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Who are the Strangers?

A Socio-Demographic Profile of Immigrants in Toronto

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A Socio-Demographic Profile of Toronto in 1996

A. Cultural Composition

In 1996, the total population of Toronto was 4,199,286 of which 1,797,294 (43 per cent) were foreign-born. While the total population of Toronto had increased by 9 per cent, in the five-year period (1991-1996), the foreign-born population had increased by 15 per cent. The comparable proportions of foreign-born for Canada and Ontario were, respectively, 18 and 26 per cent. By 1996, the proportion of Toronto's immigrants who had migrated before 1946 was only 1 per cent. Just under a quarter (24 per cent) of all immigrants had been in Canada for five years or less, and just under half had arrived between 1981 and 1996. Of all foreign-born, 2 per cent had immigrated from the USA, 40 per cent from Europe (down 8 per cent from 1991) and 58 per cent from non-European countries (up 9 per cent). The proportion from sources other than the above, was negligible. The United Kingdom (22 per cent of all European-born) and Italy (20 per cent) remained important European sources. About 6 per cent of European foreign-born, had their origins in the former USSR and 7 per cent in the former Yugoslavia. Among non-European sources, South and Central America and the Caribbean accounted for 28 per cent and Hong Kong for 11 per cent. Persons born in India represented just under 10 per cent, while the proportion for China was 9 per cent. Of all foreign-born in Canada, 35 percent were living in Toronto. Of all foreign-born in Ontario, the proportion living in Toronto, had increased from 52 percent in 1991, to 65 percent by 1996.

In 1996, 70 per cent (down 6 per cent since 1991) of the Toronto population declared a single ethnic origin. Of all mentioning a single-origin, 11 per cent gave "Canadian" as their ethnicity. British single origin accounted for 16 per cent, Italians and Chinese for 11 per cent, South Asian for 10 per cent, Caribbeans for 6 per cent, Portuguese for 4 per cent and Jewish and Polish for 3 per cent each. Including the multiples, we can summarize the ethnic breakdown of Toronto, in 1996, as follows: single Charter (British or French) 12 per cent; multiple Charter (including British, French and "Canadian") 24 per cent; single Canadian 8 per cent; European 23 per cent and non-European 27 per cent and other multiples, 6 per cent. The visible minority population had increased in Toronto from 26 per cent in 1991 to 32 per cent in 1996.

In the 5 year period, the number of persons whose mother-tongue was English had dropped further, from 65 to 62 per cent and while Italian had dropped another percentage point, Chinese (7 per cent) had become the second most important mother-tongue. The proportion speaking English in the home, dropped a further 4 percent to 73 per cent. Chinese was spoken in the home by 6 per cent and no other language accounted for more than 2 per cent. The proportion who could not converse in one of Canada's official languages went up by one percent to 5 percent, 87 per cent being able to converse in English only and 8 per cent in both official languages.

B. Levels of Education

Between 1991 and 1996 the proportion of persons over 15 years of age with post-secondary education increased by 10 per cent to 67 per cent. European and non-European immigrants, both had

1 per cent fewer with less than grade 9 education, while among Canadian-born the proportion went up from 3 to 4 per cent. European-origin immigrants with University degrees remained at 14 per cent, non-European immigrants increased from 19 to 20 per cent and the Canadian-born proportion remained at 22 per cent.

C. Occupations

In 1996, the proportion of persons over 15 years of age in the labour-force who were unemployed remained at 9 per cent and immigrants from non-European sources remained at 12 per cent. European-origin immigrants increased 1 percent to 8 per cent and Canadian-born decreased from 9 to 7 per cent.

In 1991 the classification of occupations had been changed, but the census still allowed comparison with earlier censuses. However, this was not the case in 1996. So, what follows, is an approximation of the four categories used in earlier censuses. For Canadian-born, the proportion of High white collar jobs (professional, managerial, teaching, medicine, natural and social sciences, religion and arts) was 36 per cent. For European and non-European born it was 31 and 27 per cent, respectively. Both European-origin and non-European origin immigrants had 42 per cent in manual occupations (processing, machining and fabrication, construction, transport and related), while the proportion for Canadian-born was 28 per cent. Considering industries, the proportions of European (19 per cent) and non-European (22 per cent) immigrants in manufacturing were quite similar, while for Canadian-born it was 13 per cent. Just under a tenth of European origin immigrants had work in construction, while non-European origin immigrants had 12 percent in the Retail Trade and 10 per cent each in Business service and Health/Social services. For Canadian-born, the above proportions were: Retail, 13 per cent; Business, 12 per cent and Health/Social Services 8 per cent.

D. Incomes

Income from wages continued to be a major source, but differences between groups were accentuated. While the proportion for Canadian-born remained just under 80 percent (78 per cent), for European immigrants it had dropped to 68 per cent and for non-European immigrants to 71 per cent. The latter groups, depended to a certain extent on income from government transfer (old age security and guaranteed income, CPP, unemployment insurance, federal child tax credit, and other): 21 per cent for European immigrants (up 9 per cent since 1991), 19 per cent for non-European immigrants (up 10 per cent), while the Canadian-born proportion was 10 per cent (up 3 per cent). No doubt, part of the reason for this was the flagging economy, but also the influx of immigrants from countries like the former USSR, Yugoslavia and East Africa.

When considering income from wages and salaries, the overall average in 1996 - \$19,148 (down from \$19,933 in 1991) was made equal to 100. Canadian-born had an index of 116 (up 8 points since 1991), European-born followed with an index of 93 (down 5 points) and non-European origin immigrants had in index of 77 (down 5 points from 1991). By now, the gap between Canadian-born and non-European immigrants had grown from \$26 in 1991 to \$39 in 1996.

The average total income from all sources, was \$26,147 in 1996 (almost identical to the 1991

average) and for every \$100 of the total, Canadian-born had 114 (up 5 points), European-origin immigrants had \$103 (no change) and non-European origin immigrants \$74 (down 3 points from 1991). Here too, the gap was widening between Canadian-born and non-European born: from \$32 in 1991 to \$40 in 1996.

The 1996 census introduced a new variable on income. The proportion of persons living below the poverty line. For Canada as a whole, this was 20 per cent, with Canadian-born and European immigrants having 18 per cent each and non-European born having 37 percent. In Toronto, 21 percent of the population lived below the poverty line, but while this was 16 per cent for Canadian-born and 20 per cent for European-born, it was 35 percent for non-European born.

E. Summary

In the period 1971-1996, not only has immigration changed drastically, but the population of Toronto has become very cosmopolitan. Toronto has more immigrants compared to its total population than the national average. Progressively, more and more immigrants have come from non-European sources than from traditional European sources, and Toronto's share of all immigrants to Canada has remained fairly stable.

When comparing immigrants from traditional sources and from non-European sources to the Canadian-born, the non-traditional immigrants have better qualifications and occupational statuses than the European origin immigrants. Their characteristics are close to that to the Canadian-born. However, these qualifications, do not appear to translate into positive experiences regarding employment, wage and total incomes. In each case, they are worse off than the traditional immigrants. While all immigrants appear to depend to a certain extent on government transfer as an important source of income and this is particularly so, in the most recent years. However, European immigrants in 1996, were more likely than non-European origin immigrants to depend on this source. This could well be, because of the number of immigrants coming from countries of the former Soviet Union and from Yugoslavia with little or no assets.

The Three Major Cities: Toronto-Montreal-Vancouver

A. Cultural Composition

In 1996, the total population of Toronto was 4,199,286 of which 1,797,294 (43 percent) were foreign-born. The Montreal population's 3,261,536 with 613,169 (19 percent) foreign-born, while for Vancouver this was 1,799,571 for total and 647,846 (36 percent) foreign-born. Hence, Toronto had over 500,000 more immigrants than the two other cities combined. Vancouver had more immigrants than Montreal even though its total population was 45 per cent smaller.

By 1996, the proportion of Toronto's immigrants who had migrated before 1946 was only 1 per cent and it was 2 per cent each for Montreal and Vancouver. While under just under half of Toronto's immigrants had arrived between 1981 and 1996, even more of Vancouver's immigrants (54 per cent) came in this period. For Montreal, this proportion was 47 percent.

Of all foreign-born in Toronto, 2 per cent had immigrated from the USA, 40 per cent from Europe and 58 per cent from non-European countries, while the proportion from other sources was negligible. Montreal's immigrant population broke down, as follows: USA (3 per cent); Europe (40 per cent), non-Europe (57 per cent). In Montreal, the principal European source country was Italy and other European countries, with only 3 per cent from the United Kingdom. Among non-European sources, South and Central America and the Caribbean accounted for almost one-fifth of all foreign-born. The Vancouver foreign-born broke down as follows: USA: 4 per cent; Europe 29 per cent; non-Europe: 64 per cent, while 3 per cent were classified as 'other.' The United Kingdom was the number one source, among European countries (11 per cent of all foreign-born). The following three non-European sources, accounted for over a third of all immigrants: Hong Kong (13 per cent); Other East and South-East Asia (12 per cent) and China (11 per cent).

While 35 per cent of all foreign-born in Canada were living in Toronto, Montreal accounted for 12 per cent and Vancouver for 13 per cent. In other words, 6 in 10 of all foreign-born in Canada could be found in its three largest cities.

It is interesting to note that while 70 percent of the Toronto population declared a single ethnic origin, this was high as 80 percent in Montreal and as low as 61 percent in Vancouver. If multiple ethnic origin is an indication of the inter-marriage of persons of different origin, then Vancouver appears to be ahead.

The largest proportion of persons declaring that their (single) origin was Canadian could be found in Montreal (29 per cent). Comparable proportions for Toronto and Vancouver were 7 per cent each. Single and multiple Charter origins in Montreal accounted for 26 (24 per cent French) and 15 per cent, compared to 14 and 31 per cent in Vancouver and 12 and 23 per cent in Toronto. While European and non-European (single) origins in Toronto were 23 and 27 per cent, these proportions were 12 per cent each in Montreal and 13 and 28 per cent in Vancouver.

The respective visible minority proportions for the three cities were: Toronto and Vancouver: 32 per cent each, while Montreal had 12 percent. The question on visible minorities in 1996 classified respondents by three groups and an 'other' category. Blacks accounted for 31 per cent of Montreal's visible minorities, 21 per cent of Toronto's and only 3 per cent of Vancouver's. South Asians were dominant in Toronto (24 per cent) and Vancouver (21 per cent), while Montreal had 12 per cent. Chinese accounted for just under half of all visible minorities in Vancouver (48 per cent), 25 percent in Toronto and 12 percent in Montreal.

In Toronto and Vancouver the proportions of persons whose mother-tongue was English was 62 and 65 per cent each. Chinese had become the second most important mother-tongue in both cities. However, while Chinese accounted for only 7 per cent of all mother tongues in Toronto, the proportion was 13 per cent in Vancouver, where the third most important mother-tongue had become Punjabi (4 per cent). Of course, Montreal was different when it came to language. For 68 per cent the mother tongue was French while English accounted for 13 per cent. The only other important mother tongue was Italian, with 4 per cent.

The proportion speaking English in the home, was 73 per cent in Toronto and 76 per cent in

Vancouver. Chinese was spoken in the home by 6 per cent in Toronto and 11 per cent in Vancouver. In Montreal, 70 per cent spoke French in the home, 17 per cent spoke English, but no other language accounted for 2 per cent or more.

The proportion who could not converse in one of Canada's official languages, was 5 per cent each, in Toronto and Vancouver, but only 2 per cent in Montreal. Just under half (49 per cent) of the population of Montreal could converse in both official languages, compared to 8 per cent each for Toronto and Vancouver.

B. Levels of Education

The proportion of persons over 15 years of age with post-secondary education was 67, 52 and 60 per cent, respectively for Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. Among Canadian-born, while 4 per cent each in Toronto and Vancouver had less than grade 9 education, this was 14 per cent for Montreal. The respective proportions for European immigrants with less than grade 9 education in the above three cities were, 24, 10 and 32 per cent respectively. Among non-European born, these proportions were, respectively, 11, 14, and 15. While proportions with less than grade 9 education, ranged between 11 per cent in Toronto and 15 per cent in Montreal, the contrast for European-origin immigrants in the three cities were much stronger. Proportions ranged from 10 per cent in Vancouver to 32 per cent in Montreal. The respective proportions with University Degrees were, Toronto: 20 per cent; Montreal: 15 per cent and Vancouver 18 per cent. While a fifth or more of non-European immigrants in the three cities had university degrees, only in Toronto, was their proportion exceeded by Canadian-born (22 per cent). Both in Montreal (14 per cent) and Vancouver (17 per cent) the Canadian-born had lower proportions with university degrees than immigrants as a whole.

C. Occupations

Montreal had 11 per cent unemployed, compared to 9 per cent each in the two other cities. In all three cities, non-European immigrants had substantially higher rates of unemployment than Canadian-born. In Toronto the 12 per cent unemployment rate was 5 per cent higher than that of Canadian-born. These figures for Montreal were, 21 per cent unemployment (compared to 9 per cent for Canadian-born) and for Vancouver, 12 per cent (compared to 8 per cent).

For Canadian-born, the proportion in high white collar jobs was fairly similar: 36 per cent in Toronto and 31 and 32 per cent in Montreal and Vancouver. Among Europeans it was best in Vancouver (37 per cent) followed by Montréal (34 per cent) and Toronto (31 per cent). For non-European born it was 27 per cent in Toronto and 28 per cent each in Montreal and Vancouver. Among Canadian-born, both Montreal (35 per cent) and Vancouver (34 per cent) had higher proportions in manual occupations than Toronto (28 per cent). But among European-born, while the proportions were 42 per cent in Toronto and Montreal it was only 34 per cent in Vancouver. Among non-European born, Montreal had the highest proportion in Manual occupations (48 per cent compared to 42 per cent each in Toronto and Vancouver. Considering industries, for all persons in the labour-force, the number one industry in Toronto (17 per cent) and Montreal (18 per cent) was manufacturing, but for Vancouver it was Retail Trade (13 per cent). There was much less concentration of occupations in Vancouver, and this was more likely among European-born

(Manufacturing, Retail, Business and Health each accounting for 10 per cent). In Montreal, one-quarter of European-born were in Manufacturing, but the proportion was even high for the non-European born (30 per cent). Just under a tenth of European origin immigrants had work in construction in Toronto and Vancouver, but this was only 5 per cent in Montreal.

D. Incomes

Income from wages continued to be a major source, but in Montreal, only 58 percent of non-European immigrants had this as a major source, while 32 per cent had to depend on government transfer. In Vancouver, these proportions for non-European immigrants were 65 per cent for wages and 15 per cent for government transfer. In Toronto, they were, respectively, 71 and 19 per cent. In all three cities, Canadian-born had highest proportions with wages as a main source and the lowest proportion who depended on government transfer, when compared to European and non-European immigrants.

Considering income from wages, in all three cities, Canadian-born had highest averages and non-European born had lowest. Making the average for all wage earners equal to 100, the difference between non-European born and Canadian born was \$40 each in Toronto and Montreal and \$35 in Vancouver. But while non-European born in Toronto, earned just over three-quarters of the total average, this was only 69 per cent in Vancouver and 67 per cent in Montreal.

For every \$100 of Total Income for all persons aged 16 and over, Canadian-born had 114 in Vancouver and Toronto and 104 in Montreal. In all three cities, European-origin immigrants had slightly above the average, while non-European origin immigrants did best in Toronto (\$74), than in Montreal or Vancouver (\$70 each).

The proportions living below the poverty line were 27 per cent for Montreal, 23 per cent for Vancouver and 21 per cent for Toronto. While just over a third of non-European born in Toronto (35 per cent) and Vancouver (37 per cent) were living below the poverty line this was more than half (52 per cent) in Montreal.

E. Summary

There is little doubt that immigrants to Canada, have settled mainly in its three metropolises. Foreign born represent 34 per cent of the population of Toronto, 36 per cent of Vancouver and 19 per cent of that of Montreal. But Toronto had over 500,000 more immigrants than Montreal and Vancouver combined. Among foreign-born in all three cities more than half have originated from non-European sources, the proportion being almost two-thirds in Vancouver.

In both Vancouver and Toronto, Chinese has become the second most important mother-tongue. Only 76 and 73 per cent, respectively, in these two cities, spoke English in the home, while in Montreal, 87 per cent spoke either English or French.

It was in Montreal that non-European immigrants seemed to be faring poorly. Unemployment was around 20 per cent compared to just over 10 per cent in the two other cities. Montreal also had

the highest proportion of non-European origin immigrants in Manual occupations and the highest proportion who depended on government transfer as an important income source.

Accommodating Toronto's Diversity as we Approach the 21 Century

A. Diversity

In a table available through special runs on the web (20/20 data) over 200 foreign birthplaces are listed for Toronto's immigrants. How have all of these people come to this one city? Have they made the right choice? Toronto has truly become a cosmopolitan city, but there are very important differences which persist between groups of different foreign origins and between ethnic and language groups. To begin with, ethnic groups vary strongly in total number of members as well as proportions of these who are born in Canada.

Data show periods of immigration by birthplace of immigrants. The differences between European-origin and non-European origin immigrants is obvious, given the fact that wide-scale immigration from non-European sources effectively only started in the last 30 years of the century. Charts 34 and 35 show selected ethnic groups and the proportions of their Canadian-born populations. European-origin ethnic groups have higher proportions of their populations born in Canada.

In the first half of the twentieth century, Toronto has had to accommodate immigrants from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, but for the most part, these were of European origin. Since the early 1970s, the proportion of immigrants coming from non-European sources has been increasing significantly, thus creating challenges of accommodation for an even wider spectrum of cultures. Given Canada's need for more skilled labour, these 'newer' independent immigrants had to qualify for acceptance, through a point system, which favoured those with good education and with good occupational skills. The first arrivals from non-European sources, for the most part, could not count on any kind of family sponsorship.

Among the many motives for migration, are chances for a better education (if not for the immigrant, then at least for his/her children) and a better standard of living in the new country. A better standard of living would be achieved by a steady job and an income which recognizes one's achievements and abilities. So how are immigrants doing in Toronto?

B. Differences in Adaptation

We consider how well the foreign-born, the different cultures and the different language groups are doing in the areas of education, unemployment, occupation, major sources of income, actual wage and total incomes, living below the poverty line and home ownership. In each case we list the 'top ten' groups.

The influence of the changing qualifications for immigration, since the end of the 1960s can be seen by the fact that two foreign-born groups with lowest proportions in Post-Secondary education, were among the last of the European groups to come in large numbers to Canada, namely,

those born in Portugal and Italy (Chart 36). This same difference is found among Portuguese and Italian ethnic groups in Canada, with Vietnamese falling between these two. But Greeks and Spanish also show low proportions. Similar differences can be seen for mother-tongue origins. But it is home language that seems to have the greatest impact on the proportions going on to Post-Secondary education. While 60 per cent of persons whose home language is English go on to Post-Secondary education, only one group (Polish) comes close to this proportion and when Italian or Greek is spoken in the home, the proportions are below 20 per cent.

Despite better qualifications of the non-European foreign-born and cultural groups, they suffer the highest proportions of unemployment (Chart 37). While the unemployment rate in 1995 for Canadian-born was around 7 per cent, it was around 20 per cent for those born in South Asia and East Africa. Those born in Yugoslavia, the former USSR and Poland also had high proportions of unemployed and of the top ten, no group came close to the Canadian-born proportion. When considering ethnicity, the first seven groups with high unemployment were all non-European cultures. Spanish and Balkans were the only Europeans to be found in the top ten.

A similar pattern could be discerned for mother-tongue with nearly a quarter of persons with Arab mother-tongue being unemployed. But, surprisingly, those whose mother-tongue was a combination of English and French, were also found among the top ten. Again, if one did not speak English in the home, one's chances of being unemployed were strong, worst off being those who spoke Arab in the home and those of Asian origin.

Turning to occupations, we considered the proportion of different groups whose jobs were Managerial and Professional (Chart 38). While among Canadian-born the proportion was over one quarter, the highest proportion among the top ten, was just over one-sixth for those born in the former USSR. For those born in Portugal, Italy and Poland the proportions were among the lowest. Turning to ethnicity, six European origin cultural groups were among the top ten with lowest proportions in Managerial and Professional occupations.

Among mother-tongue groups, a similar pattern was found, but here again, those whose mother tongue were a combination of English and French, were among the top ten. Overall proportions in these occupations were low when English was not spoken in the home. Best among these were those who spoke Arabic at home, with 15 per cent.

When considering major sources of family income, we compared those whose major source was government transfer, to others. While ten per cent of Canadian-born had government as a major source, this was over 40 per cent for those born in the former USSR and just under 40 per cent for South Asians. Even the lowest among the top ten, namely, those born in Central and South America and the Caribbean, had over 20 per cent whose major source of income was government. Among ethnic groups, it was the African-origin and Vietnamese, who were most dependent on this source, with Spanish following these. The data did not allow us to consider individual cultural groups from the former USSR, but the fact that Ukrainians have a high proportion whose major source is government, would indicate that this is because many of them are from the former USSR.

Those whose mother-tongue was an Austro-Asiatic language (includes Cambodia and

Vietnam) were more than three times as dependent on government transfer, than those whose mother tongue was English. Six European-origin mother-tongues appeared in the top ten. Although Italians have been very successful in Canada, it was those who spoke Italian in the home who had the highest proportion (over 35 per cent) dependent on government transfer as a major source of income. We have to conclude from this, that being able to converse in English, is a fundamental requirement for economic success.

When considering actual incomes, the pattern for wage and total incomes (Charts 40 and 41) were fairly similar, except in the case of total income by mother-tongue groups. In all other cases there was a large difference in average incomes, between the best of the top ten foreign-born and the Canadian-born, the best of the top ten ethnic groups and Toronto as a whole, and the best of the top ten mother-tongues and home languages compared to those whose language was English. Those born in the USSR had lowest average wage incomes, but were in ninth place when it came to total income. This could be an indicator that these immigrants still have some of the resources they brought with them, while many are unable to find work corresponding to their qualifications. Other than those born in the USSR and Poland, all other low income wage groups were from non-European countries. And the USSR was the only country that featured among the ten lowest average total incomes.

Poor European ethnic groups in terms of wages were the Spanish, Greeks and Balkans. When considering total incomes the Spanish were the only European source among the ten groups with low incomes. While the top ten Mother tongues earned considerably lower wages than those whose mother tongue was English, when it came to total income, the differences were less pronounced, 3 or 4 groups, coming very close to the English mother tongue average. However, when turning to home language, both for wages and total incomes, there was a strong gap between those who spoke English in the home and the top ten other groups. Again, Italians who spoke English in the home were among the ten lowest average wage and total incomes.

Around 15 per cent of Canadian-born, the total population of Toronto, or those whose mother tongue or home language was English, lived below the poverty line. In every case, the top ten groups never equaled this proportion. Among foreign-born the South Asians and East Africans had highest proportions and those born the USSR, were the European-born, to feature in the top ten. When considering ethnicity, those with African origins had just under 60 per cent living below the poverty line with Spanish being the only European-origin group. Similarly, when considering mother-tongue, Spanish and Greek groups appeared among the top ten. But so did those whose mother tongue was a combination of English and French who also appeared among the top ten home languages. Those with Arabic mother-tongues and home languages had highest proportions living below the poverty line.

Finally, as we are well aware, among immigrant groups the owning of one's home, is a very desirable objective. Both among foreign-born and Ethnic groups, none of the top ten reached the Canadian-born or Total Toronto proportion. However, it was surprising to see that even among the poorest groups, the proportion who owned homes, was just 30 per cent or more for the top ten foreign born groups and just under 20 per cent for the top ten ethnic groups. When considering mother tongue and home language groups, those whose language was a combination of English and

French again appeared in the top ten. Those groups whose mother tongue and home language was Portuguese exceeded the proportions for groups with English only.

C. Summary

Considering top ten groups in a number of domains in Toronto, has given us a clear picture of some of the problems faced by immigrants, as well as areas in which the city can improve the lot of so many of its immigrants. One thing that stands out from this analysis, is that it seems to be the same groups who appear among the top ten in all of these domains. This could be an indicator to those working in areas of assistance to immigrants, which groups are the most vulnerable. One thing is certain. In all cases, it is those whose home language is not English, that seem to be most disadvantaged. How, we can help these families, would be a challenge for immigrant agencies.

Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to give a socio-demographic overview of immigrants in Toronto and to consider the degree to which the city is accommodating the diversity of peoples settling here. Given the fact that Toronto receives more immigrants than any other city in Canada, the task is all the more daunting.

In other chapters, devoted to special areas like education, health, economics and community, we will be able to understand the situation behind the figures presented here. The history chapter also, complements this chapter, which shows in actual outcomes, how changes in immigration law have had their effect on the city.