CANADIAN CITIES AND THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND SPATIAL INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS

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Municipal governments across Canada are confronted on a daily basis with choices about the development and delivery of social policies, programs and services to immigrants and cultural minorities. These groups may have distinct needs for their social and economic well-being, and their cultures, customs and beliefs often influence their preferences for community facilities, services and housing (Qadeer 2009). Municipal officials are at the forefront of these policy challenges, as about 95 percent of foreign-born and visible minority Canadians live in urban centres (Malenfant, Lebel and Martel 2010). With the immigrant and visible minority populations projected to grow to more than a quarter and one-third of the Canadian population, respectively, by 2031, the successful settlement and integration of immigrants, and the promotion of harmonious intercultural relations between diverse groups, will become increasingly important issues at the local level.

Despite the saliency of the local context to newcomers' experiences, migration studies have been dominated by state-level, comparative analyses of laws governing territorial admission and citizenship acquisition (Castles and Miller 2003; Mahnig 2004). This national bias has obscured important subnational variations in how public institutions settle and integrate newcomers, and respond to cultural diversity. These issues are of concern at a time when a number of vulnerable groups in urban centres, including newcomers and visible minorities, are facing economic and social exclusion. As Bradford has argued, today's major public policy challenges play out in local spaces, and a "local lens" is needed to identify the changes required to create good places for people to live, work and participate in the community (2009).

This paper takes up that call through an analysis of municipal government roles in the design and provision of social services to immigrants and culturally heterogeneous populations in six of Canada's most diverse cities. For the purposes of this paper, social services refer to employment and income supports (monetary and non-monetary), child/youth services, seniors services, community/neighbourhood services (including preventive interventions) and social housing. Official documents will be used to compile an inventory of official discourse and policy, program and services responses in Vancouver, Abbotsford, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto and Peel Region. The inventory will provide the database for a proposed local-scale typology that classifies municipal approaches based on the normative premises underlying the official recognition of cultural differences and on the scope of these initiatives.

The study is situated within the context of broader debates about multiculturalism and "reasonable accommodation" in local urban planning. Supporters of multiculturalism emphasize the tailoring of planning policies to the cultural backgrounds of people, while respecting the common good and equity for others (Qadeer). Sandercock, for example, rejects the liberal conception of a common good that "transcends or ignores" cultural and other differences (2003, 104). In urban planning, reasonable accommodation involves planning practises that respond to cultural diversity within the parameters of the common good and equity for others (Qadeer). Reasonable accommodation would include measures to ensure the representation and participation of ethnic communities in planning processes, and targeted policies for the provision of culturally sensitive community services for ethnic minorities and immigrants (Qadeer and

Agrawal 2011), providing they do not cause undue hardship, unreasonable cost, the disruption of an organization or institution's operations, infringe on other people's rights, or undermine security or public order (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008: 19).

The question of whether Canadian cities have adopted multicultural planning practises is timely because newcomers and visible minorities face daunting challenges to their economic and social integration. In Canada's 24 largest municipalities and metropolitan areas, unemployment rates for recent immigrants were 2.3 times higher than for non-immigrants, and recent immigrant households were two to four times more likely than non-immigrant households to report low incomes.   In Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton and Peel Region, the incomes of recent immigrants fell behind those of non-immigrants between 2001 and 2006 (Tucker 2009). Immigrants, particularly newcomers, have also borne the brunt of unemployment since the onset of the global recession in late 2008 (Toronto Immigrant Employment Data Initiative, 2011). In Peel, one third of newcomers live below the Low Income Cut-Off line (Peel Region 2011). In Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary and Peel, home ownership affordability for recent immigrants deteriorated at higher rates, or did not improve to the same extent as for non-immigrants (Tucker 2009, iv, 44).   In Calgary, front-line emergency shelter personnel have reported significant increases in shelter usage by immigrants and refugees (Pruegger and Tanasescu, 2007).

Following a brief review of municipal responsibilities in the social services policy domain in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia, the following analysis will examine whether and how the departments responsible for this domain have adopted multicultural principles and the practises of "reasonable accommodation." A consideration of the reasons for their choices will be addressed in a separate paper, drawing on interview evidence to supplement the document analysis.

Municipal roles in social services

Ontario is the only province where municipalities have the statutory responsibility to provide social services and contribute to their funding. In Alberta, municipalities are responsible for public housing, family and community social services, and daycare. While not providing direct income support, they do provide forms of non-taxable income support, including services for children, youth and seniors, discounted fares for senior citizens at public venues, subsidized social housing and senior citizen lodges. Municipal governments also contribute to the funding of family and community support services under the provincial Family and Community Support Services Act, and of operating deficits incurred by boards of residences for low-income senior citizens (Le Sage Jr. and McMillan 2009; Sancton 2009).   Arrangements for municipal seniors' residences in Ontario are similar, except that they are operated directly by cities and upper-tier municipalities. In British Columbia, larger urban municipalities are engaged in social planning functions directed at attracting funding from senior governments, coordinating the work of non-profit agencies, and providing modest municipal subsidies to various social service organizations.   Quebec and Ontario are the only provinces that have any

financial responsibility for social housing. The City of Vancouver and regional districts in BC manage subsidized housing for seniors and people with disabilities, but has no financial responsibility for these units (Sancton).

Multicultural planning: theory and practise

Mainstream planning approaches and practises have been criticized for elevating Anglo-European cultures into universal values, and for ignoring the diversity of traditions, customs and values in multicultural cities (Burayidi 2000; Sandercock 2003; Milroy and Wallace 2004). These critics advocate planning theories founded on post-modern and postcolonial forms of knowledge that allow for different forms of knowledge based on demographic (e.g. race, gender and sexuality) and experiential (e.g. immigration and colonization) characteristics. Postcolonial discourse and postmodern planning theories emphasize ideas about identity and citizenship, and consider interactions between dominant and oppressed groups (Viswanathan 2009).

Other scholars have countered that the demographic transformation of North American cities has already led local institutions to rethink conventional planning theories and practises (Qadeer and Agrawal 2011). The multicultural or diversity planning literature now encourages professional planners to consider equity and responsiveness towards ethno-cultural minorities, through the accommodation of cultural differences (Burayidi 2000; Reeves 2005). According to Qadeer and Agrawal, these shifts came about as a result of changing societal values and ideologies, and the embedding of Canadian planning institutions in a national legislative framework of Official Multiculturalism, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the Multiculturalism Act (Quadeer and Agrawal).

Discourse about the incorporation of cultural differences in urban planning is rooted in the values of diversity and equality (Qadeer and Agrawal). Diversity refers to the recognition of cultural differences and racial identities among people, both as individuals and groups. Equality is defined as the right or entitlement to equal access and fair treatment in the public sphere, regardless of one's personal attributes. Equity refers to the policies that are the product of equal treatment with recognition of differences (2011). The process of accommodating culturally defined needs and preferences requires the balancing of different interests, and expanding the inclusiveness of planning processes by consulting with ethnic communities (Qadeer).

Local public authorities can draw on different normative traditions when deciding whether to recognize diversity in their discourse and activities. Poirier's assessment of official discourse in Montreal and Ottawa distinguished between assimilationist and pluralist models of immigrant settlement and inclusion (2004: 6-7). The assimilationist model is based on the idea of that expressions of cultural distinctiveness should remain in the private sphere, and that public spaces should be "neutral". Assimilationist discourse emphasizes individual equality, the recognition of individual rights, and the right to protection from discrimination. The radical variant of this model assumes a monocultural perspective, whereby the host society expects the minority group to conform to the lifestyles and values of the dominant group in both public and private spheres. The civic universalist variant of the assimilationist model distinguishes between

public and private space; the maintenance of cultural distinctiveness is acceptable in the private sphere, but not in public institutions, where the recognition of group-based differences is discouraged and all citizens are considered equal with respect to the rules and values of collective life (7).

The pluralist model is premised on the idea that diversity in the private sphere should be reflected in the public realm, and that society can be understood as a mosaic of communities. The multicultural variant of this model values the recognition of difference in the public sphere, including the granting of collective rights to minorities, while the intercultural variant places equal emphasis on the recognition of diversity and identities, and the promotion of common reference points for the immigrant and host society (8).

Practise

Writing at the turn of the century, Sandercock noted a significant gap between multicultural rhetoric in national politics and legal frameworks, and what was taking place in the streets and neighbourhoods of Canadian cities, with subnational governments being slow to respond to cultural diversity. In her view, the City of Vancouver, which hired multicultural planners and funded initiatives such as the Collingwood Neighbourhood House,[1] was an exception to this rule (2003). Others have argued that cities have incrementally and increasingly adopted strategies of reasonable accommodation in their planning practises. Planning departments in large and medium-sized cities, spurred by "market initiatives and demands from ethno-racial communities for their rights as Charter citizens", have been accommodating cultural diversity on a case-by-case basis (Qadeer: Qadeer and Agrawal). A survey of urban planning departments in 109 first and second-tier gateway cities, suburbs and exurban jurisdictions in the United States and Canada found that large cities with populations of more than 500,000 had adopted a substantial majority of 19 multicultural policies, ranging from ensuring the representation and participation of ethnic communities in planning processes, to providing culturally sensitive services (Qadeer and Agrawal).

The survey found that the incidence of culturally sensitive planning policies was significantly related to the size of the municipality and the country in which it was located. Large Canadian cities had gone farther (mean=15.4) than large American cities (mean=12.6) in adopting multicultural policies. Medium-sized Canadian cities with populations of 100,000-500,000 had adopted more policies on average (mean=11.6) than medium-sized American cities (mean=6.5). Smaller cities in both countries lagged the larger communities in adopting multicultural policies. The proportion of immigrants in a city's population was either not related or weakly related to the number of policies adopted in large and medium-sized cities. Small cities were the only ones where the size of the immigrant population mattered, suggesting that falling below a certain threshold of the immigrant population has some effect (2011).

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[1] CNH, established in 1985 as a non-profit, non-governmental organization to provide family and childcare services, provides a shared space for different cultural groups, intercultural exchange programs, settlement services and outreach initiatives (Sandercock 2009).

Research Design and Data

This paper employs a comparative case study design in order to develop an inventory and typology of municipal government responses to immigration and cultural diversity in the social services policy domain. This design is best-suited for describing and explaining the outcomes of a small number of cases in a manner that is sensitive to historical chronology and context (Ragin 1987). Toronto, Peel Region, Calgary, Edmonton, Abbotsford and Vancouver were selected as case studies because they are amongst the country's most diverse cities and are home to relatively large populations of immigrants and visible minorities within their respective provinces. Visible minorities constitute near or absolute majorities of the residents of Toronto, Vancouver and Peel Region, and they are a significant presence in Edmonton, Calgary and Abbotsford, where they make up between 22-26 percent of their populations (see Table 1).

The inventory will be compiled through an analysis of the official documents of the departments/units/divisions that are responsible for social services. The inventory is based on the two analytical dimensions in which multicultural planning is grounded: Recognition of Diversity, and Access and Equity. These dimensions are measured with indicators similar to those employed by Qadeer in his policy index of multicultural planning (2009). Two indicators were selected to measure the recognition of diversity: the acknowledgement of immigration and/or diversity as issues in the strategic/business plans and/or research reports of relevant departments; and the establishment of designated units or staff positions to address immigration and/or diversity in the social services domain. Three indicators of access and equity were selected: policies tailored to immigrant and/or minorities; services tailored to immigrant and/or minorities; and the inclusion of cultural groups in decision-making processes.

The inventory provides the database for a two-dimensional typology that classifies municipal roles in the social services domain. The first dimension is based on an overall assessment of the normative premises underlying the official recognition of cultural difference. Drawing on the theoretical framework employed by Poirier, it situates municipal discourse and policies on a continuum ranging from the radical and civic universalist variants of the assimilationist model to the multicultural and intercultural variants of the pluralist model. The main contrast is between cities that employ universalist discourse in their documents and which implement policies and programs that do not recognize cultural differences, and those cities which employ pluralist discourse and implement policies and programs that are specifically designed for immigrants and minorities.

The second dimension locates cities based on the scope of their access and equity initiatives, distinguishing between cities that address immigration and diversity across 4-5 areas of the social service policy domain (comprehensive), a majority of areas (selective) or relatively few areas (limited), for which they have responsibility. Depending on the province in question, these areas are: employment/income supports (monetary and non-monetary); child/youth services; seniors services; community/neighbourhood services (including preventive services); and social housing.

Based on conflicting research about the pace at which Canadian cities have implemented multicultural planning theories and practises, we expect to find inter-city variations in the recognition of diversity and in the scope of access and equity initiatives.

Based on the work of Qadeer and Agrawal, we expect that the five large cities will implement more access and equity initiatives than the only medium-sized city in this sample (Abbotsford). We also expect that the percentage of immigrants in a city will have no or very little effect on the number of policies adopted.

Recognition of Diversity

If Canadian cities were once slow to recognize diversity, this is no longer the case. Calgary, Edmonton and Toronto have corporate-wide immigration, settlement and diversity policies (City of Toronto 2001; City of Edmonton 2007; City of Calgary 2011), and Peel Region participates in a multisectoral alliance to develop strategies for newcomers. The challenges facing newcomers, refugees and/or visible minorities are consistently recognized in the strategic/business plans or research reports of relevant departments in every city. Every city ─regardless of its size─ has created units or hired staff to research and advise on the implications of migration and cultural diversity for the social service domain, or to work with multicultural communities (Table 2).

In the past decade, immigration and diversity themes have taken on an increasingly higher profile in Abbotsford ─ a city with a sizeable Indo-Canadian community that is home to 58 different ethnic groups. In response to the growing sense of isolation and disadvantage for vulnerable and marginalized populations (including immigrants), "diversity and inclusion" are identified as priority areas in the city's social planning agenda. The agenda also acknowledges gaps in the services Abbotsford provides to immigrants, especially for those who speak English as a second language (City of Abbotsford 2006). The city's strategic directions for 2011 include finding ways to provide wider access to community programs and services, particularly for vulnerable citizens (City of Abbotsford 2011). The higher profile of these issues is also reflected in recent hiring decisions. The hiring in 2005 of a Social Planner[2] to address the city's growing challenges is significant because one of the guiding principles of social planning ─ inclusion─ involves eliminating physical and cultural barriers that inhibit citizens from contributing in meaningful ways. This was followed in 2010 by the hiring of a Diversity Coordinator to promote a more inclusive community.

The Region of Peel's Human Services Department manages child care, early learning, employment and financial supports programs, housing and homelessness programs and family literacy programs. The region has a very active research program on the human service needs and labour market experiences of immigrants and/or cultural minorities. The 2007-2008 *Best Start Community Plan* for child care and early learning recommends translation, the hiring of ethnically diverse staff, and outreach in order to

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[2] Social planning includes all aspects of living in a community: safe neighbourhoods; services and supports for community members when they are vulnerable; accessible transportation; meeting places; affordable housing; citizen engagement; and a sense of belonging and inclusion for everyone (City of Abbotsford 2006).

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engage the entire community (Regional Municipality of Peel, Best Start Community Plan, 2007).

The impact of migration and diversity is addressed in numerous reports on the stock of affordable housing, housing design, homelessness and emergency shelters, which is not surprising since more than 9 percent of people who moved to Peel between 2005 and 2010 were international migrants (a rate second only to Toronto). The regional housing strategy identifies new arrivals as requiring immediate housing that is affordable, accessible, and linked to settlement services, and more established immigrants as requiring affordable intermediary housing as they proceed along the integration continuum (SHS Consulting, 31-33).

One study found that almost 53 percent of recent immigrant households spend more than 30 percent of their income on shelter (SHS Consulting 2010, 15). In 2005, 41 percent of visible minority households were spending the same amount on shelter ─ far higher than the 32 percent rate reported among all households (SHS Consulting 2009, 140). It also noted that visible minorities face exclusion and discrimination in their search for affordable housing, and experience a higher incidence of residential segregation as a result (SHS Consulting 2010, 33). These findings led to recommendations for the development of larger housing units since immigrant and visible minority households are more likely to be larger and multi-generational (SHS Consulting 2009). Another report recommended that developers consider the housing preferences of recent immigrants who are predominantly from Asia and the Middle East (SHS Consulting 2010).

Following consultations with members of ethnic and faith communities, the *Final Report of the Peel Regional Task Force on Homelessness* acknowledged that multicultural communities have issues with homelessness, that new immigrants feel they get the run-around for services, that there is a lack of culturally sensitive resources to address homelessness, and that there is racism in the system (Region of Peel 2001). The report recommended developing a homelessness strategy that addresses the needs of multicultural communities, and allocating more funds to settlement agencies dealing with the issues.

Calgary's Community and Neighbourhood Services (CNS) Business Unit facilitates/provides access to social services and recreational opportunities, provides social research and policy analysis, and supports community-based organizations through consultations, education, referral and advocacy. The unit is housed in the Community Services and Protective Services Department, whose business plan reinforces the corporate *Welcoming Communities Policy* adopted by council in 2011 (City of Calgary 2012-2014). The policy focusses on five key areas: promoting the full integration of immigrants' participation in the social, economic, political, recreational and cultural aspects of the community; intergovernmental relations; service access and equity for immigrants; advocacy, communication, public awareness and education (i.e. provide public information and research that supports successful settlement and integration, and promote a welcoming and inclusive community and municipal workplace for immigrants); and special populations (i.e. responsiveness to vulnerable segments of the immigrant populations, such as non-white low-income female immigrants, immigrants with low literacy and immigrants with disabilities) (City of Calgary 2011).

The CNS also manages the joint provincial/municipal Family & Community Support Services (FCSS) program, which develops and funds preventive social services. The FCSS program's current funding priorities are to reduce the spatial concentration of poverty and to promote the social inclusion of vulnerable populations, specifically, immigrants who have arrived in the last five years, refugees, individuals with language-cultural barriers, low income/unable to obtain employment commensurate with credentials, stay-at-home parents or seniors, members of small ethno-cultural communities (City of Calgary 2009).

The Social Policy and Planning division of the CNS Business Unit, in collaboration with Intergovernmental Affairs, provides research, position papers and responses to provincial and federal governments on to immigration and immigrant issues. In 2010, it developed the *Welcoming Community Policy* framework (City of Calgary 2011). The division has also produced numerous research publications identifying the barriers facing immigrants: homelessness, a limited affordable housing supply, the increased spatial concentration of poverty, a lack of foreign credential recognition and Canadian work experience, language and cultural barriers, racism and inter-cultural tensions, and disproportionate contact with the criminal justice system (Tanasescu et al. 2009).

Several division reports have identified homelessness and a lack of housing affordability as acute issues for recent immigrants and refugee populations (Pruegger and Tanasescu 2007). Very few housing and shelter service providers are mandated or adequately resourced to meet the needs of these groups, and immigrant service agencies are underfunded and not mandated to address housing issues. These mandate gaps, combined with linguistic and cultural challenges and a lack of information about settlement programs, exacerbated these problems for newcomers.

A report on the recreational needs of youths in East Calgary, many of whom come from immigrant families from the Middle East and Asia-Pacific, concluded that youth programs and services may need to be tailored to reflect the needs of immigrant youths from different circumstances; some youths might require cultural heritage programs, others might need help coping with the after-effects of conflict in their homelands. The report noted the challenges that service providers face when they are trying to inform parents who are not fluent in English about community-based social and recreation programs (Downie 2004).

In Edmonton, the Community and Social Development (CSD) Branch in the Department of Community Services provides strategic social planning and service delivery. The department's current business plan refers to implementing anti-racism initiatives and to developing a framework for service delivery to African and multicultural communities (City of Edmonton Department of Community Services 2012-2014). The CSD branch business plan refers to developing and implementing the corporate *Immigration and Settlement Strategy*, supporting multicultural and Aboriginal communities in accessing or developing physical spaces to meet and recreate, supporting the development of an access strategy to sports and recreation for multicultural and Aboriginal groups, implementing the *Racism Free Edmonton Action Plan,* building a new model for engaging citizens from multicultural and Aboriginal communities in crime prevention, and supporting the implementation of targeted employment outreach

initiatives to under-represented communities (City of Edmonton Community and Social Development 2012-2014).

In 2008, Mayor Mandel set up the Edmonton Task Force on Community Safety to develop strategies to reduce crime rates, increase citizens' sense of safety and engage citizens as crime prevention specialists. The task force report noted that many newcomers are at risk of encountering homelessness, substance use, prejudice, psychological challenges, and neighbourhood disorganization, increasing the risk that they might be victimized or engage in criminal behaviour. The report recommended developing innovative models for engagement within the city's Aboriginal and multicultural communities that support their cultural ties, practises and communities, and creating a Community Safety Coordinating Council to lead grassroots collaborative approaches to community safety (Edmonton Task Force on Community Safety 2009). The report recommended the creation of the community-based REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities, which focuses on crime prevention initiatives. Its *Violence Reduction Plan* identifies goals and actions that the city will take in order to address the immediate social development needs of vulnerable populations, specifically, refugees, newcomers, fragile elderly and youth-at-risk (REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities 2011).

While there are no specific references to immigrant, multicultural or visible minority communities in *Building Together: the City of Edmonton Low Income and Special needs Housing Strategy 2001-2011* (City of Edmonton 2001)*,* the *Edmonton Community Plan on Housing 2005-2009* (Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing 2005), notes the need for more cultural sensitivity in staff and program delivery. As in Abbotsford, Edmonton has hired designated staff to deal with multicultural issues. The CSD's Multicultural Liaison Officers work with city departments and external partners to promote awareness of Edmonton's multicultural fabric, to improve accessibility to programs and services, and to support the community/organization development of Edmonton's multicultural communities (City of Edmonton 2012).

Vancouver's Social Development Department identifies and helps address social problems, and advises city council on policies related to financial support for community service organizations, housing projects and programs and childcare. It also directly manages 820 units of subsidized housing for low-income seniors and singles with disabilities. The department's Social Policy division provides support to council, other departments and community organizations in addressing multicultural and diversity issues, and advises Council on areas of concern, including immigrants. The department has dedicated staff working on multicultural and diversity issues (City of Vancouver 2012a).

A report commissioned by the city and NGO partners noted the contribution of young and highly-educated immigrants to the city's labour force and cultural capital, as well as the negative consequences for social inclusion associated with deficiencies in English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction for the young, inadequate settlement and integration supports for newcomers, the underutilization of skilled worker labour capital, and increasing poverty (Cooper 2006). *Seniors in Vancouver* notes that recent elderly immigrants are more likely to be low income than other seniors, that public institutions and services need to develop cultural competencies and interpretation/translation services

for non-English-speaking seniors, and that ethnic minority seniors might face discrimination in home support and residential care programs. Ethnic seniors also lack full access to health care services or financial assistance, are overly dependent on their families for interpretation, and are pressured by family expectations that they work/babysit (City of Vancouver 2010). Immigrants are not mentioned in Vancouver's *Housing and Homelessness Strategy* (City of Vancouver 2011), but this may be attributed to the small proportion of homeless individuals in Vancouver who are "ethnic" (Social Planning and Research Council of BC 2005).

Themes related to immigration and diversity infuse City of Toronto reports on employment and social services, neighbourhood services, childrens' services and housing. The *Action Plan for Social Assistance in the City of Toronto* recognizes that newcomers face unique challenges related to problems with accreditation, the non-recognition of foreign skills and education, a lack of information about labour market needs, a lack of Canadian work experience, a lack of workplace-based language training and bridging programs, racism, discrimination and acculturation (Toronto Social Services 2006). About 25 percent of Ontario Works clients have been in Canada for less than five years. Despite their higher levels of education than previous immigrant cohorts, post-1990 arrivals earned less ten years later, relative to the average earnings of Canadian-born citizens, than did immigrants who arrived in 1970. Toronto Employment and Social Services' *Starting in the Right Place* noted that the unemployment rates for immigrants are double the rate for non-immigrants (Toronto Employment and Social Services 2008).

In 2005 Toronto adopted a Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy that designated 13 Priority Areas for infrastructure investment. The neighbourhoods have high rates of low-income and unemployment, growing numbers of children and seniors, along with high concentrations of new immigrants and visible minorities. The report warns that persistently low incomes and a widening income gap between the rich and the poor in many communities threaten the city's social cohesiveness. Some neighbourhoods have experienced increasing levels of gun violence and criminal gang involvement. An unequal distribution of services and facilities has left some neighbourhoods less well-equipped to deal with social challenges (Corke 2005).

Toronto Childrens' Services child care plan for 2010-2014 stresses the need to provide service access based on the universal principles of age and geographic equality (determined through a spatial analysis of the proportion of children living below the LICO). While fee subsidies for licensed child care spaces are allocated based on these principles, they are also provided to Francophone and Aboriginal families looking for culturally specific child care programs (Toronto Children's Services 2010). *An Affordable Housing Action Plan 2010-2020* identifies new Canadians as people needing assistance to meet their housing needs, and that immigrants and refugees have distinct needs for housing and supports (Housing Opportunities Toronto 2009).

Access and Equity

Cities are more likely to implement access and equity initiatives tailored for immigrants and/or minorities in certain social policy areas than in others (see Table 3). Every city in the survey had implemented at least one initiative in the areas of youth/child services and community/neighbourhood services. All cities, save for Abbotsford, had introduced an employment or income support initiative (monetary or non-monetary) designed for immigrants and/or minorities. There was less activity in the areas of seniors services and housing. Based on official documents, it seems that Vancouver and Calgary were the only cities that had developed initiatives for this demographic, while Toronto was the only city that has taken concrete action in the area of housing.

The Abbotsford Building Connections (ABC) Project is a partnership between the City and community services organizations, schools and the university sector. Its goal is to build intercultural and interfaith connections with the aim of increasing mutual understanding and reducing racism (Abbotsford Building Connections 2012). Initiatives have involved the twinning of schools, faiths, business/agricultural associations, diversity programming at the Intercultural Hub in the city's Matsqui Recreation Center, and the translation of print materials in six languages. The Intercultural Hub offers conversation circles, mentorship programs for racialized youth and diversity education workshops. ABC's plans for 2012 involve hosting a 12-week diversity leadership training program for mid-level managers in the bureaucracy (City of Abbotsford Social Development Advisory Committee, 8 February 2012).

Peel Region participates in several multisectoral partnerships to facilitate the economic integration of newcomers. Its social policy analysts participate in the Peel Newcomer Strategy Group, launched in 2006 by the Region and the United Way to develop a model of newcomer settlement and integration. The Newcomer Strategy Group coordinates ImmigrationPeel.ca, a municipal Immigration Portal managed by the Region that provides newcomers with labour market and government and community service information. Peel is also a member of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC). Through TRIEC's Mentoring Partnership program, new immigrants in Peel are provided with occupation-specific mentoring opportunities (Peel Fair Share Task Force et al. 2011).

The region's Children's Services division provides child care subsidies to eligible landed immigrants and refugees, among other eligible recipients, and works with multicultural groups and social service providers (24-25). As part of the Best Start Network, it has developed programs for Aboriginal, francophone and other diverse communities, and has delivered services to the families of young children in high-growth, high immigrant, low service areas with the Learning in Our Neighbourhood (LION) mobile early learning and parenting centres (Region of Peel Childrens Services 2012).

Calgary's Community Services & Protective Services Department works with the CARE Strategy to develop the core cultural competencies of staff providing services for the children and youth of immigrant families. The Community and Neighbourhood Services (CNS) Business Unit has supported corporate departments in partnering with the

Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary to improve the attraction, retention and hiring of immigrant labor. The FCSS' Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth program offers afterschool life skills, newcomer orientation, in-home family settlement and immigrant student mentorship. The Seniors Division of CNS has developed a resource guide to increase the cultural competency of service providers working with culturally diverse seniors. It also deploys staff to act as resource persons for community initiatives that address immigrant issues.

Edmonton's Community Services Department provides grants and funding for multicultural groups, event hosting and travel grants, and a special community grant program for emerging immigrant and refugee communities. Edmonton also joined forces with the Council for the Advancement of African Canadians to create a public space for African communities. The Africa Centre offers educational, social and cultural integration programs which address the needs of African youth: after-school programs, stay-in-school initiatives, peer support and mediation, crime prevention, business training, health, leadership development and recreational and sports activities (Edmonton Task Force on Community Safety 2009). Edmonton's Social Development Rapid Response Team will be developing a team of social workers and community recreation coordinators to respond immediately to high-priority personal social crises by moving in and working directly with affected communities. It will also increase opportunities for members of the aboriginal and multicultural communities to be social and recreational program leaders (REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities, 2011).

Vancouver's Social Planning staff meet with groups to learn their perspectives on public participation and multicultural/diversity issues. Social Planning initiatives have included the Mayor's Task force on Immigration, created in 2007 to recommend policy and program directions regarding immigration issues. It also administers the Community Services Grant Program. Funding priority is given for community-based services that remove barriers to access, facilitate the integration of newcomers into community life, and community capacity building, particularly for newly arrived groups with unique and serious problems (City of Vancouver 2012a).

The program has supported programs and centres tailored for ethnic seniors: the 411 Seniors Centre provides multicultural information counsellors and outreach counsellors who visit home-bound seniors and provide social/recreational activities; Vancouver Second Mile provides a drop-in space to Chinese seniors, among others, and the SUCCESS Seniors Quality of Life Program helps connect Cantonese and Mandarin-speaking seniors to community centres. The Vancouver Cross-Cultural Seniors Network provides opportunities for seniors from different backgrounds to share information and work on common issues (City of Vancouver 2012b).

Vancouver has also worked with immigrant and multicultural organizations to establish a Mentorship Pilot Project in response to recommendations by the Mayor's Task Force on Immigration. As a project partner, the city invites employees to mentor skilled immigrants over the course of four months. The program is coordinated by Social Policy staff, the Equal Employment Opportunity Program and Human Resources (City of Vancouver 2012c). Finally, Vancouver Parks and Recreation's Immigrant Buddy

program matches young newcomers with local young people so that they can make a positive connections with their peers (City of Vancouver 2005).

In Toronto, the city manager must present an annual report to council on the status of the 2003 *Plan of Action for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination*, which ensures that non-discrimination, anti-racism, accessibility and equity policies and programs are integrated in the operations of the municipality (City of Toronto 2003). The 2009 *Access, Equity and Human Rights (AHER) Achievements* report provides a summary of corporate and divisional initiatives related to social services and other policy domains (Pennachetti 2009). The corporate "equity lens" (in effect since 2009) requires city divisions and staff to consider and respond to the implications of serving a diverse population and ensures that the policies and programs benefit all city residents equitably.

On the employment front, the city offers a Black African Canadian Employment Equity Program, a Profession to Profession mentoring immigrants program and the Career Bridge Internship program. The Toronto Enterprise Fund (TEF) is a joint program of the city, United Way and senior governments that provides employment opportunities to vulnerable people through social enterprises. In 2009, 17 percent of the people employed through TEF were immigrants. Children's Services has implemented a strategy to improve designated groups' representation at all levels of the municipal workforce. Shelter, Support and Housing Administration posts job openings on SkillsInternational.ca and settlement.org, which are employment-related websites that target immigrants (Pennachetti).

Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS), Public Health and Parks, Forestry and Recreation have collaborated to deliver the Investing in Families and Investing in Neighbourhoods Programs. These programs help improve the quality of life for Ontario Works recipients and people in priority and vulnerable neighbourhoods, many of them with high concentrations of immigrants. Another TESS program, Pathway to Advance Youth Employment, has partnered with TRIEC to connect youth and skilled immigrant pools to large employers TESS and TRIEC also partner in the annual conference for international professionals (Toronto Employment and Social Services 2011).

To help facilitate the economic integration of immigrants, TESS and the provincial Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration completed a 2006 pilot project using the Workplace Language Assessment (WLA) and pre-screening process developed by Canadian Centre Language Benchmarks (CCLB). Staff trained in CCLB conduct pre-screening to identify people with significant language barriers. Full WLAs are then provided at TESS offices by a trained assessor.

On the housing front, Toronto has a Housing Charter — the first of its kind in Canada —which states that all residents should be able to live in their neighbourhood of choice without discrimination. The city's Streets to Homes Program provides follow-up support services to recently housed clients, including immigrants and refugees experiencing settlement issues. In delivering housing and homeless programs, tenant hotline counsellors in the Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) provide services in 12 languages. In 2009, the online Tenant Survival Manual was translated into 19 languages. Immigrants also received support through SSHA's Housing Help program (Pennacchetti). Finally, the corporate Community Partnership and Investment Program

invests in strategic partnerships with community-based organizations, including multicultural organizations, and encourages residents to engage in civic life, participate in decision-making and develop their skills and capacity.

A typology of planning discourse and practises in the social services policy domain

The typology's first dimension assesses the normative premises underlying the official recognition of cultural difference in the social services policy domain (Table 4). As the inventory has shown, no city in this survey has adopted an assimilationist model that does not recognize cultural differences in public policies, programs and services (Table 2). Officials responsible for researching, developing and delivering social service functions in some of Canada's most diverse cities have adopted pluralist discourse of the multicultural variant. Their research and strategic documents, governance structures and/or staffing decisions reflect ─ to varying degrees─ a strong recognition of the impact of immigration and cultural diversity on changing demands for services, and of gaps in current service provision.

The second dimension locates cities based on the scope of their access and equity initiatives, distinguishing between cities that address immigration and diversity across 4-5 social service areas (comprehensive), a majority of areas (selective) or relatively few areas (limited) (Table 3). Briefly, every city has addressed at least one if not most areas: Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary were classified as "comprehensive", Peel Region and Edmonton as "selective", and Abbotsford as "limited" (Table 4). It must be acknowledged that within the "comprehensive" category, there are large variations in the number of specific initiatives undertaken in Toronto, compared to Vancouver and Calgary. This preliminary assessment of the scope of city initiatives will be further refined by counting those initiatives.

Conclusions

The expectation of inter-city variations in the extent to which diversity would be *recognized* in the public sphere was not confirmed. If Canadian cities once lagged senior governments in terms of multicultural planning theories and practises, this is no longer the case. Every city in this survey, regardless of population size, the size of the immigrant population, or provincial location, has incorporated post-colonial discourse about identities and citizenship, in addition to multicultural planning theories grounded in the values of diversity, equality and equity, into key official documents, governance structures and/or staff responsibilities. However, while every city has adopted the discourse associated with multicultural planning theories, there were inter-city variations in the scope of concrete access and equity initiatives.

The second hypothesis that larger cities would lead medium-sized cities in the incidence of access and equity initiatives was confirmed, as Abbotsford was the only city classified as "limited". The third hypothesis that the size of a city's immigrant population would have no or very little effect on the incidence of equity and access initiatives was also largely confirmed. Vancouver's immigrant population is twice the

size of Edmonton's and Calgary's, but the scope of initiatives in the latter two cities is equal or similar to that found in Vancouver. As Qadeer and Agrawal have argued, once a certain threshold of immigrant population is reached in the case of medium and large cities, variations in the percentage of immigrant population make little difference.

Table 1 – Population Profiles of Municipalities and Provinces, 2006 census

	Toronto	Peel Region	Ontario	Edmon-Ton	Calgary	Alberta	Vancouver	Abbots-Ford	BC
Population	2,503,281	1,159,405	12,160,282	730,372	988,193	3,290,350	578,041	123,864	4,113,487
Population change 2001-2006 (%)	.9	17.2	6.6	9.6	12.4	10.6	5.9	7.2	5.3
Non-Official Home Language only (% of population)	31.2	27.3	15.1	12.7	13.9	9.1	32	19.1	15.7
Immigrants (% of pop.)	50	48.6	28.3	22.9	24.8	16.2	45.6	26.2	27.5
Immigrated before 1991 (% of immigrants)	47.9	46.7	55.4	57.5	49.6	56	50	54.5	54.1
Immigrated 1991-2006 (% of immigrants	52.1	53.3	44.6	42.5	50.4	44	50	45.5	45.9
Visible minority population (% of pop.)	47	50	22.8	22.9	23.7	13.9	51	26.4	24.8

Source: Statistics Canada 2006

Table 2: Inventory of Responses in the Social Services Policy Domain

	Abbotsford	Vancouver	Calgary	Edmonton	Peel Region	Toronto
Recognition of immigration/diversity in plans/research reports	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Designated staff/units for immigration/diversity	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Policies tailored for immigrants' or ethnic minorities' specific service needs	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Programs/services tailored for immigrants' or ethnic minorities' needs	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Inclusion of immigrant/ethnic minority community organizations in decision-making	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲

Table 3 – Scope of Access and Equity Initiatives Tailored for Immigrants and Minorities

	A	V	C	E	Peel	T
Employment/income supports		▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Youth/Child Services	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Seniors Services		▲	▲			
Community/Neighbourhood	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Housing	NA					▲

Table 4 – A Typology of Municipal Roles in Social Service Policy Domain

Dimension	Vancouver	Abbotsford	Edmonton	Calgary	Toronto	Peel Region
Recognition of difference	Multicultural	Multicultural	Multicultural	Multicultural	Multicultural	Multicultural
Range of Initiatives	Comprehensive	Limited	Selective	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Selective

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