30 May 2011

Working Paper

Karin Kronstal and Jill L Grant
School of Planning
Dalhousie University
Halifax, NS, Canada

"We're friendly but …are we welcoming?" The Halifax case

Interviews contrast the views of those responsible for economic, social, and cultural development with those providing immigrant settlement services in Halifax, a mid-sized Canadian city. Respondents described Halifax as a friendly place, but also identified barriers which limit the abilities of newcomers to integrate easily into tight local social networks. Although those responsible for development saw immigration as a vital tool to provide demographic growth and economic vitality, service providers worried that the needs of immigrants took second place to the development agenda. While respondents construed immigrants as contributing cultural diversity to a city with a relatively homogeneous character they tended to overlook local minorities and to sidestep issues of racism.

Acknowledgements:
Funding for this research was provided by two sources: the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (under the Major Collaborative Research Initiatives grant number 412-2005-1001 to Dr D.A. Wolfe at the University of Toronto); a pilot study grant from the Atlantic Metropolis Project. We are grateful to the research team in Halifax: R. Holme, A. Pettman, R. Butler, J. Haggett, and J. Morton. We also thank the participants in the study for their generosity of spirit and commitment to welcoming newcomers. We take sole responsibility for the conclusions reached here.

The need for newcomers

Cities participate vigorously today in a competition for growth, as they have for more than a century (Ward 1998). Since the pioneering work of Jane Jacobs (1969; 1984), cities have been defined as engines of the economy, driving innovation and development (Savitch and Kantor 2002; Wolfe 2009). While development policy in the 20th century focussed on attracting industry and investment to cities to stimulate growth, the approach changed in the 2000s – with the growing influence of Richard Florida's (2002) ideas – to attracting talented and creative workers who might then attract investment. This transition in development philosophy led many Canadian cities, including Halifax (Nova Scotia), to focus their attention on luring newcomers to ensure a level of demographic and economic growth. The ability of smaller cities to attract and retain newcomers has been the subject of recent scholarly interest (Grant and Kronstal 2010; Walton-Roberts 2011).

With low rates of natural increase, and a development philosophy linked to attracting talented workers, Canadian views about immigration have been shifting. Based on an analysis of the media debate around immigration legislation between 1996 and 2004, Bauder (2008) suggested that four themes dominated the newspaper coverage, in this order: dangers related to immigration; humanitarian reasons to support immigration; the political utility of immigration; and the economic utility of immigration (including the need for growth and the fear of labour competition). By the same period, however, demographic concerns about an aging population and declining smaller city-regions were beginning to influence the immigration debate. Mid-sized Canadian cities came to see capturing migrants – mostly from other nations -- as a critical imperative for economic success. As Derwing and Krahn (2008, 186) wrote, "It has been predicted that, by 2011, almost all labor market growth will have to be fed by immigration." An influential national consensus now holds that urban growth depends on capturing international migrants who provide the innovation and work ethic to drive expansion in the national economy (Downie 2010; Ottaviano and Peri 2006). Not surprisingly, then, every Canadian city hopes to attract and retain immigrants.

While Canada is a major magnet for international migrants, newcomers do not select their destinations randomly. Over 70 percent of international migrants land in the three largest cities: Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver (Chui et al. 2007; Ley and Germain 2000). Bourne and Rose (2001, 110) observed that contemporary international migrants tend "to remain in these cities rather than fanning out to smaller urban centres and other regions as many did in the past". Some 95 percent of immigrants who landed between 1996 and 2006 went to four provinces: Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec (Carter et al. 2008). Other provinces and small urban centres scrambled for a share of the remaining growth. In the last decade, mid-sized cities such as Halifax, Nova Scotia – on Canada's eastern seaboard – began to focus attention on encouraging immigration as part of the economic development strategy (ShiftCentral 2003). Like Edmonton, Alberta, which created immigration policies to spur growth (Derwing and Krahn 2008), Halifax developed its own policy suite designed to attract and retain newcomers.

Contemporary local economic development processes reflect the premises of the creative cities paradigm postulated by Richard Florida (2002, 2005) and Charles Landry (2006; 2008). This philosophy – which suggests that 21st century economies depend on innovation, creativity, and growth centred in cities – proved seductive to local governments (Kipfer and Keil 2002; Peck 2005). Talented and creative workers who drive innovation in the economy are thought to seek urban places that are culturally diverse and tolerant (Florida 2002; Florida 2005; Florida *et al*. 2008). Consequently, local governments try to attract and retain groups they perceive as contributing to cultural diversity: multiculturalism and immigration play pivotal roles in the discourse of diversity (Dhamoon 2006; Good 2009). In the wake of declining birth rates and population projections that forecast labour shortages, most Canadian provinces and cities are targeting international migrants not only as a potential solution to their demographic shortfalls and contributors to talent pools, but also as producers of cultural diversity who create a local context that then stimulates greater urban vibrancy and economic growth.

Migrants are likely to remain in places where they become effectively integrated into the economic and social fabric. Integration supposes that newcomers will maintain some degree of contact with their native culture while "seeking to participate as an integral part of the larger social network" (Berry 1997, 9). The success of integration depends on actively engaging both the immigrant and the host society (Rodriguez-Garcia 2010). Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2002, 28) defined integration as "a two-way process that encourages adjustments on the part of both newcomers and the receiving society" rather than conventional practices that described successful integration "in terms of the degree to which immigrants converge to the average performance of native-born Canadians and their normative and behavioural standards" (Li 2003, 1). Canada's policy on multiculturalism, initiated in 1971 (before large-scale immigration from non-European donor countries began) offered a flexible conceptual model within which politicians could renegotiate the terms of the integration of ethnic communities (Kymlicka 1998, 24). While critics of the policy suggested that multiculturalism isolated and segregated minorities (Bissoondath 1994; Gwyn 1995), Kymlicka argued that the policy of the 1988 Multiculturalism Act promoted integration within common institutions while accommodating cultural diversity (1998, 43). Multiculturalism may not achieve perfect integration, but Kymlicka (1998, 40) suggested that it "evolved as a framework for debating and developing the terms of integration to ensure that they are fair" (1998, 40).

Cities experience different levels of success in integrating migrants. While large cities have substantial ethnic and religious communities which may help newcomers make social and economic connections (Chui et al. 2007), smaller cities may find that societal conditions present some barriers to the participation of newcomers (Downie 2010). Given that a small relative share of immigrants settle in smaller communities, finding ways to integrate newcomers into local social and economic networks so that they can and want to remain becomes essential to local authorities (Halliday 2006).

Halifax attracts thousands of young Canadians annually from across the country to attend its six degree-granting post-secondary institutions and to serve in the military stationed in the city. By contrast, the number of international migrants arriving annually has been

small: fewer than 3000. For both groups the retention rate remains below the targets local decision makers hope to achieve (Grant and Kronstal 2010). Ramos and Yoshida (2011) noted that almost 30 percent of recent immigrants to Atlantic Canada had relocated between six months and two years of arriving in Canada: they found moving associated with poor economic and social integration of the immigrants. As Brown (2002) explained, however, the ecology of migration choices proves highly complex, with a range of factors operating on migrants and the communities they inhabit.

In this paper we contrast perceptions of the challenges of retaining newcomers in Halifax. On the one hand we discuss the views of those involved in economic and social development who define diversity – and the immigrants who bring it -- as contributing to economic potential and quality of life in the city; on the other hand we hear from those providing immigrant services who describe the social and economic needs of newcomers and the barriers immigrants face in making the transition to living in Halifax. Understanding the social dynamics of a city clarifies the challenges and opportunities available to outsiders or newcomers. As Wulff and Dharmalingam (2008) noted, immigrants become socially connected by joining groups and interacting with community members. Immigrants' ability to access local networks is critical to successful long-term settlement. The openness of communities to newcomers (whether from within the nation or from outside) "provides a window on more fundamental social processes, structures, and changes" in the host community (Brown 2002, 7-8).

For our analysis we draw on data from two sets of interviews with a total of 54 respondents. During the summer of 2006 we interviewed 27 officials working for government and other development associations in the Halifax Region: 14 worked for economic development agencies, seven for cultural development agencies, and four for social development agencies. Another respondent served as an elected official in the Halifax region. The study – part of a national comparative research program -- examined conditions creating effective leadership and collaboration among agencies working in local development: it explored linkages between community engagement and economic growth. Findings pointed to the importance to the local economy of collaboration and networking and revealed respondents' perceptions that Halifax can be a difficult place to be a newcomer. In follow-up research during the summer of 2009 focussing on immigration service providers, we interviewed another 27 respondents who worked on behalf of, or directly with, immigrants to the Halifax Regional Municipality. Fifteen worked for non-governmental organizations providing immigration settlement services; some specifically served international students or refugees. Seven respondents were government employees working with immigration services, three served as elected officials, and two were private citizens operating in volunteer roles. We asked civic officials whether newcomers can integrate easily into the region; questions posed to service providers focused on the integration experiences of immigrants.

We found that although strong social networks and a sense of cultural rootedness and identity within Halifax facilitate formation of a cohesive policy framework they may hinder the integration of newcomers, especially international migrants. Despite the city's reputation for hospitality and friendliness, Haligonians – the residents of the city – are

perhaps not sufficiently welcoming to newcomers. As one regional development agency staff person we interviewed for our research in 2006 said,

> I think a common problem is that although we're very friendly here, we're not always a welcoming community. We don't tend to really welcome people into our homes a lot, or invite people over, or really try to go out of our way to make opportunities.

Despite fulfilling many of the attributes of the desired creative city model – including scoring high on indices of talent, technology, and creativity (Gertler and Vinodrai 2004) and on rankings of cities attractive to young creative types (Next Generation 2009) – Halifax's economy continues to struggle to provide enough jobs to retain the many talented young people who come to the region for university and the well-qualified immigrants who choose the city. While Canadian-born migrants may find it reasonably easy to integrate within social networks in the region, if they fail to integrate economically they do not remain for long. International migrants -- especially those who struggle with English or may be visible minorities—find themselves "marked" in ways which may hinder their social as well as their economic integration.

The next sections illustrate our findings. We begin by briefly describing conditions in Halifax before moving on to describe what those interviewed told us about the challenges of integrating newcomers. The final section considers some implications of our results.

The policy context in Halifax

Founded in 1749 to take advantage of its spectacular port, Halifax has a history as a government town that prospered in war and languished in peace time (Fingard et al. 1999). The economy traditionally relied on government and military services, port activities, and logistical support for the resource sector. Before the province amalgamated the city with its neighbouring smaller urban districts and large rural county in 1996, to form Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), the economy proved somewhat sluggish, and economic reports often lamented high unemployment rates (e.g., APEC 1987). At the time of amalgamation, local business interests and government launched the Greater Halifax Partnership (GHP 2007) to rebrand and reposition the region as a "smart city": a new philosophy of development emerged.

In 2004 the city brought Richard Florida into Halifax for a public lecture (HRM 2004): the creative cities discourse complemented the smart city framework that Partnership promoted (GHP 2006).The Partnership commissioned a report on the city's ability to compete on creativity (Gertler and Vinodrai 2004). Gertler and Vinodrai (2004) noted that while Halifax scored highly on Florida's measures of talent, creativity, and technology, it placed 19th in Canadian cities in the Mosaic Index: a measure of diversity evaluating the proportion of the population born abroad. The economic strategy developed in 2005 talked about the importance of immigration (HRM 2005a). The same year saw the Partnership develop an immigration strategy (Hornberger 2005) and the city release an immigration action plan (HRM 2005b). The 2006 census showed the

population of the city-region (Census Metropolitan Area or CMA) nearing 373,000 and revealed an economy which was diversifying as new industrial clusters in biomedical and cultural-creative industries supplemented earlier clusters in higher education, maritime, ICT services, and business services (Spencer and Vinodrai 2009). The proportion of foreign-born residents increased slightly (to 7.6 percent), but remained well below the national average of close to 20 percent. Unemployment rates in Halifax had fallen considerably, and the Partnership pressed the need to recruit talent (GHP 2006). Encouraging immigration to the city-region became a cornerstone of the new development agenda.[1]

After many decades of hard times, limited in-migration, and extensive out-migration, the Maritime region (which includes Nova Scotia) had developed close(d) communities where newcomers might expect to be asked "who's your father?", so that local residents could place them within social networks. Maritime hospitality depended on "kitchen parties" welcoming family members and old friends "down home" (Bruce 1988). Along with relative isolation came the legacy of a conservative[2] political and social culture (Brym 1979; Evans 2005).Thick and interlocking locally-based social networks characterized the region.

Extensive in-migration began to change the social environment in Halifax in the 1980s. The decision of the Shambhala Buddhists to relocate their international headquarters to Halifax brought hundreds of immigrants from the US but also generated a cultural buzz in the city: the Buddhist community developed effective mechanisms to help newcomers integrate socially and economically within the city (Miller 2008; Touch Base Online 2010). Expanded higher educational programs and health care facilities attracted talented and creative people to the region in greater numbers. Developing social networks of newcomers offered migrants new opportunities for integration, but concerns about the possible exclusion of immigrants – especially those of colour -- lingered.

The provincial government adopted a framework for immigration in 2004 and an immigration strategy in 2005 (Nova Scotia 2004; 2005). The Office of Immigration created programs to entice entrepreneurs and attract professionals to relocate to the province. Local immigration policy by 2005 highlighted the importance of integrating newcomers in Halifax to ensure that they stay. The Partnership's immigration strategy advocated creating a welcoming community and focussing efforts on attracting immigrants likely to stay (Hornberger 2005): low retention rates encouraged officials to narrow the scope of who they should attract. The strategy identified the concern that existing social networks may exclude newcomers, and encouraged mechanisms to assist integration. The Halifax immigration action plan (HRM 2005b) indicated that the city would take steps and improve services to support newcomers. By the 2006 census,

[1] The Atlantic Provinces Economic Council report of 1987 includes only one reference to immigration in the 200-page document: in the historical section describing settlement in the region. The key economic concerns in 1987 were finding ways to absorb the excess labour capacity generated by the baby boom and women's accelerated participation in the workforce. (APEC 1987)

[2] Recent shifts in voting patterns to elect left-of-centre political parties to govern Nova Scotia signal changes occurring in what was a conservative tradition.

Halifax had 27,400 residents who had been born outside of Canada, with almost 10,000 of them from two source countries: the United Kingdom and the United States (Statistics Canada 2007). By contrast, in the five-year period up to 2006, the largest donor source of immigrants was China (Chui et al. 2007).

By the end of the first decade of the 21st century, the Partnership launched several initiatives to better integrate newcomers. In 2007 Fusion Halifax—a social networking organization for 20 to 40-year-olds—was started with funding from economic development sources (Fusion 2011). It holds social, lobbying, and professional events to engage and connect young people: in 2011, it began a mentoring program to link young professionals to established experts (Fusion 2011). The Partnership also organized events and programs to connect immigrants to the business community and to support businesses looking to hire newcomers (GHP 2011a; 2011b): its Connector Program provides a referral process to put immigrants directly in touch with potential employers.

The contemporary development context in Halifax reveals that creative cities discourse has become hegemonic (Grant et al. 2008); it identifies immigrant labour as an essential input for economic growth. Thus we see strong convergence in economic development and immigration policy. Effectively integrating migrants so that they remain in the city-region to spur economic growth constitutes a major policy thrust.

The challenges of integration

Some things had changed in Halifax between 2006, when we talked with those involved in development policy, and 2009, when we interviewed those engaged with immigration issues. Although immigration remained a priority in 2009, officials were dealing with scandals over the provincial nominee program to attract entrepreneurs to the region (McDonough 2008), and service providers were reorganizing as governments changed funding priorities. Despite the passage of three years, however, those interviewed generally agreed that the Halifax city region needed newcomers. By and large they accepted the premises of the economic development and the immigration strategies. Several spoke explicitly about the need to attract and retain immigrants as a principal means of securing growth. Without such mechanisms, Halifax cannot be internationally competitive, as a government representative indicated in 2006:

> Some people may not understand how important immigration is to the economic growth, but if you look at communities like Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver, the main reasons they've grown so much is because of immigration, and the entrepreneurialism that immigrants bring with them.

Civic officials identified close working and social relationships as a major advantage for Halifax. For instance, a staff member for an economic development association interviewed in 2006 called his professional network "a blessing in the sense that you can pick up the phone and call people who work in different organizations who all know each other," though he recognized it could be "very daunting for people who do come from

other places" to make their way in. A community association representative (in 2006) thought the scale of the city contributed to the context:

> I think in general the community is one that's willing to work together and, you know, it is a small community, too, which is sometimes a blessing and sometimes a curse. It's a blessing in the sense that you do know, you can pick up the phone and you can call people who work in different organizations, and they know each other and they, you know, they talk to each other. You run into people downtown, that sort of thing. It's a curse sometimes in the sense that it can be very daunting for people who do come from other places to come into a community like this that's fairly close-knit. Where, you know, there are a lot of people who know each other, who grew up together, that are part of that fabric. So, that is a potential barrier as well, you know, that type of community.

High levels of collaboration facilitated by thick social networks prove effective for those working in the city (Grant et al. 2008; Grant and Kronstal 2010). At the same time, however, all respondents recognized that newcomers may be excluded from pre-existing social and profession circles. The need to provide more effective integration for newcomers came up frequently.

The integration of newcomers occurs within a social and economic context. The interviews revealed some consistencies and some contradictions in perceptions of that context and its effect on newcomers. Respondents agreed that Halifax's natural beauty, abundant heritage, laid-back atmosphere, and creative culture attracted newcomers. Views differed around whether the city exhibited friendliness, tolerance, and appropriate political attitudes.

We might summarize respondents' perceptions of the response that newcomers get in Halifax as "friendly at a distance". Halifax enjoys a reputation in the tourism industry – and among many of those interviewed -- as having friendly people. Yet a municipal settlement services staff member interviewed in 2009 noted, "We're very friendly as long as you're visiting; if you're staying there tends to be a lack of open arms". Service providers who moved to the region from within Canada reported being treated like foreigners during their initial years in the region. An elected official, who called Nova Scotia a "somewhat insular society" (in 2009), remembered when a relative was so bothered by feeling socially excluded that she returned to Western Canada after only two years in Halifax. A federal elected official recalled in 2009 that when she first arrived, everyone she spoke to knew she was from elsewhere, "but it doesn't come up in conversation now." She contrasted her own experience with that of other newcomers who do not "fit the mould".

An economic development manager recognized in 2006 the challenge of moving beyond friendliness to welcoming: "If you are a newcomer from the Maritimes, the answer is yes [it is easy to integrate]. If you are a newcomer from somewhere outside the Maritimes, it is somewhat more difficult. If you are an immigrant in the true sense of the word, it's not easy at all. I'm not proud to say that, but it's not easy". The Province's recent

immigration strategy, "*Welcome home to Nova Scotia*" (Nova Scotia 2011) imagines a hospitality that respondents did not report.

With small immigrant communities, Halifax does not have the extensive social networks that can provide connections and social support to newcomers from a vast array of nations or ethnicities. The city has a large Lebanese community, as several respondents noted, but other ethnic groups may be spottily represented. A government representative in 2006 talked about "what I call the MTV syndrome": immigrants feel more welcome in Montreal, Toronto, or Vancouver than in small communities with fewer compatriots.

Although respondents saw Halifax as a creative place and increasingly liberal in many ways, they almost universally also described Halifax as a conservative city. One respondent in 2006, a federal economic development staff member, decried the unwillingness to innovate: "New ideas are thought of negatively here. The first reaction is, 'No, we can't do that'. The second reaction is, 'I don't think we should do that.' New ideas, new anything here, faces an uphill battle." Immigrant service providers described Nova Scotians as conservative and closed: an attitude that protects social privilege. In 2009 one NGO manager and staff service provider speculated that the military background of the city contributed to developing a social hierarchy where many are "very keen on keeping things in the manner to which they have become accustomed".

A difference of opinion emerged amongst respondents about whether Halifax is sufficiently tolerant of differences. While many respondents described the city as being tolerant and inclusive, others identified discriminatory sentiments and actions. The manager of a federal economic development organization in 2006 described Halifax as a welcoming city where "we don't have discrimination". Few saw Halifax as cosmopolitan except in relation to other parts of the Atlantic region. The manager of a provincial cultural development organization (in 2006) referred to Nova Scotia as "a one-dimensional society in many ways…it's uni-cultural, right? white European". Another manager noted in 2006 that while "we have some Black, Lebanese, and Asian communities, I don't think they're large. I don't think the province is very diverse". Although a few respondents critiqued Halifax as too "white," civic officials rarely mentioned race or ethnicity when discussing the cultural differences of immigrants coming to Halifax.

Some respondents said that visible minorities faced problems in the city. For instance a provincial staff person told us in 2006: "I think that it would be very difficult for a visible minority… I think that it is not so much the reaction as it is there is less cultural and ethnic diversity here, and so that makes it very difficult." Those immigration service providers who had immigrated to Nova Scotia suggested that race and language played more significant roles in their settlement experience than did their country of origin. They noted that racial and/or linguistic discrimination continued to define immigrants' identities over time. A few suggested that newcomers of diverse ethnic backgrounds faced greater challenges in rural Nova Scotia than in Halifax.

Despite the long term presence of significant Aboriginal, African-Nova Scotian, and Acadian minorities in the region, most civic officials described Nova Scotia as racially and culturally homogenous. Thus we see evidence of the way in which the discourse of multiculturalism and immigration has transformed "culture" into the idiom of meaningful difference (Scott 2003). As Dhamoon (2006, 358) wrote, "Specifically, the terms 'culture' and 'multiculturalism' are used to package those who share some aspects of identity without adequately addressing historical and contemporary forms of racism, colonialism, and imperialism." Several respondents referenced the African Nova Scotia community yet avoided discussing race relations in historical context. The local history of displacement, discrimination, and disadvantage (Clairmont and Magill 1987; Paul 2006) emerged rarely in the interviews. An exception appeared in 2006, as an officer from a cultural development organization criticized the lack of discussion around racism at the official level. "The city is still divided by a racial line...They talk about multiculturalism in this city yet they haven't even resolved the pervasive issues. It's one of the things I find very displeasing about this city".

Service providers challenged the view that Halifax's small proportion of immigrants renders the city culturally homogenous. They identified racial prejudice as an issue of deep concern affecting African Nova Scotians and some immigrants. One municipal service employee talked in 2009 about the perception that Halifax is not a diverse city. She saw this dismissal of the African Nova Scotian community and new immigrant communities as part of a deliberate effort to maintain the status quo.

> We're still like that. We very much want people to assimilate, to melt. We're not multicultural; we in Nova Scotia very much aim for the melting pot. 'Look, everybody's the same, we treat everybody the same and there is no colour, race, ability, or anything.' Well, that's just not the reality.

The dilemma of identity

The obverse of developing a "down home" mentality in Nova Scotia over the decades of economic decline is a strategy of marking those who come from outside as come-from-aways, or CFAs. Being born in Nova Scotia played a significant role in respondents' perceptions of the region and their integration into it; for example, civic officials from outside the province generally referred to themselves as CFAs. Many spoke of feeling like outsiders even after many years in the city. A staff member at a provincial social development agency (in 2006) found people unreceptive to her ideas even after living 20 years in the region. In 2009, one NGO manager referred to the CFA phenomenon as a "strange, invisible barrier". Newcomers can face challenges in penetrating the sense of rootedness, although many form their own alternative social networks (some of which have grown in power and significance over the last two decades).

Coming from away can affect professional opportunities, even for Anglophones: as a manager of a social development association said in 2006, "I only came here from Chicago and I found it really difficult being from away, just in terms of job hunting. All my job references were a long distance phone call away. It was quite problematic". Some

native English speakers noted that their "exotic" accents disarmed locals and sometimes helped them make connections. Service providers noted, however, that accents serve both as markers of belonging as well as of difference. One NGO manager (in 2009) received regular compliments on a British accent: "I can guarantee you if you go to talk to the immigrants who are learning English, they won't get the same reaction". The extent to which native English speakers can integrate into local networks varies.[3]

When asked to describe cultural differences in specific terms, almost all civic officials mentioned language first. Respondents cited fluency in English as *the* key to integration, both in terms of obtaining employment and, in the words of one respondent who worked for a cultural development organization in 2006, "accessing culture". One provincial social development staff member in 2006 described his neighbour as the ideal immigrant: an immigrant from Mexico who learned English through locally sponsored ESL courses.

> We did everything we could to accommodate him, to help him feel welcome and to sort of get him up on his feet. Now he's on his feet and he's a contributor. That's the value of just helping them through the integration process and allowing them to come in and celebrate their culture, not oppress it.

The discourse revealed a certain tension between the idea that speaking a common language – English – facilitated a shared identity, and the notion that linguistic diversity promoted a desired multicultural identity. Officials were uncertain about what to do. As a manager of a social development association said in 2006,

> I'm not sure we have to change our structure to accommodate their languages. We have to create structures that can help them evolve into the common language, but we'd be silly to push their language out. We should foster their language and let them speak it because it just makes us more diverse.

While privileging English the respondent identified the utility represented by other languages. The last two passages also reveal the privileged power position of the host speakers. The first talks about *allowing* migrants to come in and not oppressing their culture. The second employs the verb "evolve" in explaining how and why migrants need to transform themselves to suit the structure of the host community: the comments imply a progressive or naturalizing process of one-way adaptation.

Many immigrant service workers in 2009 characterized the general response to immigrants by the local population as fearful, defensive, or shy. One NGO service provider described the city's current approach to welcoming immigrants as similar to "a doctor who is identifying a sickness or illness**,**" except the disease is the dis-ease the immigrant generates in others. Several identified the need for public education to overcome deep-seated fear toward any type of difference, including religion, race, and ethnic background.

[3] Lyons et al. (2011) suggested that immigrants from the United Kingdom and South Africa were virtually missing from the negative discourse around immigration in the focus groups they conducted among young New Zealanders. By contrast, migrants from England were generally seen as excluded from being seen as "Scottish" even after decades of living in Scotland (Bond 2006).

The purpose of newcomers

Many respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of exposure to different cultures afforded in the city and favoured increasing the numbers of immigrants. In addition to the economic gains immigrants bring, respondents thought having more immigrants in the city would provide a more stimulating cultural environment. As one economic development association staff member noted in 2006, "The great advantages of having lots of immigrants is the different culture that they are able to bring with them, and the different food and the different music and all the different dress, that sort of thing". In other words, immigrants enhance the consumer experience in the city.

The two sets of interviews revealed divergent perspectives about why Halifax should help migrants come to and stay in the city. Those promoting economic development and immigration policy often took an instrumental or utilitarian perspective: diversity is good for business (Zanoni et al. 2010). Integrating newcomers is an economic imperative for growth. Officials saw city leaders as valuing liberal multicultural ideals, though they recognized motivations might be less than altruistic. As one manager of an economic development association put it in 2006, politicians embraced diversity "because they learned that they need to in order for this community to grow and for us to attract the right types of companies that we want here". To a certain extent, these views revealed a "shallow multiculturalism of only food and festivals" (Sandercock 2004, 156). Development officials appreciated the benefits newcomers bring without acknowledging the need of the host society to adapt its practices and processes to accommodate (Rodriguez-Garcia 2010). By contrast, immigrant service providers took a social development perspective, seeking ways to help migrants negotiate meaningful new lives in Halifax. Service providers felt frustrated that immigrants were perceived primarily as a source of revenue and labour rather than as people with distinct needs.

The barriers to belonging

A recent survey of 508 residents in Halifax revealed generally positive attitudes towards immigrants, but also flagged some significant concerns (Emberley 2011). A majority, 68 percent, said that immigrants must integrate into the customs of Canada. "Only 61 per cent of respondents feel people in our community are accepting of immigrants, yet 88 per cent are personally accepting of immigrants" (Emberley 2011, 5): the large gap between what people claim for themselves but see in others may reflect weak personal and community commitment. Halifax is not as welcoming as it may think it is.

Respondents' sense of belonging and their personal stakes in seeing the social dynamic and composition of the city change influenced their answers to our questions. As figures of authority, civic officials understood the demographic challenges facing the region. That officials so frequently characterized barriers as difficult but surmountable may reflect some of their own personal experiences: many of them came to Halifax from other

places. For these respondents, geographic markers of difference did not keep them from gaining positions of authority. They may assume that newcomers from other parts of the world could have a comparable experience, providing they speak sufficient English to find employment. Few officials reflected on how their personal experiences may differ from those of newcomers belonging to racial or ethnic minorities.

The Halifax interviews suggested that those developing and implementing public policy defined cultural diversity – as embodied by people speaking different languages, cooking different foods, and practicing different customs -- as beneficial to the community and economy. They accepted the creative cities discourse that linked diversity to tolerance, growth, and innovation. In the context of solving the population problem, welcoming and integrating immigrants was seen as both necessary and potentially fruitful for the region. Cultural diversity was desirable for its utility in contributing to the labour pool and to entertainment options. At the same time, development authorities put the onus for integration largely on newcomers, identifying the programs available to help them develop the skills and connections to fit within the local economy and society.

Those working with immigrant groups proved less sanguine. As advocates for newcomers, they recognized the challenges faced by those who come speaking other languages, practicing other religions, and presenting new faces to the region. Most service providers saw the current system as requiring newcomers to adapt through personal transformation or work hard to make their way into existing networks while demanding little or no accommodation by the host community. Service providers exposed systemic barriers to welcoming newcomers on their own terms and integrating them effectively into the local economy. Differences in power relations have profound consequences for newcomers. The inability of the local economy to effectively absorb immigrant workers and the opacity of local social networks create conditions that limit retention of immigrant households. Until Halifax perfects strategies to accommodate the immediate needs of immigrants it will likely continue to fail to meet its immigration targets.

Officials interviewed seemed unsure of what the host society could or should do to accommodate the diversity they desired. One respondent, a manager of an economic development agency in 2006, was uncomfortable with the word integration: “Especially in all the things that come with it, ‘Leave your culture at home.’ I’m not into that at all. But if you take the more positive side of integration; you know, giving them a chance”. Several described integration in the broadest terms possible: permitting others to celebrate their culture while not giving up one’s own. Yet even in characterizing integration as an exchange of cultures, officials did not envision parties of equal standing. Describing the ideal cultural exchange in a 2006 interview, a social development staff member positioned the immigrant in a passive stance relative to the host society:

> It isn’t sufficient to just *teach them* about our culture, and *integrate them* into our culture –I think we need to *give them* a sense of belonging by *allowing them* to contribute to the community (emphasis added).

In the absence of a discussion of what is meant by “their culture” and “our culture”,

officials relied on what Bannerji (2000, 51) called the "deployment of diversity." That is, they talked about a "value-free, power-neutral plurality, of cultural differences where modernity and tradition, so-called white and Black cultures, supposedly hold the same value" (Bannerji 2000, 51) Rather than acknowledge the hegemony of particular cultural traditions and practices, local officials talked about embracing or consuming diversity.

In sum, the interviews suggested that Halifax's greatest strength is simultaneously its Achilles' heel. The tight and overlapping local social networks that facilitate trust and collective action between long-term residents, and often effectively absorb Canadian-raised and native English-speaking newcomers into the region, may limit the ability of immigrant and visible minority newcomers to integrate quickly. Immigrant and visible minority newcomers are defined as "culturally diverse" others, valued in an abstract way for their potential economic and social utility but set apart by their differences. The inability to consistently make social and/or economic space for immigrants may account for some challenges Halifax and other smaller cities face in retaining international migrants. While the city has enjoyed prosperity based on interprovincial migration over the last several decades, its long-term growth prospects may depend increasingly on finding ways to make international migrants feel accommodated within a socially inclusive and welcoming community. This will test the policies and practices which seek to more effectively engage those outside existing power networks to participate in social, economic, and governance processes.

Our data suggest that Halifax welcomes immigrant newcomers in an instrumental way. That is, public policy and business leaders hope immigrants can solve local demographic and economic needs, yet local governance and social networks remain somewhat impermeable. As Derwing and Krahn (2008, 198) note, "Most of the policies that provinces and municipalities have developed in the last few years talk about 'welcoming communities', but there is very little evidence that political leaders have any tangible plans for addressing this issue". Like many smaller cities with limited resources – only 20 percent of one full-time staff position to implement its immigration strategy -- Halifax has been slow to develop a strong policy context and sufficient mechanisms to engage immigrant newcomers fully. Without commitment and critical reflection on the part of the host society the concept of welcoming communities remains shallow: a friendly face is not sufficient. Our research points to the ways in which particular social constructions of community identity may alienate newcomers. Illuminating such barriers constitutes a step toward opening the gates to welcoming newcomers into our communities.

References:

APEC (Atlantic Provinces Economic Council). (1987). *Atlantic Canada today*. Halifax: Formac Publishing.

Bannerji, H. (2000). *The dark side of the nation: Essays on multiculturalism, nationalism and gender*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc.

Bauder, H. (2008). Immigration debate in Canada: how newspapers reported, 1996-2004. *Journal of International Migration and Integration, 9,* 289-310.

Berry, J. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology, 46*(1), 5-34.

Bissoondath, N. (1994). *Selling illusions: The cult of multiculturalism in Canada*. Toronto: Penguin.

Bond, R. (2006). Belonging and becoming: national identity and exclusion. *Sociology, 40*(4), 609-626.

Bourne, L., & Rose, D. (2001). The changing face of Canada: the uneven geographies of population and social change. *The Canadian Geographer, 45*(1), 105-19.

Brown, D. (2002). Migration and community: social networks in a multilevel world. *Rural Sociology, 67*(1), 1–23.

Bruce, H. (1988). *Down home: notes of a Maritime son.* Toronto: Key Porter Books.

Brym, R. J. (1979). Political conservatism in Atlantic Canada, In: R Brym and J Sacouman, (Eds) *Underdevelopment and social movements in Atlantic Canada,* pp. 59-79. Toronto: New Hogtown Press.

Carter, T., Morrish, M., & Amoyaw, D. (2008). Attracting immigrants to smaller urban and rural communities: lessons learned from the Manitoba provincial nominee program. *Journal of International Migration and Integration, 9,* 161-183.

Chui, T., Tran, K. & Maheux, H. (2007). *Immigration in Canada: A portrait of the foreign-born population. 2006 census*. Ottawa, Statistics Canada. Catalogue no. 97-557-XIE. http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-557/index-eng.cfm

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2002). *Performance report*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada.

Clairmont, D., & Magill, D. (1987). *Africville: the life and death of a Canadian Black community*. Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press.

Derwing, T. M. & Krahn, H. (2008). Attracting and retaining immigrants outside the metropolis: is the pie too small for everyone to have a piece? The case of Edmonton, Alberta. *International Migration & Integration, 9*, 185–202.

Dhamoon, R. (2006). Shifting from 'culture' to 'the cultural': critical theorizing of identity/difference politics. *Constellations, 13*(3), 354-373.

Downie, M. (2010). *Immigrants as innovators: Boosting Canada's global competitiveness.* Ottawa, Conference Board of Canada. Available at http://www.conferenceboard.ca/documents.aspx?did=3825 accessed 5 May 2011

Emberley, R. (2011). Embracing immigration. *MetroNews Halifax*, 6-8 May 2011, page 5.

Evans, T. A. (2005). The impact of representation per capita on the distribution of federal spending and income taxes, *Canadian Journal of Political Science, 38(*2), 263-285.

Fingard, J., Guildford, J., & Sutherland, D. (1999). *Halifax: the first 250 years*. Halifax: Formac Publishing.

Florida, R. (2002). *The rise of the creative class and how it's transforming work, leisure, community, and everyday life.* New York: Basic Books.

Florida, R. (2005). *Cities and the creative class.* New York: Routledge.

Florida, R., Mellander, C. & Stolarick, K. 2008. Inside the black box of regional development: human capital, the creative class and tolerance. *Journal of Economic Geography, 8*, 615-649.

Fusion Halifax. (2011). FUSION Halifax. Available at http://www.fusionhalifax.ca/en/home/default.aspx accessed 4 May 2011

Gertler, M. & Vinodrai, T. (2004). *Competing on creativity: Focus on Halifax.* A report prepared for the Greater Halifax Partnership. Available at: http://www.greaterhalifax.com/site-ghp2/media/Parent/Competing_on_Creativity_Focus_on_Halifax.pdf, accessed 8 March 2009

GHP (Greater Halifax Partnership) (2006). A partnership model for economic growth. Available at http://www.greaterhalifax.com/site-ghp2/media/Parent/Smart_City_Framework_2006(1).pdf accessed 3 March 2009

GHP (Greater Halifax Partnership) (2007). History. Available at: http://www.greaterhalifax.com/en/home/about_the_partnership/media_centre/history.aspx, accessed 8 March 2009

GHP (Greater Halifax Partnership) (2011a). Immigration: programs. Available at http://www.greaterhalifax.com/en/home/aboutus/Projectsinitiatives/immigration/learnmore.aspx accessed 4 May 2011

GHP (Greater Halifax Partnership) (2011b). Halifax Connector Program. Available at http://www.greaterhalifax.com/en/home/ourprograms/immigration/connectorprogram/default.aspx accessed 4 May 2011

Good, K. R. (2009). *Municipalities and multiculturalism: the politics of immigration in Toronto and Vancouver*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Grant, J. L., Holme, R. & Pettman, A. (2008). Global theory and local practice in planning in Halifax: the Seaport redevelopment. *Planning Practice and Research, 23*(4), 517-532.

Grant, J L., & Kronstal, K. (2010). The social dynamics of attracting talent in Halifax. *The Canadian Geographer, 54*(3), 347-365.

Gwyn, R. (1995). *Nationalism without walls: The unbearable lightness of being Canadian*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.

Halliday, B. (2006). Immigration-fueled diversity in Canada: implications for our second- and third-tier cities. *Our Diverse Cities, 2* (summer), 88-93.

Hornberger, C. (2005). *Halifax Region immigration strategy.* Business case and strategic action plan. Volume 1. Greater Halifax Partnership. Available at http://www.greaterhalifax.com/site-ghp2/media/Parent/HRIS_ActionPlan.pdf accessed 23 December 2007.

HRM (Halifax Regional Municipality) (2005a). *Strategies for success: Halifax Regional Municipality's economic development strategy 2005-2010.* Available at: http://www.greaterhalifax.com/site-ghp2/media/Parent/Economic_Strategy.pdf, accessed 23 December 2007.

HRM (Halifax Regional Municipality) (2005b) *Immigration action plan.* Available at http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/ActionPlanSept05_WebRes.pdf accessed 23 December 2007

Jacobs, J. (1969). *The economy of cities.* New York: Random House.

Jacobs, J. (1984). *Cities and the wealth of nations: Principles of economic life.* New York: Vintage Books, Random House.

Kipfer S &Keil, R. (2002). Toronto Inc? Planning the competitive city in the new Toronto. *Antipode, 34*(2), 227-264

Kymlicka, W. (1998). *Finding our way: Rethinking ethnocultural relations in Canada.* Canada: Oxford University Press.

Landry, C. (2006). *The art of city making.* London: Earthscan

Landry, C. (2008). *The creative city: a toolkit for urban innovators.* London: Earthscan

Ley, D. & Germain, A. (2000). Immigration and the changing social geography of large Canadian cities. *Plan Canada, 40*(4), 29-32

Li, P. S. (2003). *Deconstructing Canada's discourse on immigrant integration.* Prairie Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration. PCERII Working Paper No. WP04-03. http://pcerii.metropolis.net/WorkingPapers/WP04-03.pdf

Lyons, A. C., Madden, H., Chamberlain, K., & Carr, S. (2011). 'It's not really us discriminating against immigrants, it's more telling people how to fit in': constructing the nation in immigration talk in New Zealand. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, *21*(1), 14-27.

McDonough, P. L. (2008). Nova Scotia's provincial immigration policy: the failure of the business mentorship program. Ryerson University, Thesis and Dissertations, Paper 105. Available at http://digitalcommons.ryerson.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1105&context=dissertations&sei-redir=1#search=%22nova+scotia+failure+provincial+nominee+program%22 accessed 4 May 2011

Miller, L. G. (2008). The Shambhala Buddhist immigrants: a Nova Scotia success story? In Terry Murphy and James de Finney (eds.), *Our Diverse Cities*, *5*, 100-103 Atlantic Region, Canada Metropolis Centre. Available at http://canada.metropolis.net/pdfs/ODC_spring2008_e.pdf#page=102 accessed 5 May 2011

Next Generation Consulting. (2007). Attracting and retaining talent to Greater Halifax. Executive summary. Available at http://www.greaterhalifax.com/site-ghp2/media/greaterhalifax/Measuring_the_Halifax_Handprint_Executive_Summary.pdf accessed 8 March 2009

Next Generation Consulting. (2009). *Next Cities™: the top Canadian hotspots for young, talented workers. 2009-2010* Canada version. Available at Http://next_cities_2009-2010_Canada.pdf accessed 16 September 2009

Nova Scotia, Province of. (2004). *A framework for immigration*. Halifax: Office of Immigration.

Nova Scotia, Province of. (2005). *Nova Scotia's immigration strategy*. Halifax: Office of Immigration.

Nova Scotia, Province of. (2011). *Welcome Home to Nova Scotia: a strategy for immigration.* Available at http://www.gov.ns.ca/jobshere/docs/ImmigrationStrategy-WelcomeHomeToNS.pdf accessed 5 May 2011

Ottaviano, G. & Peri, G. (2006). The economic value of cultural diversity: Evidence from US cities. *Journal of Economic Geography, 6*(1), 9–44.

Paul, D. (2006). *We were not the savages.* (Third Edition) Black Point NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Peck, J. (2005). Struggling with the creative class. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 29*(4), 740-770

Ramos, H. & Yoshida, Y. (2011). *Why do recent immigrants leave Atlantic Canada? Working Paper* 32-2011, Atlantic Metropolis Centre, Halifax. Available at http://www.atlantic.metropolis.net/WorkingPapers/Ramos_Yoshida_WP32.pdf accessed 4 May 2011.

Rodriguez-Garcia, D. (2010). Beyond assimilation and multiculturalism: a critical review of the debate on managing diversity. *Journal of International Migration and Integration, 11,* 251-271.

Sandercock, L. (2004). Sustaining Canada's multicultural cities. *Our Diverse Cities, 1,* 153-157.

Savitch, H.V. & Kantor, P. (2002). *Cities in the international marketplace: The political economy of urban development in North America and Western Europe.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Scott, D. (2003). Culture in political theory. *Political Theory, 31*(1), 92-115.

ShiftCentral. (2003). *Are we urban? The urban growth agenda in the Atlantic Canadian context*. Report prepared for The Greater Halifax Partnership. Available at http://www.greaterhalifax.com/site-ghp2/media/Parent/Urban_growth_agenda_English.pdf accessed 4 May 2011.

Spencer, G. & Vinodrai, T. (2009). *Halifax: Innovation Systems Research Network city-region profile, 2006.* Available at http://www.utoronto.ca/isrn/city%20profiles/2006%20City%20Profiles/Halifax%20Profile%202006.pdf accessed 8 May 2011.

Statistics Canada. (2007). Immigrant population by place of birth, by census metropolitan area (2006 census). Available at http://www40,statcan.ca/101/cst01/demo35a-eng.htm accessed 4 May 2011.

Touch Base Online. (2010). Shambhala Buddhists among the most successful immigrant groups: report. (4 September 2010) Available at http://www.touchbaseonline.ca/?p=1330 accessed 5 May 2011.

Walton-Roberts. M. W. (2011). Immigration, the university and the welcoming second tier city. *Journal of International Migration and Integration* (Online release DOI 10.1007/s12134-011-0187-3 published online 19 April 2011)

Ward, S. (1998). *Selling places: The marketing and promotion of towns and cities 1850-2000.* London: E&FN Spon.

Wolfe, D. A. (2009). *Twenty-first century cities in Canada: The geography of innovation.* Ottawa, Conference Board of Canada.

Wulff, M., & Dharmalingam, A. (2008). Retaining skilled migrants in regional Australia: The role of social connectedness. *International Migration & Integration, 9,* 147–160.

Zanoni, P., Janssens, M., Benschop, Y., & Nkomo, S. (2010). Unpacking diversity, grasping inequality: rethinking difference through critical perspectives. *Organization, 17*(1), 9-29.