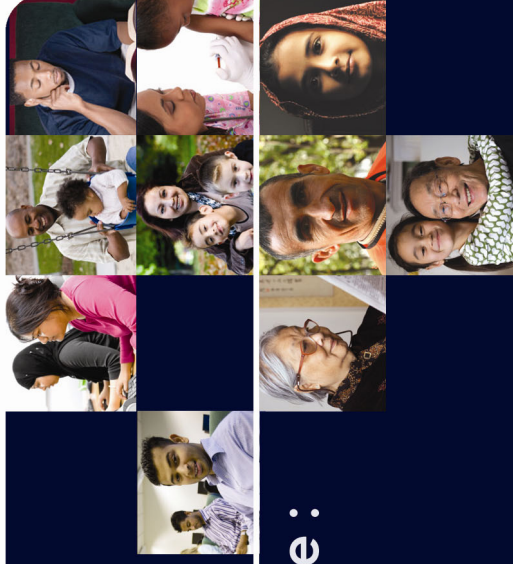


Communities Within: Diversity and Exclusion in Ottawa

Les communautés au sein de notre ville :
la diversité et l'exclusion à Ottawa



An initiative of the Social Planning Council of Ottawa
Un projet du Conseil de planification sociale d'Ottawa



Housing and Neighbourhood Exclusion of Ottawa's Visible and Ethnic Minority Communities

A project funded by Canadian Heritage, Immigration and Aboriginal Unit, City of Ottawa
and United Way Ottawa with the Collaboration of Carleton University



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Overview of the Presentation

1. Housing – a quick snapshot of issues
2. Geographic distribution of the various communities – a brief summary of the implications
3. Main focus and central to the question of exclusion:

Are visible minority groups more likely to live in poor neighbourhoods than non-visible minority groups?

Housing

Affordability:

- Access to affordable housing a significant issue in light of lower median incomes and higher rates of poverty

Quality:

- Disrepair a concern in public housing and in some older residences in Chinatown

Suitability:

- Overcrowding an issue for many – related to some larger families including extended family structures. Ability to afford suitable housing is part of the issue. Shortage of housing for larger families. Need a more diverse housing stock.

Access:

- Some incidences of discrimination in rental practices.
- Also credit check, rental history a barrier for visible minority residents who are new immigrants.

Housing for Distinct Needs

Social Housing

- With higher rates of poverty within the communities, research participants very conscious of a trade off with respect to housing: addresses affordability but results in ghettoization within a poor quality neighbourhoods
- Results in some communities being over-represented among social housing tenants in relation to their percentage of the population (e.g. Somalis)
- Consequence is that some communities disproportionately affected by social housing policies – e.g. whole family evicted if one person charged with a crime, administrative requirements, etc.

Housing for Seniors

- Critical shortage of culturally appropriate housing and service supports for vulnerable seniors, including long term care and supports to aging in place
- Significant concern re isolated seniors – living on their own, or isolated during the day in the home of their adult working children in neighbourhoods without appropriate services / peer network

Home Ownership

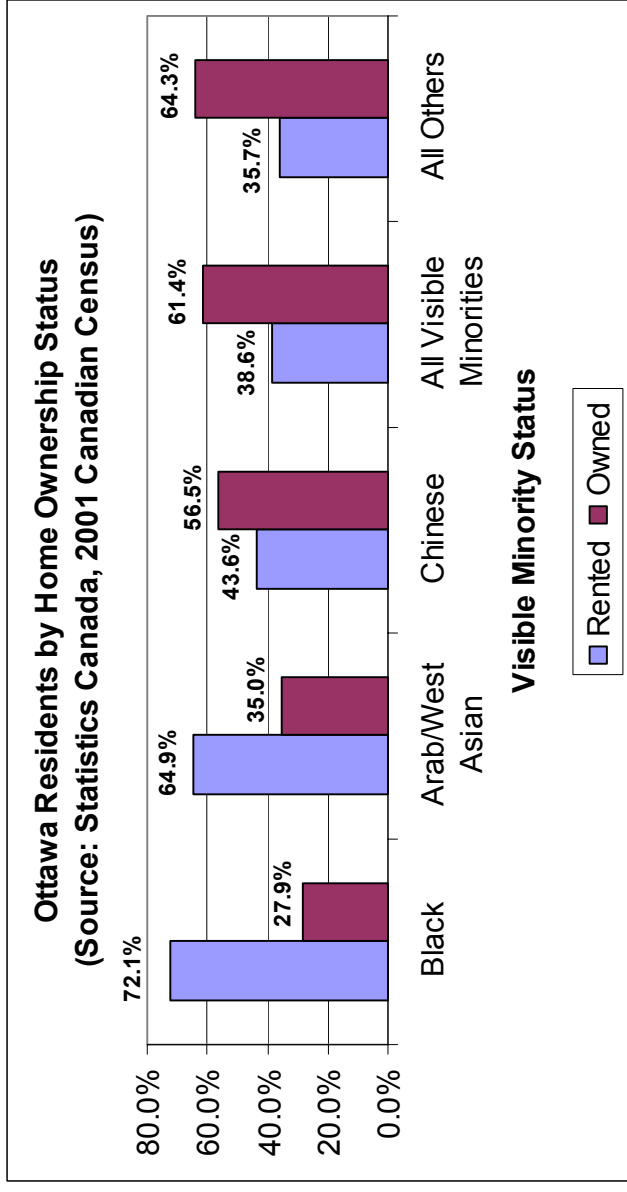
- Seen as an important asset building strategy
- Slightly lower level of home ownership among visible minority residents (61.4%) compared to all others (64.3%)
- Some sub-groups within the visible minority category have significantly lower home ownership rates (see Chart)

Barriers:

- Cost of mortgage
- Interest (in commercial mortgages) a problem for some re. religion

Need

- Affordable ownership strategies
- Alternate financial instruments to commercial mortgages



Why a Neighbourhood Level Focus?

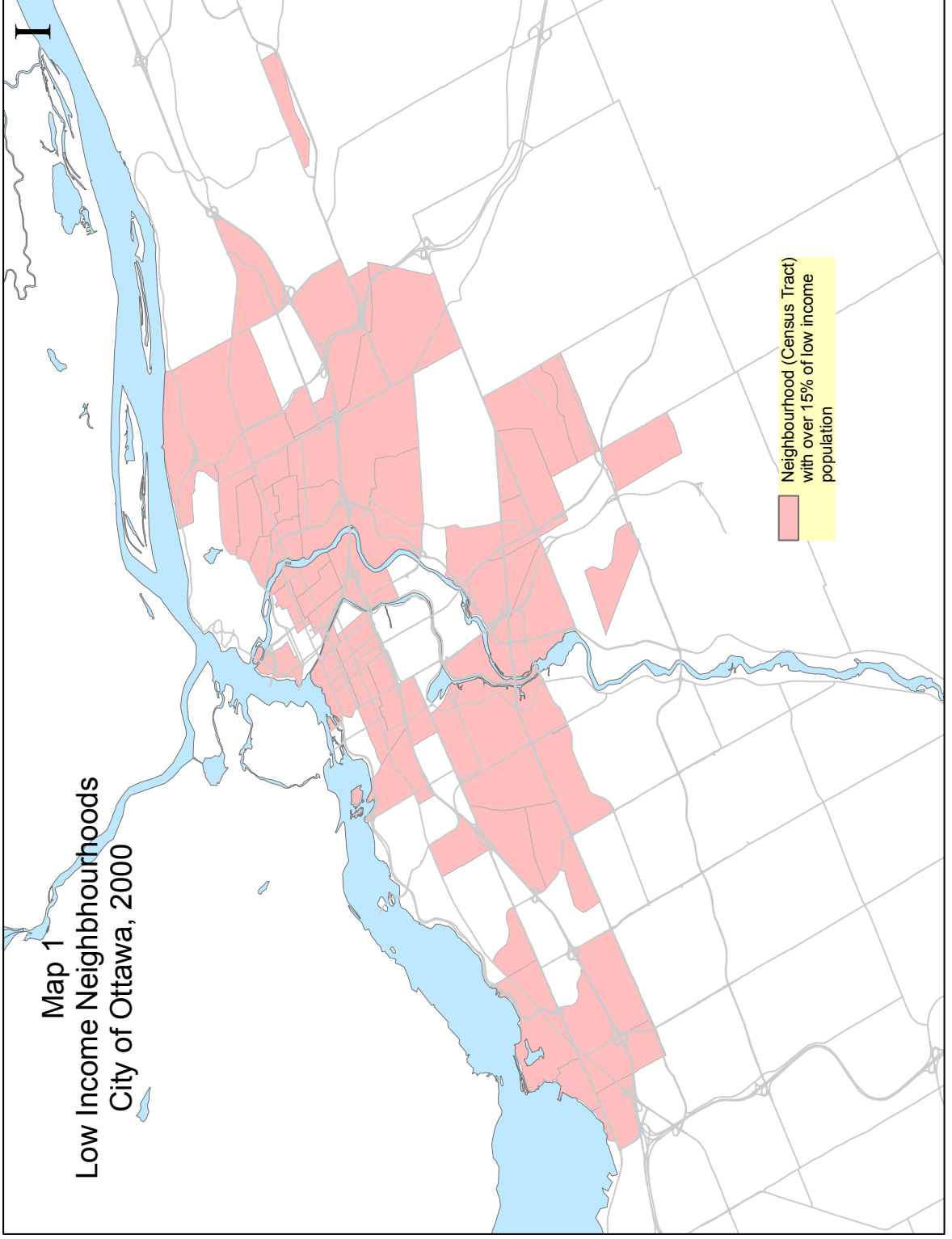
- Exclusion faced by individuals and families can be compounded by living in neighbourhoods which themselves are disadvantaged within the City (SPC, 2006 / 2007)
- Neighbourhood impacts are more significant for low income residents, families with young children, seniors and adolescents (Séguin, 2002; 9). All are populations of concern within this research
- The neighbourhood is often a place of civic engagement – in the local school or community group
- All neighbourhoods have strengths and vulnerabilities. Low income neighbourhoods may be cohesive in many ways, resilient and have many assets including good social capital (can be a place of inclusion)
- Currently a public policy interest in neighbourhood level strategies
- Exclusion within particular neighbourhoods can result in lack of cohesion within a city which can negatively affect safety and the economy. (Infrastructure Canada, 2006; 54)

Distribution of Case Study Communities

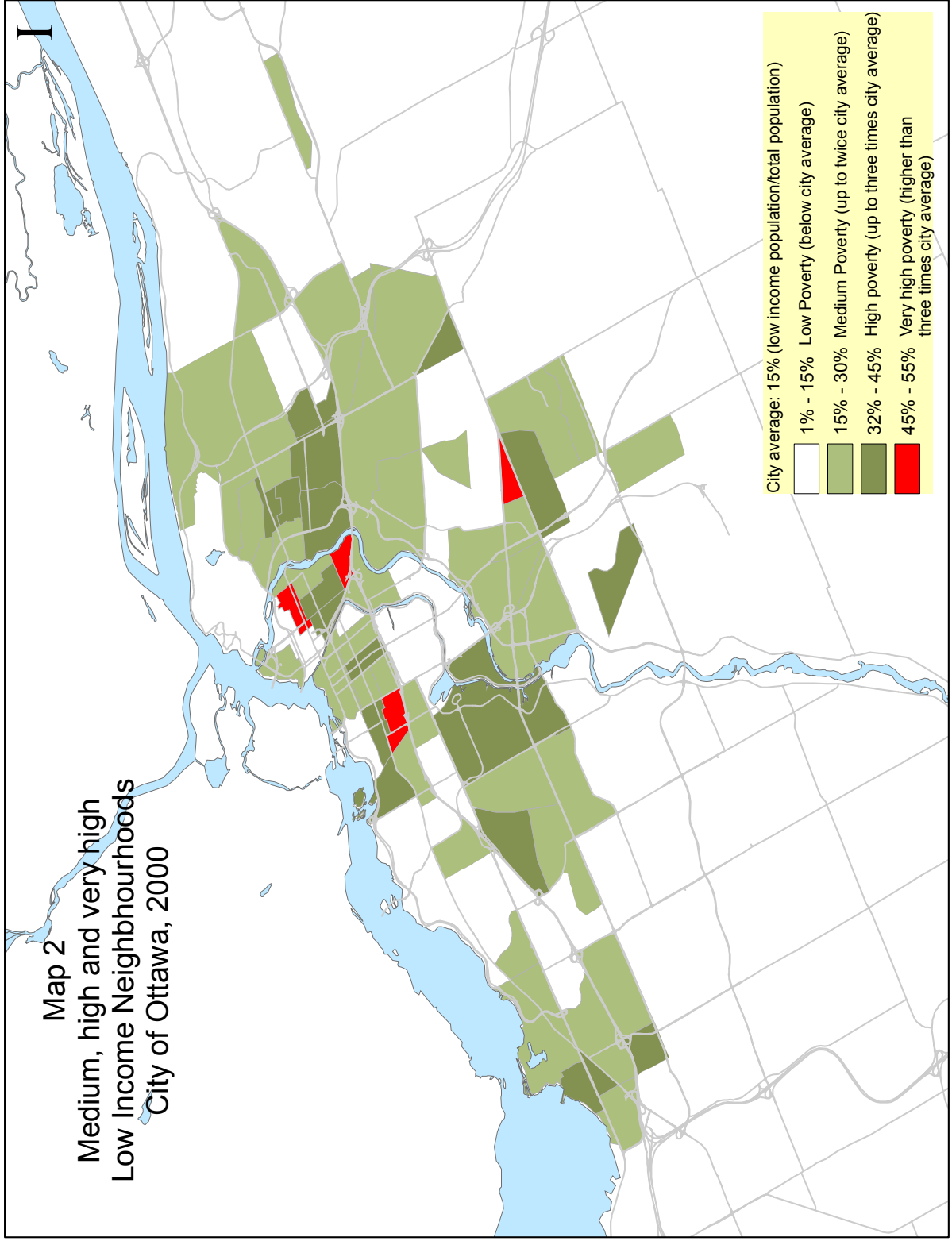
- Ottawa does not have a strong pattern of significant geographically defined neighbourhoods where people of a common background live in high concentrations (sometimes called “ethnic enclaves or clusters)
- Some neighbourhoods are viewed as such enclaves, but are actually quite diverse (Chinatown as an example)
- Members of the case study communities, and visible minority residents are spread throughout the City
- This is a strength of our City
- However, the lack of concentrations presents challenges with respect to
 - Determining best location for culturally specific services
 - Achieving inclusion in mainstream services, given the diversity in each neighbourhood (one size does not fit all)
 - Community members connecting with each other – highlights importance of cultural and recreational activities to facilitate community networking
 - Degrees of isolation for members of distinct communities who do not find peers in their neighbourhood

A Dimension of the Geography of Exclusion in Ottawa

- Defining “poor neighbourhoods”
- Poor neighbourhoods can be defined as Census Tracts (CTs) with above city averages of low income population
- There are 59 poor neighbourhoods (CTs) in Ottawa, representing 34% of all CTs – see Map 1
- These neighbourhoods show various magnitude of poverty (medium, high and very high) – see Map 2
- 70% (78,500) of all low income persons live in the poor neighbourhoods



Map 2
 Medium, high and very high
 Low Income Neighbourhoods
 City of Ottawa, 2000



Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census, DMTI Spatial

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Visible Minority Groups

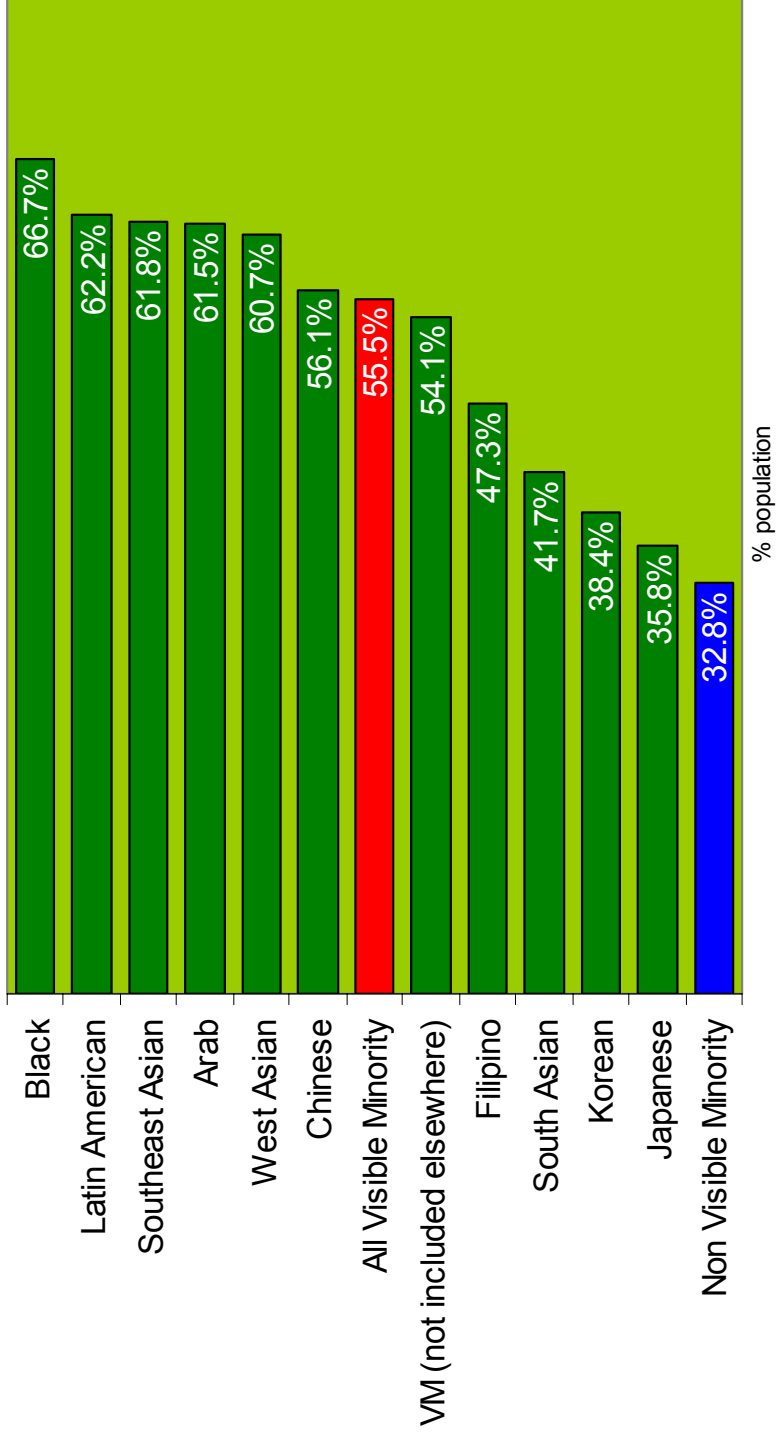
- 18% (136,000) of the population belong to visible minority groups
- The major visible minority groups are:
 - Black (which included Somalis)
 - Chinese
 - South Asians
 - Arab (which includes Lebanese)
- 30% of all visible minority groups are low income versus 11% of all others

Visible minority group members in poor neighbourhoods

- Over half (55.5%) of all visible minority group members live in poor neighbourhoods – see Table 1
- Less than one-third (32.8%) of all others (non-visible minority group members) live in poor neighbourhoods
- Living in these neighbourhoods are:
 - 66.7% of the Black group
 - 62.2% of the Latin American group
 - 61.8% of the Southeast Asian group
 - 61.5% of the Arab group
 - 60.7% of the West Asian group
 - 56.1% of the Chinese group

Table 1

Proportion of Visible Minority Groups living in poor neighbourhoods, Ottawa, 2000

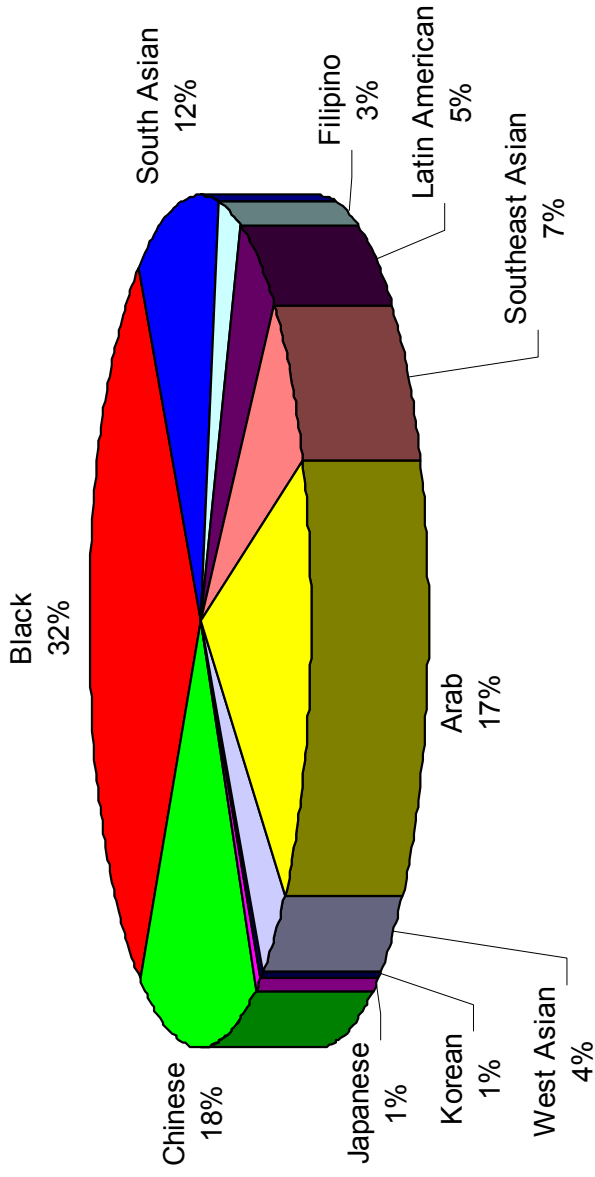


Composition of Visible Minority populations living in poor neighbourhoods

- As shown in Chart 1, about 80% of the visible minority population living in poor neighbourhoods are represented by four groups
 - Black (32%)
 - Chinese (18%)
 - Arab (17%)
 - South Asian (12%)

Chart 1

Percent distribution of VM population living in poor neighbourhoods



Geographic Dimension to the Exclusion of Visible Minority Residents?

Yes, visible minority groups are more likely to live in poor neighbourhoods than the non visible minority population.

56% of visible minority group members versus 33% of all others (Non-visible minority group members)

The intersection of the racialization of poverty and the geography of exclusion create an extremely divisive tendency in Ottawa and a critical issue in the social and economic exclusion of visible minority residents.

Addressing the Geography of Exclusion

- Improve supports for individuals and communities to access resources and opportunities
- Build inclusive environments (systemic change)
- Support the capacity of community actors to be engaged in making change

Improved access to resources for individuals and communities

- Improve living conditions of people experiencing exclusion, particularly low income residents
- Develop a strategy to meet the housing and care needs of a diverse seniors population, including culturally appropriate long term care and supports for aging in place
- Improve core community infrastructure, particularly in poor neighbourhoods, including municipal services and voluntary sector services

Build inclusive environments (Systemic Change)

- Develop inclusive housing policies, inclusive neighbourhood planning policies and resources for affordable housing
- Examine public housing policies to determine where visible minority residents may be disproportionately impacted
- Ensure inclusive policy and practice within local school boards and individual schools – through collaborative and reciprocal strategies between community representatives and school structures
- City of Ottawa develop a framework to support geographically focused economic development
 - Support investment in neighbourhoods
 - Counter disinvestment (e.g. flight of basic commercial and retail services from low income neighbourhoods)
 - Work with ethnic and visible minority organizations supporting small business development

Support Community Actors to be Engaged in Making Change

- Funders and decision makers support community initiatives to establish meeting “spaces” which build social capital within ethnic and visible minority communities (e.g. community meeting spaces, cultural activities, community gardens, etc.)
- Enhance initiatives related to a community based safety and crime agenda which creates safe spaces and builds trust and understanding between racialized communities and the justice system
- Ensure that exclusion is explicitly considered in neighbourhood level planning processes, through the implementation of best practices

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