

# How Canadian Cities are Responding to International Migration

- Analyzes municipal government discourse and policy responses with respect to immigration and cultural diversity in six Canadian cities
- Develops a typology of local models of settlement and diversity management
  - Normative premises underlying recognition of cultural diversity in public domain
  - Breadth of responses
  - Locus of authority
- Accounts for variations in models

# Rationale

- Urban character of immigration
- New arrivals and members of cultural minorities are facing economic and social challenges – do cities view these issues as within their scope of authority?
- Erosion of federal government authority over the settlement and integration policy domain

# Cities, immigration and diversity: theory and practise

- Divergent philosophical approaches and policy responses in European cities are linked to official attitudes about the spatial and temporal presence of immigrants, and about the preservation of their cultural “otherness” (Alexander, 2004)

# Cities, immigration and diversity: theory and practise

- Official attitudes about the recognition of cultural difference in the public domain inform responses in Montreal and Ottawa (Poirier, 2004):
  - Assimilationist Model (monocultural and civic universalist variants)
  - Pluralist Model (multicultural and intercultural variants)

# Cities, immigration and diversity: theory and practise

- Municipal government activity levels and policy styles vary between cities with similar levels of social diversity and operating under similar constitutional and financial constraints (Tate and Quesnel, 1995; Wallace and Frisken, 2000; Edgington and Hutton, 2002; Good, 2005; 2009)

# Explanations for inter-city variations

- Europe:
  - Attitudes and strategic objectives of elites
  - Ethnic group demands for policy input (UK)
- Canada:
  - Head-start; fiscal capacity; racial tensions; political leadership; history of social policy involvement (consistent factors)
  - Social diversity; NGO influence; senior government inaction (variable factors)

# Methodology and Research Design

- Comparative case study design
- Study sites are home to relatively large populations of immigrants, visible minorities in BC, AB and ON
- Explores three areas of inquiry: profile; intercultural relations; access and equity
- Official documents and semi-structured interviews with municipal officials and ISPO representatives

# Case studies

- Abbotsford, BC
- Vancouver, BC
- Calgary, AB
- Edmonton, AB
- Toronto, ON
- Brampton, ON



# Profile on the municipal agenda: indicators

- Formal immigration and settlement policies adopted by council
- Council advisory bodies dedicated to immigration or diversity issues
- Prominence of immigration and/or diversity in strategic plans and city vision statements
- Central administrative structures dedicated to these issues

# Intercultural relations: indicators

- Adoption of multicultural policies
- Adoption of human rights, anti-racism and/or anti-harassment policies
- Membership in CCMARD

# Access and Equity: indicators

- Human resources policies
- Corporate communications policies
- Public consultation practises

# Typology of local models

- Normative premises underlying recognition of diversity in the public sphere:
  - Assimilationist model (monocultural or civic universalist variants)?
  - Pluralist model (intercultural or multicultural variants)?
- Breadth of responses:
  - Comprehensive, selective, or limited?
- Locus of authority for immigration, diversity:
  - Centralized or decentralized?

# Overview of Results

- Cities have latitude to pursue distinct models of settlement and diversity management
- Most cities have adopted civic universalist models of settlement and diversity
- Just two cities have developed comprehensive and relatively centralized approaches to these issues
- Understanding Canada's approach to settlement and diversity must be tempered by a consideration of local realities

## **Profile on the municipal agenda: formal policies and council priorities**

- Toronto and Edmonton are the only cities with formal immigration and settlement policies, and where their respective mayors have made these priority issues
- Calgary expected to consider adopting a Municipal Immigration Policy in early 2011

## Profile on the municipal agenda: council advisory bodies

- Advisory bodies have been set up in 5 communities
- These bodies are currently active in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Peel Region

# Profile on the municipal agenda: vision statements and strategic plans

- Presence of cultural diversity does not necessarily mean that:
  - City vision statements recognize diversity as an integral part of the community's identity
  - Diversity will inform municipal strategic plans

## Profile on municipal agenda: administrative structures

- Toronto and Edmonton have established central units to develop, coordinate and monitor diversity policies across the municipal bureaucracy
- Vancouver's Social Planning Department employs staff who are dedicated to multicultural and diversity issues

# Intercultural Relations

- Adoption of provincial multicultural policies by 9 provinces has not translated into their universal adoption by the municipalities
  - Vancouver and Abbotsford the exceptions

# Intercultural Relations

- All 6 cities have human rights or anti-discrimination policies consistent with provincial legislation, but Toronto has gone beyond the minimum requirements
- Calgary, Edmonton and Toronto) are members of the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination

# Access and Equity

- Wide variations in activity levels, philosophies and concrete responses concerning the recruitment, hiring and training of immigrants and

# Access and Equity: recruitment and employment

- Participation in multisectoral coalitions to address labour market integration issues: Calgary (ISCC), Edmonton (ERIEC), Toronto and Peel Region (as part of TRIEC)
- Employment Equity policies: Toronto and Vancouver
- Audit workforce diversity: Toronto, Edmonton
- Recruitment outreach: Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Vancouver

# Access and Equity: training

- Immigrant internships: Toronto, Edmonton, Vancouver
- Mentoring program for immigrants and Black/African Canadians: Toronto

# Access and Equity: corporate communications

- Policies and practises range from unilingual English modified by some linguistic pluralism, to corporate-wide multilingualism
- Multilingual Services Policy: Toronto, Brampton
- Multilingual Translation:
  - Toronto and Brampton: formal policies
  - Other cities adopt a more decentralized approach
- Interpretation:
  - Five cities offer formal multilingual interpretation services over the phone and/or in person

# Access and equity: public consultation

- Public consultation processes in Edmonton and Toronto require consideration of ethnocultural diversity

# Local models of settlement and diversity

- Discourse and responses: Civic universalist approach most common
- Breadth: Most cities' responses are selective or limited
- Locus of authority: Toronto and Edmonton have adopted most centralized, coordinated responses

# Accounting for different models

- Local labour market conditions
- Political leadership/lack of interest or political will
- Civil service leadership, often characterized by commitment to social justice
- Social diversity: absolute size of immigrant and visible minority population (Toronto), or politically active cultural group (Abbotsford, Brampton)
- Lack of visible minority voices on elected council (Calgary)
- Limited fiscal capacity (in Abbotsford)
- Intergovernmental relations not generally deemed an impediment to action