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**Towards the Pluralist City?
Distribution and Localisation
of Visible Minorities in Montréal,
Toronto and Vancouver in 2001**

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Foreword

This working paper resumes the text and slides that were presented at the Tenth National Metropolis Conference, held in Halifax in April 2008. The paper was presented during a workshop session called New Immigration Neighbourhood. That workshop was organized by Annick Germain, Professor at INRS-UCS (Montréal), and Director of the Quebec Metropolis Centre. I'm particularly grateful to her for inviting me at this event to present results from my recent research on immigration and neighbourhood.

The paper is part of a research project financed by the Quebec Metropolis Centre. The main purpose of this project was to describe and analyze the housing conditions of newcomers, in relation with their individual characteristics and the larger context of urban dynamics. The data used in this presentation were provided by Statistics Canada by way of the Metropolis Project. The author wants to give a special thanks to Jacques Ledent, professor at INRS-UCS (Montréal), and president of the Committee on data for the Quebec Metropolis Centre. The author would also like to thank all the members of this committee. Without their work, it would have been much more complicated to gain access to useful datasets.

Finally, any person interested to have more information on this project can contact me by e-mail (xavier.leloup@ucs.inrs.ca). It would be my pleasure to answer any question or to discuss new development for this kind of project.

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
I. FRAMEWORK OF THE PAPER	2
II. II. THE CANADIEN CONTEXT.....	4
III. DATA AND METHODS	5
IV. RESULTS AND COMMENTS	10
CONCLUSION.....	20
RÉFÉRENCES	21

List of Slides

SLIDE 1 – Framework of the paper	3
SLIDE 2 – Census data.....	5
SLIDE 3 – Index of residential concentration.....	6
SLIDE 4 – A knowledge-based classification method.....	7
SLIDE 5 – Neighbourhood classification.....	8
SLIDE 6 – Living and housing conditions of minority households.....	9
SLIDE 7 – Visible minorities in Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver in 2001	10
SLIDE 8 – Low-income households according to visible minority status in 2001	11
SLIDE 9 – Neighbourhoods classification in Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver	16
SLIDE 10 – Localisation of neighbourhoods: Montréal	17
SLIDE 11 – Localisation of neighbourhoods: Toronto	18
SLIDE 12 – Localisation of neighbourhoods: Vancouver	19

List of Figures

FIGURE 1 – Visible minorities: Index of residential concentration	12
FIGURE 2 – South-Asia: Index of residential concentration	13
FIGURE 3 – Black: Index of residential concentration	13
FIGURE 4 – Chinese: Index of residential concentration	14

INTRODUCTION

What I want to present today is a paper on the distribution and the localisation of visible minorities in the three great Canadian cities (the French version of this paper has been published in the Canadian Journal of Regional Science, see references). Several reasons justify that we take a look at this question.

First, with the increase of newcomers and of visible minorities in Canadian cities, some questions aroused in the public opinion about the creation of so called “ghettos”, where the minorities are living on their own and don’t have any contact with the host society. Emerging in the press, on the Internet, on the radio, or even in some official statements –as for example in the context of Québec’s commission on reasonable accommodation related to cultural differences–, the issue of “ghetto” and “ghettoization” brings out, if not fear, at least uncertainty about the effects of spatial concentration of immigrants and members of minority groups. But, what is exactly the extent of this concentration? And what are the effects of this concentration? These questions seem to be frequently avoided in the common discourse on immigration.

Secondly, it’s true that the social fabric of Canadian cities is changing in different ways. Several of these changes are related to the increased numbers of newcomers and visible minorities. It’s obvious that Canadian cities have much more ethnic enclaves or neighbourhoods today than ten or twenty years ago. Despite this trend, it’s also obvious that these enclaves and neighbourhoods are much diversified and that nothing allowed us to use the term “ghetto” in these circumstances. However, it doesn’t mean that newcomers or visible minorities don’t face barriers or challenges in their social and residential insertion. Social fabric of Canadian cities is thus very complex and social or ethnic factors can intersect in a very large array of ways.

These considerations lead us to three questions:

- What is the level of *encapsulation* of visible minorities in Canadian cities?
- In what kind of neighbourhoods are visible minorities concentrated?
- What are the living and housing conditions of visible minorities in Canadian cities?

To go further, it’s useful to briefly go back to some of the key theories, concepts and debates that have been developed to describe and explain the settlement of ethnic minorities in cities.

I. FRAMEWORK OF THE PAPER

One of the first models (see Slide 1 below) built to explain the spatial localisation of ethnic minorities dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century and the Chicago School of Sociology. Those authors had elaborated what is known as urban ecology. The model supposes that ethnic minorities will assimilate to the rest of the population when their members achieve social mobility. This model has been the subject of huge debates. In the 1960s, for example, Glazer and Moynihan published a study on ethnic minorities in New York City showing that old groups of immigrants still concentrated in some parts of the city, even if they have reached a high social status. From that point on, the assimilation model was highly debated.

Another point to take into consideration is that urbanism had dramatically changed during the last century, especially in North America and in Europe. When the researchers of the Chicago School wrote about cities, they wrote about industrial cities where the great industry and the working class are the main sources of development. Today, we are looking at post-industrial/post-Fordist/global city regions where knowledge and service economy are predominant. This change in urbanism can also have effects on the localisation and well-being of different groups.

All those changes had consequences on ethnic geography in large cities. For example, works by Alba and Logan show that immigrant groups settle in various urban contexts in US cities. In many cities, it's usual to find newcomers both in the old center where immigrant neighbourhoods have existed for a long time and in the wealthier suburbs where their installation is recent. Neighbourhoods where the newcomers choose or are forced to settle are diverse: some of them are much like the old ethnic enclaves but there are also a number of new types.

All these changes require that we look at three important dimensions when we try to explain the spatial distribution of visible minorities:

- It's first important to recognize that all cities aren't at the same stage of transition from an industrial to a post-industrial economy. It's then of great interest to compare ethnic geography in different cities.
- Secondly, it's of great importance to consider the social fabric of the city as a multi-dimensional process, which involves at the same time social and cultural factors. Adopting this point of view, researchers must use datasets which allow them to intersect indicators at the neighbourhood level to describe neighbourhoods like a so-

cial milieu. These multivariate approaches are an alternative to studies that subsume all attitudes and practices from one indicator—for example, ethnicity, visible minority status, land of birth...

- Third, it's important to take into account the diversity of neighbourhoods where immigrants and newcomers settle today.

SLIDE 1 – Framework of the paper

Urban Ecology, Pluralist Cities and Post-Industrial/ Post-Fordist/Global urbanism

- Urban ecology and the debate about assimilation
 - Post-Industrial/Post-Fordist/Global urbanism and the rising of the “new urban poor”
 - Consequences on the newcomers and minorities: the complex ethnic geography of large cities

 - Three important dimensions to take into account:
 - Stage of transition from an industrial to a post-industrial urban economy
 - Multidimensionality of social fabric of the city
 - Diversity of neighbourhoods where immigrants and newcomers settle
-

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II. THE CANADIEN CONTEXT

Canadian cities are facing all those transformations. Economy in metropolitan regions is changing from an industrial to a post-industrial one, although this change doesn't occur with the same strength—Toronto achieving a much deeper economical restructuring and presenting the profile of a global city compared to Montréal, with Vancouver somewhere in between.

The liberalization of immigrant policies takes part in this change allowing a rising number of newcomers in the three larger Canadian cities. In addition, they come from increasingly diverse countries of origin and have more diversified background (including their immigration status and experience).

All these changes have mixed effects on the social fabric of Canadian cities. On the one hand, neighbourhoods where immigrants and members of minority groups settle are very diverse. And on the other hand, it's impossible to describe into one simple pattern the relations between immigration, visible minority, poverty and living and housing conditions.

For these reasons, this study tries to describe with more accuracy the spatial distribution of visible minorities, the neighbourhoods where they reside and their living and housing conditions.

III. DATA AND METHODS

Now a few words about methodology before I present the results.

For this study, I used 2001 census data for the three Metropolitan Regions of Canada: Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver (see Slide 2 below).

Individuals or households and census tracts were respectively retained as individual and spatial units for the analysis.

The most important thing to say about the data is that I used the special compilation that Statistics Canada provided to the Metropolis project. The main advantage of these tables is that they give access to multivariate analyses at a low-scale, here the census tract. It's thus possible to describe a neighbourhood as a social milieu and to take into account the multidimensional aspect of urban fabric.

SLIDE 2 – Census data

Data

- ❑ 2001 census for the three Metropolitan Regions of Canada: Montréal, Toronto, Vancouver
- ❑ Individuals or households and census tracts were respectively retained as individual and spatial units for the analysis
- ❑ Data files were provided by the Metropolis project and contain information, among others, on visible minority status, incomes and low-income threshold, and housing conditions (homeownership and housing expenditure-to-income ratio), those variables are all of interest for the study

As mentioned earlier, the study tries to answer three questions.

The first aim (see Slide 3 below) of the study is to evaluate the encapsulation of visible minorities in Canadian cities. To achieve this, I therefore used a synthetic measure of residential concentration proposed by Poulsen and colleagues. The index is quite simple and is of great help for comparative studies. It provides the percentage of minority members who live in neighbourhoods where they represent a certain percentage of the local population – this last percentage is also called a threshold by the authors. In this study, I used concentration thresholds ranging from 20 to 70 per cent.

SLIDE 3 – Index of residential concentration

- *Index of Residential Concentration (Poulsen et al., 2002)*
 - One aim of the study is to evaluate the *encapsulation* of visible minorities in Canadian cities. I therefore use a synthetic measure of residential concentration that combines three dimensions:
 - A degree of concentration – the extent to which there are some residential areas where a minority predominates.
 - A degree of assimilation – the extent to which a minority shares spaces with the “host society”.
 - A degree of encapsulation – the extent to which a minority is isolated from both the “host society” and other minority groups.
 - How the measure works?
 - The index provides the percentage of individuals living in neighbourhoods where the minority they belong to represents a certain percentage (also called a threshold) of the whole population: 20%, 30%, 40%... (For example, in Vancouver in 2001, 53,4% of all Chinese lived in a neighbourhood where Chinese accounted for 20% or more of the whole population.)

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The second aim (see Slide 4 below) is to describe the neighbourhoods where members of visible minorities are found. I therefore used a classification method which is also proposed by Poulsen and colleagues as an extension to their encapsulation index.

SLIDE 4 – A knowledge-based classification method

- *A knowledge-based classification method (Poulsen et al., 2001)*
 - A second aim of the study is to describe the neighbourhoods where visible minority households are living.
 - I therefore used a classification method based on the homogeneity-heterogeneity continuum which underpins all studies of segregation.

The next table gives details for the classification (see Slide 5 below).

As you can see, it's a classification in six types differentiated along a homogeneity-heterogeneity continuum.

At one end, you find the host community isolated type wherein we find less than 20 per cent of members of visible minorities. And at the other end, you have the ghetto defined with three criteria :

1. 70 per cent or more of the population belonging to a visible minority;
2. at least 60 per cent of all visible minorities belonging to one group;
3. nearly all members of that group in the entire urban area must live in that kind of neighbourhoods.

Between these two ends, you would find different situations with various levels of ethnic mix.

SLIDE 5 – Neighbourhood classification

Type	Abbreviation	Definition
Host community isolated	Isolated	<20% of visible minorities in the neighbourhood (Census Tract)
Host community non-isolated	Non-isolated	Between 20% and 50% of visible minorities
Pluralist enclave	Pluralist	Between 50% and 70% of visible minorities
Mixed minorities neighbourhood	Mixed	>70% of visible minorities without a dominant group
Polarised minorities neighbourhood	Polarised	>70% of visible minorities with a dominant group (>60% of the all visible minorities belong to one group)
Ghetto	Ghetto	Same as polarised, >70% of visible minorities with >60% of the all visible minorities belong to one group and the additional criteria of at least 30% of all members of that group in the entire urban area must live in that kind of neighbourhoods

Source: adapted from Poulsen *et al.* (2001) and Walks and Bourne (2006)

Finally, the study wanted to take into account the living and housing conditions of minority households (see Slide 6 below). I therefore introduced a distinction in the above classification between poor and non-poor neighbourhoods. I also used an array of indicators to compare non-visible minority households and visible minority households on income and housing conditions. I finally traced maps of the six types of neighbourhoods defined by the classification.

SLIDE 6 – Living and housing conditions of minority households

- Finally, the study aims at taking into account the living and housing conditions of minority households.
 - In order to fulfil this aim, I introduce, first, a distinction in the above classification between *poor* and *non-poor* neighbourhoods; a neighbourhood is classified as *poor* if 40% or more of its households were under the low-income threshold (as defined by Statistics Canada).
 - Secondly, we use an array of indicators to compare non-visible minority households with visible minority households on income and housing conditions.

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With all these tools in mind, we can now see the results.

IV. RESULTS AND COMMENTS

The first table (see Slide 7 below) is only a recall of things that are well known. Toronto and Vancouver are clearly the cities where visible minorities are the most numerous. Toronto is the city where diversity is the highest. In Vancouver, Asian minorities are predominant. Finally, Montréal seems to be a much more homogenous city. However, we must not forget that the visible minority status is only one variable available to describe ethnic diversity. If I choose to work with it, it's because of the increasing concern in the public opinion about the emergence of "ghettos", which is frequently linked with residential and commercial concentration of groups who are clearly visible.

SLIDE 7 – Visible minorities in Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver in 2001

	Montréal		Toronto		Vancouver		Total	
	Counts	%	Counts	%	Counts	%	Counts	%
Visible minorities	457020	13,5	1710110	36,9	725700	36,9	2892830	29,0
Black	139280	4,1	309910	6,7	18460	0,9	467650	4,7
South Asia	57850	1,7	473635	10,2	164320	8,4	695805	7,0
Chinese	51305	1,5	408935	8,8	342620	17,4	802860	8,0
Other Eastern Asia	45470	1,3	113340	2,4	81455	4,1	240265	2,4
Philippines	17925	0,5	133310	2,9	57045	2,9	208280	2,1
Arabic/Western Asia	79245	2,3	95650	2,1	27270	1,4	202165	2,0
Latin-American	53035	1,6	75815	1,6	18765	1,0	147615	1,5
Others (non-visible minority)	2920790	86,5	2930220	63,1	1241820	63,1	7092830	71,0
Total	3377810	100,0	4640330	100,0	1967520	100,0	9985660	100,0

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of population, Profile 2B (20%).

Note: "Other Eastern Asia" aggregated Koreans and Japanese with "South-East Asia"

The second table (see Slide 8 below) gives information on low-income households. As you can see, several things differentiate the three cities. First, the global level of poverty is very different in the three cities, reaching 26,5 per cent of households in Montréal, 18,8 per cent in Toronto and 23,2 per cent in Vancouver. Secondly, visible minority households have much more chances of being of low-income than the rest of the population. The gap is especially wide in Montréal with near half of the visible minority households with an income below the low-income threshold. Finally, there are some differences between groups. For example, people with Arabic or Middle-Eastern background seem to experiment more socioeconomic hardship. It may be related to the fact that this group is largely composed of recent immigrants.

SLIDE 8 – Low-income households according to visible minority status in 2001

	Montréal		Toronto		Vancouver		Total	
	Counts	%	Counts	%	Counts	%	Counts	%
Visible Minorities	70455	46,9	136575	27,7	69765	33,2	276795	32,4
Black	23045	48,4	33280	32,9	2145	32,5	58470	37,6
South Asia	8435	48,3	31840	25,9	9335	23,2	49610	27,4
Chinese	7310	44,9	32195	26,8	36520	35,5	76025	31,8
South-East Asia	4305	36,6	3760	26,5	3495	43,3	11560	34
Philippines	1915	34,8	5335	15,7	3280	21,2	10530	19,1
Arabic/Western Asia	14115	52,3	10990	37,8	4135	46,5	29240	45
Latin-American	8870	49	6335	27,9	2465	41,4	17670	37,8
Others (non-visible minority)	305760	24,1	170735	15	106125	19,3	582620	19,7
Total	376215	26,5	307310	18,8	175890	23,2	859415	22,6

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of population, Profile 2B (20%).

Note: "Other Eastern Asia" aggregated Koreans and Japanese with "South-East Asia"

The next graphs (see Figures 1 to 4 below) synthesize results for the index of residential concentration. Graphs show results for the total of visible minorities, South-Asia, Chinese and Black. As you can see, visible minorities have a similar pattern of encapsulation in Toronto and Vancouver, with a rough 90 per cent living in neighbourhoods where these groups count for 20 per cent or more of the total population, and more than 20 per cent of them living in neighbourhoods where these groups count for 70 per cent or more of the total population. The level of encapsulation is much lower in Montréal: 60 per cent of visible minorities at the 20 per cent threshold and less than 10 per cent at the 70 per cent threshold.

When you take a look at the three groups, it's clear that Chinese people are the most encapsulated, except in Montréal. Black communities seem to be the least concentrated in space, and South-Asian groups experiment a moderate concentration. Groups that aren't showed in these graphs don't have any significant concentration level in the three cities.

FIGURE 1 – Visible minorities: Index of residential concentration

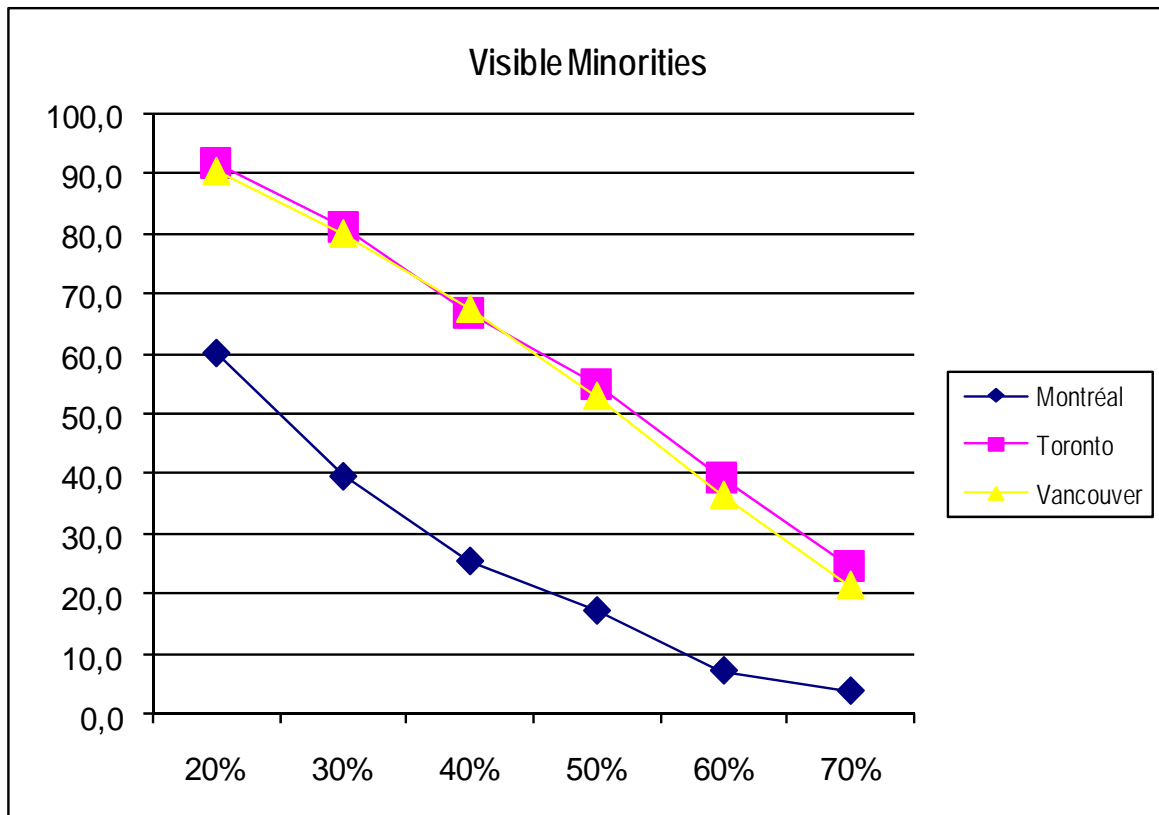


FIGURE 2 – South-Asia: Index of residential concentration

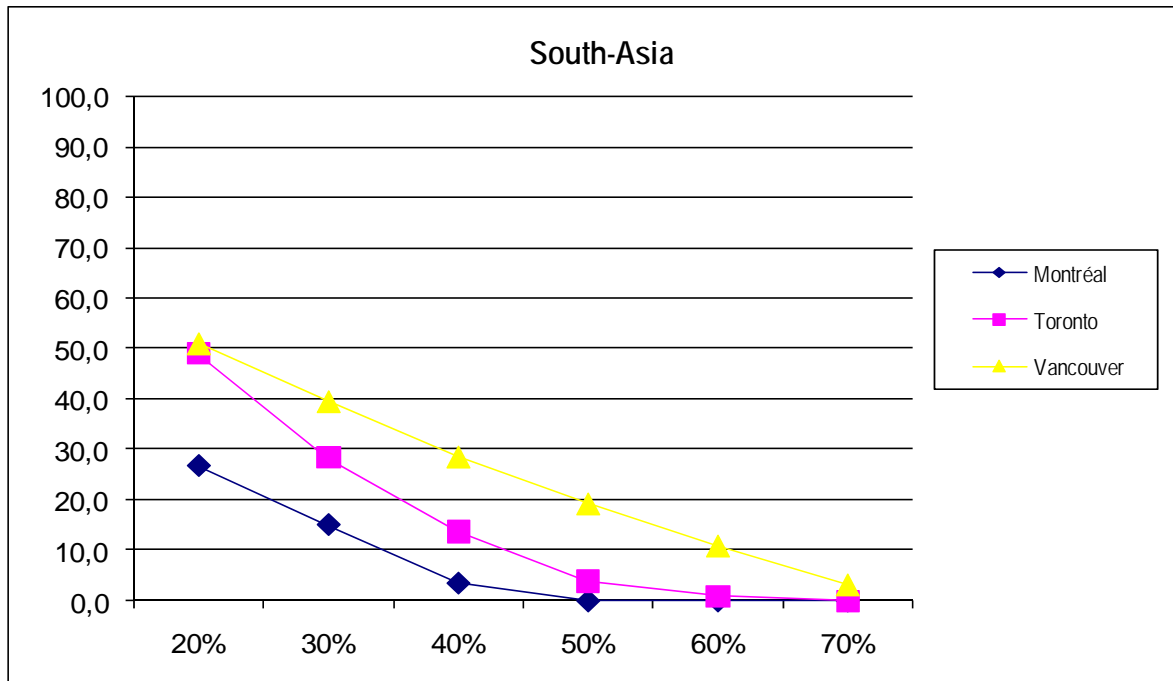


FIGURE 3 – Black: Index of residential concentration

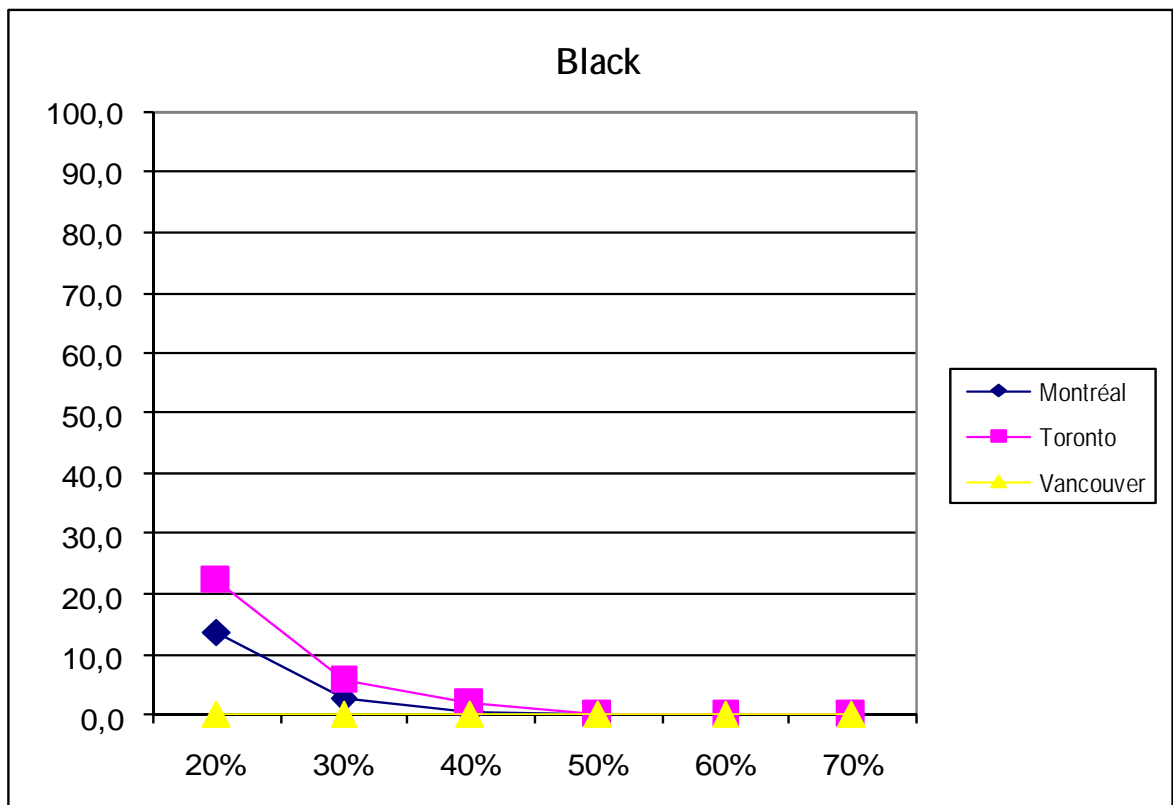
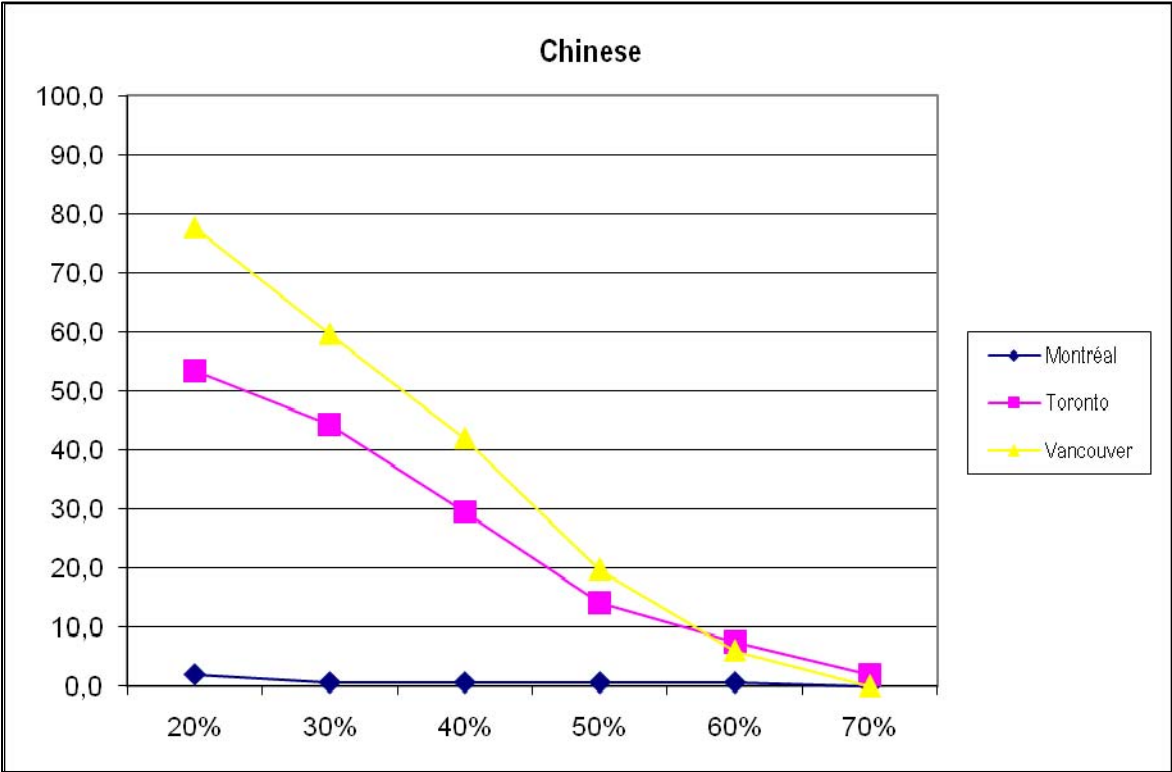


FIGURE 4 – Chinese: Index of residential concentration



Neighbourhood classification offers some interesting results (see Slide 9 below). To read the table properly, it's important to begin with the first row, the one with yellow underlining. It gives the number of neighbourhoods per type in every city. As you can see, Isolated and Non-isolated neighbourhoods are prevailing in Montréal, whereas Toronto and Vancouver have much more Pluralist, Mixed and even Polarised neighbourhoods.

However, absolute numbers don't tell the whole story. It's why second and third rows present the percentage of total population and visible minorities who live in each type of neighbourhoods. If you take a look at these rows, you would note that in Montréal a rough 18 per cent of visible minorities live in one of the last three types of neighbourhoods, and especially in poor ones. In Toronto and Vancouver, this percentage is much higher and it concerns much wealthier neighbourhoods than in Montréal. It seems that in Montréal, diversity and poverty can be related. I will come back to this question in a moment.

The last row is also of interest. As you can see, 83 per cent of non-visible minority individuals live in an isolated neighbourhood in Montréal, and when you add to this number the second category, the percentage rises to 98 per cent. In Toronto and Vancouver, the same percentage is fixed around 80 per cent.

SLIDE 9 – Neighbourhoods classification in Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver

	Isolated		Non-isolated		Pluralist		Mixed		Polarised	
	Non-poor	Poor	Non-poor	Poor	Non-poor	Poor	Non-poor	Poor	Non-poor	Poor
Montréal										
CT (counts)	573	80	99	64	3	21	0	5	0	1
Population (%)	70,3	6,5	12,5	6,9	0,3	2,9	-	0,7	-	0
Visible Minorities (%)	34	5,7	25,9	17	1,1	12,3	-	3,9	-	0,2
Others (non-visible minority)	76	6,6	10,4	5,3	0,1	1,4	-	0,2	-	0
Toronto										
CT (counts)	300	1	366	10	140	14	46	20	27	0
Population (%)	29,9	0,1	39,3	0,9	16,9	1,6	5,7	2,4	3,1	-
Visible Minorities (%)	8,2	0,1	35,8	1,1	27,5	2,6	12,6	5,3	6,8	-
Others (non-visible minority)	42,5	0,2	41,3	0,8	10,8	1	1,7	0,8	1	-
Vancouver										
CT (counts)	158	2	154	9	52	3	5	0	2	1
Population (%)	29,7	0,2	38,7	1,8	18,2	1	3,3	-	6,5	0,6
Visible Minorities (%)	10,1	0,1	36,1	1,7	29,2	1,5	7,1	-	12,9	1,2
Others (non-visible minority)	41,1	0,3	40,2	1,8	11,7	0,7	1,2	-	2,8	0,2

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of population, Profile 2B (20%).

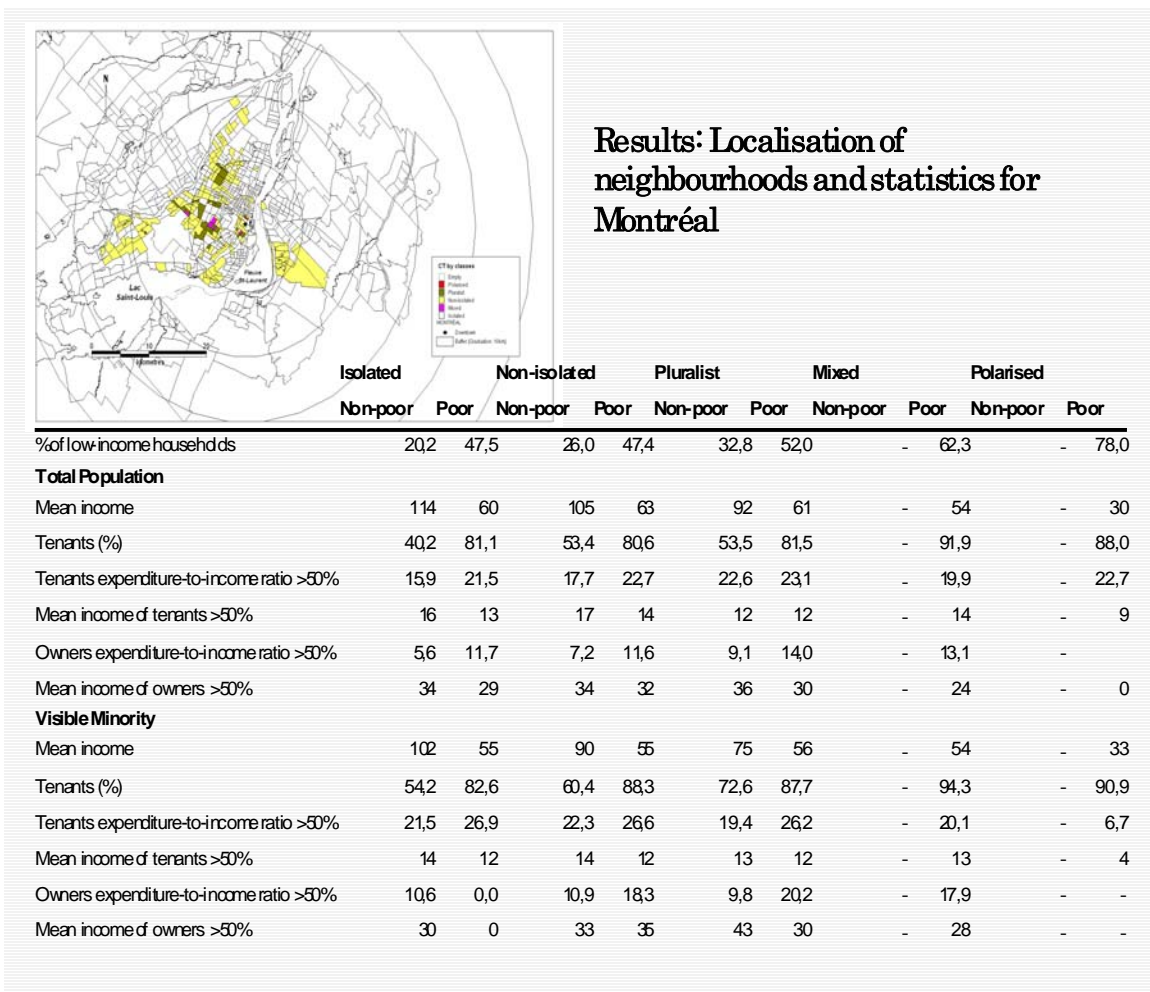
The last three slides (see Slide 10 to 12 below) provide information on the localisation of the different types of neighbourhoods and tables on the income and housing conditions of households for the total population and for visible minorities.

I don't have enough time to comment all the data that these tables provide. The first thing I want to do is to give a quick comment on the three maps. I built these maps in order to compare the localisation of the different types of neighbourhoods. To achieve this aim in a simple manner, I created concentric rings of 10 kilometres wide around downtown. Maps show clearly that diversity has widely spread in Toronto and Vancouver. On the contrary, ethnic diversity remains a phenomenon confined to the center of Montréal.

Without going into all the details, what the data is telling is that it seems that three different stories are going on in the three cities.

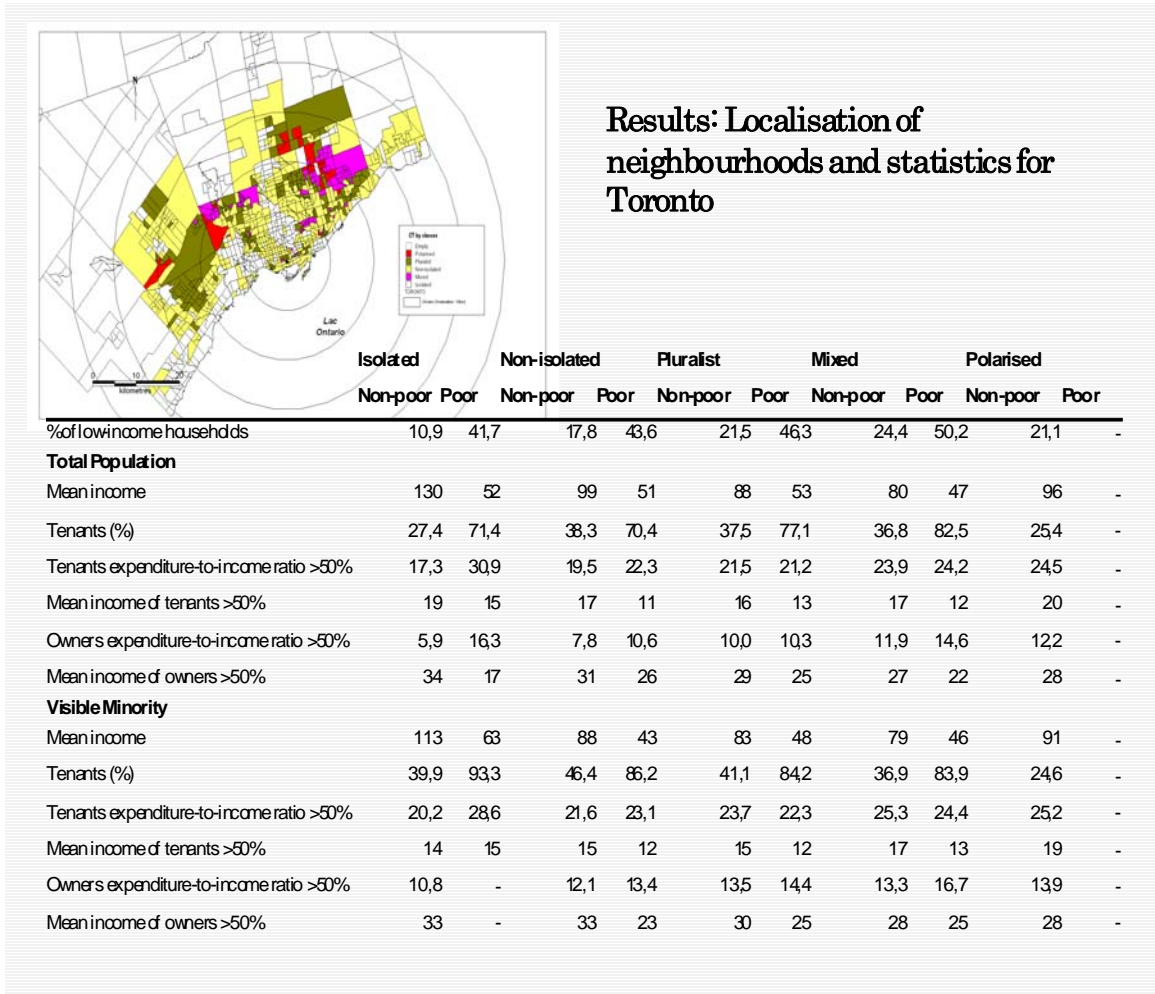
In Montréal, visible minority households have more chance to live in a poor neighbourhood, disregarding whether they are themselves below the low-income threshold or not. For visible minorities, the odds of living in a poor neighbourhood are much higher in Montréal than in the two other cities.

SLIDE 10 – Localisation of neighbourhoods: MONTRÉAL



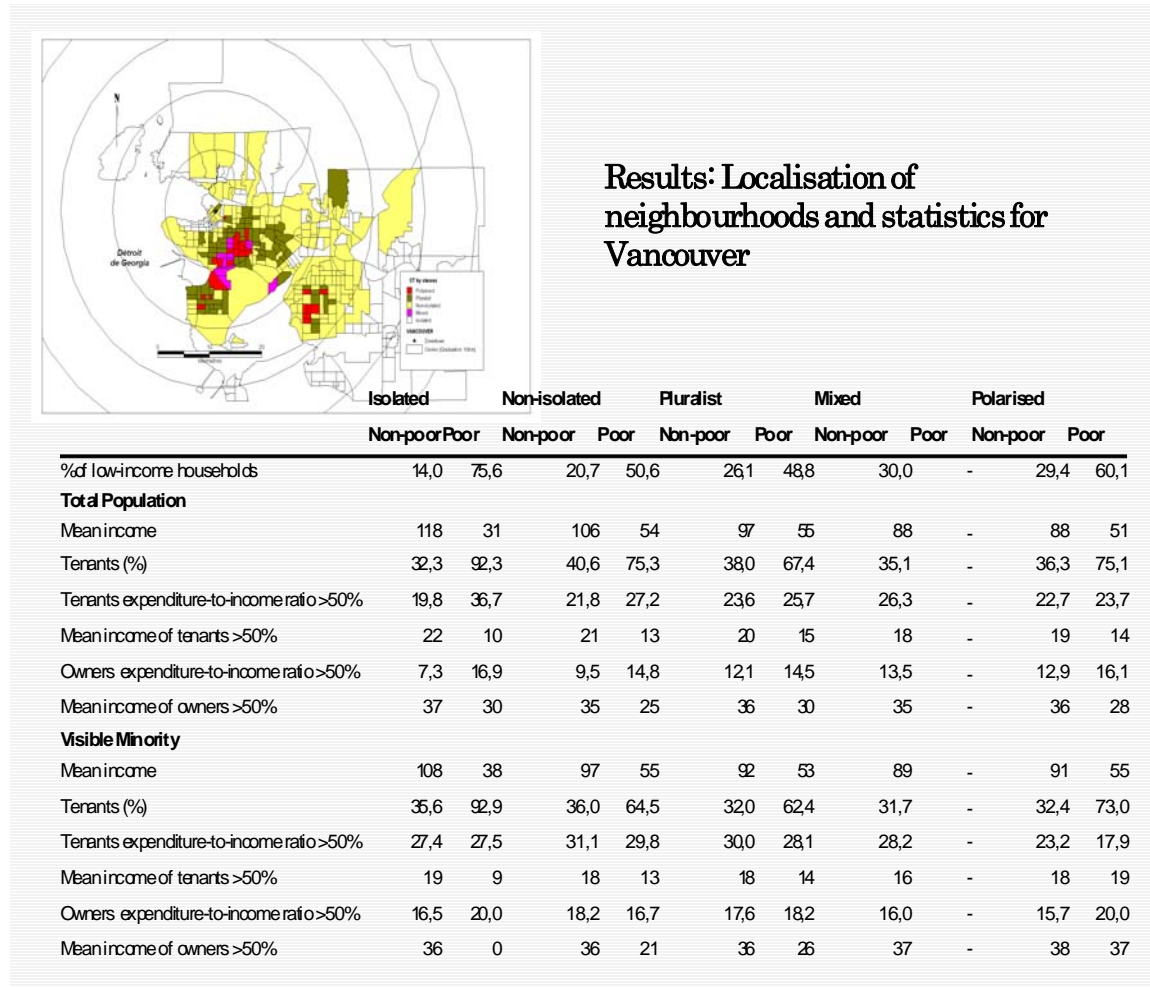
In Toronto, visible minorities have developed what others have called “ethnic communities” (for example, see works by Alba and Logan), defined as non-poor neighbourhoods located in the suburbs, where homeownership and good living conditions predominate.

SLIDE 11 – Localisation of neighbourhoods: TORONTO



In Vancouver, both models coexist, with the specificity that visible minority households share the same odds of living in poor neighbourhoods than the rest of the population. In others words, social mobility seems to have the same effect for visible minority and non-visible minority households, which is not the case in the other two cities where visible minorities continue to be disadvantaged on this point.

SLIDE 12 – Localisation of neighbourhoods: VANCOUVER



CONCLUSION

First, it's clear now that Canadian cities have turned into pluralist cities. However, as we have seen, encapsulation of minority groups remains a moderate phenomenon. Concerns about "ghetto" formation are in this context much more of an irrational fear than an objective issue.

Secondly, it's also clear now that the social fabric of Canadian cities is a complex process. From that point of view, it's impossible to see newcomers or minority groups as weakening the socioeconomic strength of Canadian cities or the social cohesion of local communities. Most of the time, it's possible to make the assumption that visible minorities are experiencing an uneven access to wealthier neighbourhoods, but aren't the cause of neighbourhood decline. Nevertheless, I concede that this point must be the subject of further research.

Finally, it's important to note that individual characteristics also play a role in the whole urban fabric. The result is a complex mix of social and ethnic factors that shape each neighbourhood in a specific way.

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