visas to those who have met all other requirements, such as medical, security and criminality checks. For more details on the agreement, see http://cicnet.ci.gc.ca/english/irpa/fs-quebec.html.

[27] For more details on the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Agreements, the CIC website provides an overview at http://cicnet.ci.gc.ca/english/policy/fedprov.html.

[28] For more details, see http://www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/english/citdiv/immigrat/newcomer.htm.

In addition to specific settlement programs, provincial governments have a direct role in providing many social services essential to the integration process. For example, education, health and, in the case of Quebec, job training, play a role in creating the conditions for a successful settlement process over the long term. For example, many provinces have "English as a second language" programs under which immigrant children receive English instruction. In Quebec, through the *Programme des classes d'accueil*, immigrant children are placed in separate classes for an initial period of adaptation; they receive training in French as well as the basic knowledge necessary to their inclusion in regular classes (McAndrew, 2002).

Since the adoption of the Charter of the French Language in 1977, the Quebec government has developed a number of policies aimed at facilitating the integration of immigrants into the French majority. The MRCI has been very active in recent years in defining its own approach to the integration of immigrants. It has developed an elaborate policy framework on integration and intercultural relations, which seeks to distinguish itself from Canadian multiculturalism.[29]

Municipal Governments

Rapid change is taking place at the municipal level. As we saw above, the immigrant population varies considerably from one place to another, even among the three major cities. As a result, experiences and needs also vary greatly. The role of municipal governments in this area depends on the degree of autonomy and the nature of services provincial governments delegate to municipalities. In general, municipalities have responsibilities in areas such as urban planning, housing, public transport, infrastructure and cultural activities, all of which play a role in fostering a sustainable environment for newcomers.

The growing proportion of immigrants in Canada's three major cities is creating major strains on local administrations. As discussed previously with regard to education, it is at the local level that diversity has particular significance. Services must be adapted, but municipal governments' revenues, mostly from property taxes, do not allow the necessary flexibility to respond to such needs. Municipalities therefore tend to seek specific arrangements with provincial governments to fund targeted activities or programs.

For example, through its Social Planning Department, the City of Vancouver has an agreement with the provincial government to provide a number of programs and initiatives aimed at adapting its services to ethno-cultural minorities.[30] While the municipality does not play a direct role in the settlement process, it does work in partnership with the province and funds a number of NGOs that provide settlement services, mostly for job training and housing programs.[31]

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[29] Among others, a policy statement from 1991 proposes a "moral contract" between new Quebec residents and the Quebec society where, among other things, French is recognized as the common public language. See *Au Québec pour bâtir ensembles, Enoncé de politique en matière d'immigration et d'intégration*. See also MRCI, Plan stratégique 2001-2004 at http://www.mrci.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/Plan_strat_2001-2004.pdf.

[30] Examples are: an equal employment opportunity program specifically targeted at ethno-cultural minorities, intercultural training for public employees, multilingual information documents, establishment of an Advisory Committee on Cultural Communities, etc.

[31] An overview of the City of Vancouver's initiatives can be found at http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/ socialplanning/initiatives/multicult.htm.

In Montreal, the city government plays a limited role in social services, health and education, all of which are delivered through provincial agencies. It is, however, very much involved in promoting intercultural understanding through various services in sectors as diverse as cultural events, infrastructure, access to housing, language classes, etc. For example, in June 2002, the City of Montreal reached an agreement with the Quebec government aimed at facilitating the integration of new immigrants in French through cultural, athletic, environmental and artistic activities.[32] The amalgamated City of Montreal has an advisory board on ethno-cultural relations, the *Conseil interculturel*, which provides policy recommendations to the city.

The situation is slightly different in Toronto. The City of Toronto has extensive programs that deal with the settlement of immigrants. In 1997, the Ontario government transferred to the municipal government of the amalgamated City of Toronto the responsibility for a number of social services vital to more vulnerable immigrants' settlement process, such as social assistance, social housing, child care and public health. Without the corresponding transfer of revenue, however, the city has been unable to develop long-term plans specifically targeted at the immigrant community. As a result, while the City of Toronto has to assume increasing responsibilities in service planning and settlement activities, it focuses mostly on emergency measures such as providing temporary shelters for recently arrived families. The city is spending up to $30 million a year in services for refugee claimants and other immigrants ineligible for federally funded services. It spent an additional $4.3 million in 2001 to provide emergency shelters, often in motel rooms, to newcomers.[33]

The Role of NGOs

Two types of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a role in the social inclusion process (though the two categories often overlap). First are the ethno-cultural associations that promote cultural activities and community-based events. Second, a number of NGOs provide services to immigrants. In Toronto, for example, more than 100 organizations offer various services (Mwarigha, 2002). Federal and provincial government funding has priorized larger multi-ethnic NGOs that provide services on a territorial rather than ethno-cultural basis.

Similar trends can be observed in the evolution of the role of such NGOs in Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and other cities. As front-line service providers, they have all suffered from the provincial and federal government budget cuts of the last decade. The pressures on NGOs are not just financial, however. Increased emphasis on accountability and project rather than core funding from all levels of governments has resulted in a significant loss of autonomy for service-providing NGOs. As Annick Germain (1999) notes, there are concerns that such organizations are increasingly seen as arm's-length government agencies. However, this quasi-institutionalization has not been accompanied by an increased role in policy-making and priority-setting. The governance of settlement services is still largely a top-bottom process. As a result, while the knowledge about needs (which vary considerably) lies mostly at the community level, programming is still for the most part developed vertically.

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[32] See http://www.micro.newswire.ca/release/june2002/05/c3291.html.
[33] According to the City of Toronto Immigration and Settlement Policy Framework (2001).

Summary of Responsibilities

Federal	Provincial	Municipal	Local NGOs
- Admission - Selection - Settlement services (language and orientation) - Multiculturalism (funding for ethno-cultural and anti-racism activities) - Transfer payments for health and social services	- Selection* - Settlement services* (language, orientation, employment) - Education - Health - Social assistance - Housing - Municipal government funding	- Settlement services** (orientation, access, job search, language training) - Social services** - Urban planning - Housing - Cultural activities - Infrastructure and public space management - Transport	- Provide settlement services funded by all levels of government - Create space for civic networks and cultural expression - Act as advocacy groups and represent immigrants in governance mechanisms

* Varies according to federal-provincial agreements
** Mostly in Toronto, but there are also specific programs elsewhere

While the federal government has encouraged greater involvement of provincial and municipal authorities in the definition and administration of settlement programs, there is still much confusion as to who does what and who is accountable for what. The multiplication of sources of funding, the overlap across levels of government and the lack of consultation with community organizations delivering services create a highly fragmented governing structure where coordination is difficult and energy and resources are spent in administrative wrangling rather than in improving the services. The experience of Toronto is noteworthy in this regard. There is still no agreement on the administration and funding of settlement services between the federal and Ontario governments. As a result, local service providers and the municipal government are left in a sort of limbo as to who is responsible for long-term policy planning and resource allocation (Kwan, 2002). Coordination at the local level is extremely difficult, creating a situation where short-term projects are favoured over long-term initiatives.

In sum, federal and provincial programs are generally focused on short-term transitional settlement services through NGOs, while municipalities are often faced with the longer-term effects of lack of support for the crucial medium-term integration process, most notably in access to housing and the job market. There is little doubt that municipal administrations face increasing pressure to provide services to newcomers.

VI. Toward a Renewed Partnership for Sustainable Diversity

As this paper has demonstrated, fostering sustainable diversity is a complex and challenging policy objective. While diversity can be a strength, the inclusion of new immigrants is not easily achieved. The current portrait is one of increased concentration of newcomers in a few urban centers and great variety in skills, income, linguistic ability, and cultural and religious backgrounds. The main conclusion to draw from these two trends is that the pathway to sustainable diversity will vary greatly from one place to another, and from one group to another. Skilled immigrants with significant levels of human capital may experience a relatively straightforward integration process. Some, however, may face significant challenges to inclusion from the lack of recognition of their skills and credentials to systemic discrimination. Cultural, linguistic and religious differences may also create further obstacles to adapting to the broader society and its values, customs and norms.

As the interim report of the Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues points out, "the measure of success of any immigration policy is in the integration of individuals and families into their communities. For many families, assistance with housing, employment and support for their children is essential in overcoming the barriers to smooth integration and becoming independent" (Sgro, 2002: 23). However, policies and programs must recognize the range of immigrant experiences, and these must be reflected in their capacity to respond to specific needs in specific places.

This analysis leads us to conclude that an adequate response to the challenges of sustainable diversity should take two complementary paths: first, more targeted services are needed to respond to the diversity of situations in urban Canada; second, greater coordination among levels of government and community-based actors is needed to ensure effective use of resources.

Targeting Services

The research on the socio-economic inclusion of new immigrants points toward certain areas where government action, at all levels, is critical. First, the literature confirms that recent immigrants are more vulnerable socio-economically than previous cohorts. While this may simply reflect the fact that inclusion is a long-term process, it nonetheless points to the need for targeted services and long-term measures for certain categories of immigrants. The importance of such services is confirmed by Jeffrey Reitz's (1998) conclusion that the relative economic success of immigrants in Canada compared with the United States is not simply a function of their characteristics at entry but perhaps more significantly of the institutional support they receive in the initial years of settlement. The Sgro report (2002: 23) points out that "current settlement programs are sometimes too short term to be effective." The result is an increased dependency on social assistance programs, putting pressure on communities and affecting the capacity of local governments to foster sustainable diversity.

There is thus a need to invest in medium- to long-term settlement services for certain immigrants at risk of exclusion. Services such as job training, access to affordable housing and more extensive language training are examples of long-term services that should be integrated into current settlement programs. Efforts to encourage the integration of immigrant children and the

second generation, from pre-school through university, are also important. Language instruction, for example, is beneficial for children as well as adults.

Another problem immigrants face is the lack of recognition of foreign credentials. The Sgro report (2002: 24, No. 28) acknowledges this in its recommendations. While there are currently efforts to facilitate the recognition of diploma and experiences of immigrants, great losses in human capital still result from strict barriers imposed by professional corporations and government agencies. Government leadership is needed to standardize the process for assessment and recognition of credentials.

In addition, socio-economic inclusion appears to be much more difficult for certain immigrant groups. Visible minorities seem to be constantly at the lower end of the scale according to the various indicators of poverty and deprivation. While a number of programs aim to counter systemic discrimination, it remains a burden for many new immigrants. Governments at all levels, in collaboration with local actors and community representatives, should develop a collaborative strategy to respond to the growing problem of exclusion faced by visible minorities. A number of initiatives already exist. We need to know what works and what has failed, and why. As part of such a collaborative strategy, resources could be better directed toward targeted programs.

It is also increasingly evident that the management of urban spaces is an essential dimension of sustainable diversity. As we discussed, there is no consensus on the impact of spatial concentration of immigrants on the social sustainability of cities. On the one hand, it seems to contribute to the creation of social networks and may facilitate access to employment. On the other hand, when combined with poverty, spatial segregation becomes a potentially explosive mix, affecting life chances and leading to social exclusion of future generations. But the neighbourhood is not in itself the cause of deprivation. Recent research on the question underlines the merits of a combination of urban revitalization programs, including public spaces and community infrastructure, with increased access to social services and targeted employment strategies. It seems urgent, however, to provide municipal governments with the capacity to develop long-term programs and services that take into account the double-edged reality of spatial concentration of immigrants.

A high priority should be given to creating urban spaces and institutions conducive to the development of strong civic networks and community initiatives. The federal government can play a role in this regard by funding local infrastructure, such as sports and recreation facilities, and community-based initiatives. Such action should be integrated into long-term urban strategies developed locally in coordination with other levels of governments and community organizations.

Similarly, sustainable urban planning must take into account access to affordable housing for immigrants. The lack of affordable housing is often cited as a major cause of deprivation among recent immigrants. Again, all levels of governments have a role to play. The reality of new immigrants and the potential risks associated with spatial segregation in poor neighbourhoods should be addressed in any housing strategy developed by governments.

Decentralization or Collaborative Governance?

Our brief overview of the various mechanisms governments can use to facilitate the processes of inclusion demonstrates the complexity of governance in a sector where needs are as diverse as the population served. The overall portrait is of growing involvement of both provincial and municipal administrations in providing services and funding initiatives to facilitate the inclusion of immigrants. There are also increasing pressures on NGOs to act as service providers. Whether it is the result of provincial transfers or "on the ground" needs, a number of municipalities have developed valuable expertise and a number of specific initiatives in order to facilitate access to services and promote intercultural relations.

The greatest problem for municipalities, as for NGOs, is a lack of access to the policy-making process at the federal and provincial levels (Kwan, 2002). Municipal governments, which often work closely with the various agencies delivering services to immigrants, are frequently ignored when it is time to review programs or redefine the priorities. This creates a situation where confusion, rather than coordination, becomes the rule.

There is, consequently, a strong argument to be made for greater consultation and the transfer of more resources to municipalities for the development of integration programs that respond to the specific needs of the local population. As Mwarigha (2002: 22) suggests, referring to the situation in Toronto:

> In light of the urban settlement challenges faced by immigrants, local communities and service providers, there is growing recognition of the need to end the current limbo in settlement devolution. … A new settlement deal that includes a key role for cities in policy and planning is necessary in order to correct a problem that is increasingly evident – local communities and municipalities carry most of the costs of medium and long term immigrant settlement.

The mayors of five Canadian cities also recently recommended that local governments be included in the definition of not only settlement but selection policies that have a direct impact on the needs for settlement services.[34]

In its interim report, the Task Force on Urban Issues underlines the importance of coordination at all levels. Rather than proposing new federal programs or policies, it suggests that existing services be reviewed with provincial and city governments to develop a more cohesive approach (Sgro, 2002: recommendations 22, 23, 24). In my view, this is the right approach toward more effective government intervention in the various areas examined in this paper.

The Task Force's recommendation (no. 30) to convene bi-annual conferences on immigration with all orders of governments also deserves some attention. A first federal-provincial-territorial conference on immigration was held on October 16, 2002 in Winnipeg. Ministers responsible for immigration agreed to pursue collaboration on matters related to immigration targets and settlement services. While the place of non-governmental actors was recognized in the post-

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[34]   *In Common Cause: Cities Dialogue on Immigrant and Refugee Issues in Canada.* Chief Administrator's Office, City of Toronto, 2001.

conference press release, there was no reference to a greater role for municipal governments in the policy process or intergovernmental discussions.[35] The main challenge the federal government will face in that respect is the reluctance of provincial governments to engage in a three-level process. That said, conferences such as this, rather than a ministerial council or other formal intergovernmental body, could allow for broader involvement and a more open process of governance. Means to include municipalities in the intergovernmental exchanges should be a priority in the preparatory work for the next ministerial conference expected in 2003.

In a number of provinces, municipal governments have been given additional responsibilities during the past decade or so. Advocates of greater autonomy for Canada's cities call for much greater change – not least in light of some of the trends and pressures discussed in this paper (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2002). However, if needs are best defined locally, there are certain pitfalls to decentralization, especially when it becomes, in effect, a downloading process without the transfer of adequate resources. There is a risk of creating a situation where municipal governments have increasing responsibilities and increasing budgetary needs but no leverage in defining broad policy orientations and even less in long-term budgetary planning. As creatures of provincial governments, municipalities have little fiscal autonomy. This results in a limited capacity to develop long-term programs involving significant investments. Even as they have gained more responsibility for fostering social sustainability, fiscal constraints considerably limit the capacity of municipalities to respond to the growing needs of the population (Séguin and Germain, 2000).

Transfers of responsibility also have their costs. Decentralized programs do not offer the same equalization potential as broader "aspatial" programs, as Séguin and Divay (2002) remind us in their discussion paper in this series. They rightly underline the importance of "general" social policies and programs in allowing for redistribution of wealth at the national and provincial levels. The experience of American cities, where services are decentralized and many are privately delivered, should serve as a warning. The result is often polarization between wealthy neighbourhoods where the tax base can sustain quality services and poorer ones where local resources are not sufficient. It is not irrelevant, from this perspective, to remember that redistribution and equity were main reasons for the amalgamation of the various municipalities now forming the City of Montreal. A more centralized body with greater fiscal capacity can allocate resources more equitably among the various urban sectors. As with other urban priorities, developing policies and programs to foster sustainable diversity requires paying careful attention to the potential tension between equity and responsiveness to local conditions and needs.

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[35]   The Press release is available at: www.cic.gc.ca/english/press/02/0235-pre.html.

VII. Conclusion

As discussed at the outset, the objective of sustainable diversity is not to even out differences and create homogenous communities. Urban policies conducive to social sustainability must build bridges among people of diverse origins and create the conditions for the full inclusion of immigrants into neighbourhood life, the labour market and the cultural life of the city. However, they must do so from a perspective that fully recognizes difference and its various expressions. This is the challenge Canada is facing. It is in many ways a positive challenge: that of creating the best possible conditions for ethnic and cultural diversity to become a great asset in the new economy. The current interest of governments in fostering the economic and social well being of Canadian cities is an opportunity to be seized. However, important choices need to be made in relation to our approaches to immigration. More targeted interventions are needed in certain sectors in order to counter the growing risks of exclusion of the most vulnerable groups. Second, municipal governments and local service providers, both of which are absorbing a growing proportion of the costs related to immigrant settlement processes, have urgent needs for additional resources. Fiscal constraints have become a key problem for local governments because of their limited autonomy in the taxation field. In addition, greater intergovernmental collaboration, with an increased role in policy planning and priority setting for local governments and NGOs, is necessary in order to provide a more effective response to the various contexts and dimensions of urban diversity.

There is a just middle ground between excessive decentralization and compartmentalized governance or top-down programming. The governance of urban spaces is inherently a multi-level activity. It is possible to develop policies and to allocate resources and responsibilities in a collaborative manner (the federal infrastructure programs provide a good example). The federal-provincial agreements on settlement services could also serve as a basis for a more integrated approach that avoids the pitfalls of decentralization while keeping in mind that needs are defined at the local level. In order to do so, municipal governments and NGOs should be involved with the federal and provincial governments in defining long-term policy goals and setting priorities that correspond to their specific situations and needs. The challenge for the federal government is to use its leadership to create spaces for multi-level collaboration while keeping in mind provincial governments' constitutional responsibility for municipalities.

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CPRN Funding Sources

Project Funders

- Canadian Heritage
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- City of Toronto
- Environment Canada
- Human Resources Development Canada
- Laidlaw Foundation
- Policy Research Initiative
- Privy Council Office
- Public Works and Government Services Canada

Corporate Sponsors

- BCE Inc.
- Canadian Pacific Charitable Foundation
- Hydro-Québec
- IPSCO Inc.
- Power Corporation of Canada

Special Thanks

We would like to acknowledge the generous past support of the following federal government departments, who provided core funding to CPRN from its inception in December 1994 until March 31, 2000. Without such support, CPRN might not have become the vital contributor to innovative policy development in Canada that it is today.

- Canadian International Development Agency
- Citizenship and Immigration
- Fisheries and Oceans
- Health Canada
- Human Resources Development Canada
- Public Works and Government Services Canada
- Transport Canada