

Communities Within: Diversity and Exclusion in Ottawa

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



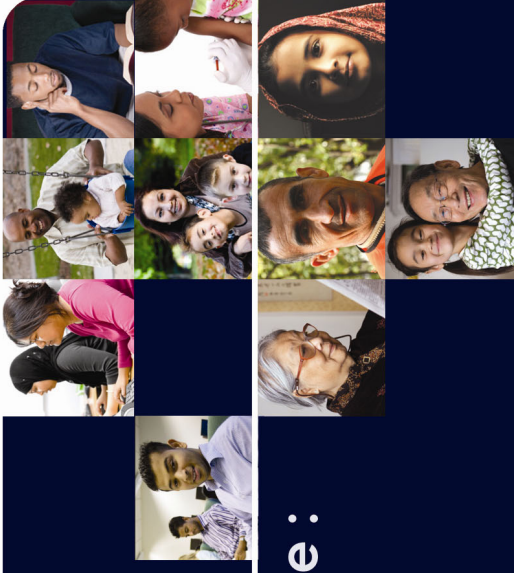
An initiative of the Social Planning Council of Ottawa
Un projet du Conseil de planification sociale d'Ottawa

Examining the Degree of Exclusion within Ottawa's Lebanese Community

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



Canadian
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Communities Within: Diversity and Exclusion in Ottawa

- Why did we choose the Lebanese community?
- Lebanese Canadians were strongly opposed to their classification as a “visible minority” from the initial contact with our data collection personnel.
- “Ethnic minority” is another term which is sometimes ascribed to members of the Lebanese and other communities. The term “ethnic minority” refers to a group of people of the same race or nationality who (1) share a distinctive culture and (2) have different national or cultural traditions from the majority of the population.

An Overview Statistical Portrait

- Based on 2001 census data
- Lebanese Canadian Population in Ottawa: 18,135
- The proportion of Canadian-born immigrants among Lebanese Canadians is significantly higher than that of visible minorities.
- About 31.5 percent of Lebanese Canadians are Muslims.

Religious Diversity

Religious Affiliation	Lebanese Canadians	All Visible Minorities	Non Visible Minority
Catholic	36.4	22.7	49.2
Protestant	5.0	12.1	30.2
Christian Orthodox	19.8	3.2	1.7
Christian, n.i.e.	3.3	3.9	1.4
Muslim	31.5	24.9	0.8
Jewish	0.0	0.2	1.7
Buddhist	0.0	6.1	0.1
Hindu	0.1	5.8	0.0
Sikh	0.0	1.8	0.0
Eastern religions	0.2	0.6	0.1
Other religions	0.1	0.0	0.2
No religious affiliation	3.7	18.9	14.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

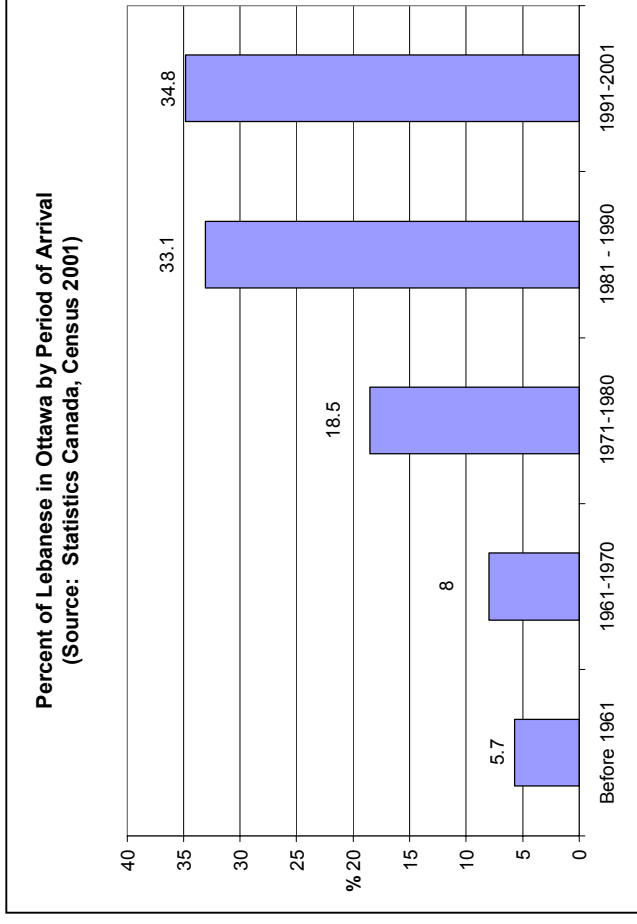
Age Group Distribution

- The percentage of children and youth is higher in the community than in other populations in Ottawa
- 45% of the population is aged 24 or younger
- 29 % of the population are children aged below 15 years
- This implies increased demand for child and youth services
- It also high levels of dependency within the community resulting in financial strain

Percent of Ottawa Residents by Age Groups and Selected Characteristics, 2001			
Age Group	Lebanese	All Visible Minority	All Others
0 – 14 years	28.8	26.2	17.9
15 – 24 years	16.2	15.9	12.9
25 – 44 years	31.3	35.3	32.2
45 – 64 years	17.3	17.3	25.3
65 years +	6.4	5.4	11.6
Total	100.0	100.00	100.0

History

- Lebanese first arrived in Ottawa in the 1890s because of political marginalization under the rule of the Ottoman Turks in Lebanon
- Most Lebanese immigrated to Ottawa between 1981 and 2001 because of the Civil War in Lebanon

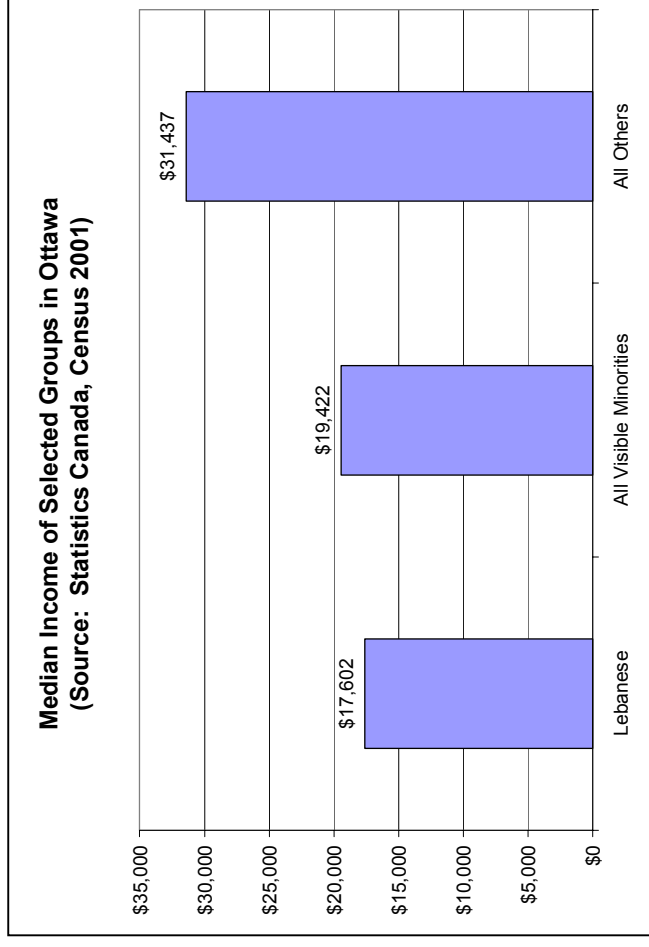


Earlier Arrivals Received A Warmer Reception Than Other Groups

- The long history of immigration to Ottawa
- Similar religious background to the mainstream society eased the reception
- Successfully organized in the early years to be classified as European in ancestry
- Early exposure to different cultures in Lebanon facilitated integration
- More recent immigrants who are primarily Muslim have faced significantly more barriers – Islamophobia and anti-Arab sentiment a serious factor

Economic Exclusion and Inclusion

- 7.7 % of Lebanese Canadians are unemployed
- 57.5% are low income
- Median income is \$17,602



Factors in Economic Exclusion

- Lack of Recognition of foreign credentials
- Difficulties retraining
- Biased hiring practices
- Seldom obtain higher management positions

*One of the biggest issues that I keep noticing is the rising numbers of Lebanese immigrants who become taxi drivers as soon as they come into the country. There is a huge problem with people coming from certain countries. It is not just Lebanese people but you see a lot of it here in the Lebanese community. New immigrants are educated but they can't find a job based on their degree. **Participant***

Education

- One in three Lebanese Canadians has less than a high school education
- 17% of Lebanese Canadians have a university degree
- 50.3 % of Lebanese Canadians have working knowledge of English
- 47.3 % are bilingual

Barriers to Employment

- Lack of Recognition of foreign credentials
- Difficulties retraining
- Biased hiring practices
- Seldom obtain higher management positions
- *One of the biggest issues that I keep noticing is the rising numbers of Lebanese immigrants who become taxi drivers as soon as they come into the country. There is a huge problem with people coming from certain countries. It is not just Lebanese people but you see a lot of it here in the Lebanese community. New immigrants are educated but they can't find a job based on their degree. Participant*

Self Employment

- 17.4% of the Lebanese community in Ottawa is self-employed, this is more than double the percentage found among all visible minority persons
- Informants identified this as a survival strategy'
- The higher incidence of self-employment may be a factor in levels of low income, as many self-employed have marginal incomes.

Ottawa Residents by Employment Status, 2001.

Employment Status	Lebanese	All Minority	Visible Minority	Non Minority	Visible
Employees	82.1	91.1		89.6	
Self-employed (incorporated)	6.9	2.8		3.0	
Self-employed (unincorporated)	10.5	5.8		7.2	
Unpaid family workers	0.5	0.2		0.1	
All Workers	100.0	100.0		100.0	

Poverty is an Issue

- Nearly 1/3 of all Lebanese-Canadians in Ottawa earn low incomes.
- 57.7% of the Lebanese community earn less than \$20,000 annually, compared to 55% for all visible minority persons and 36.5% for all non-visible minority persons
- Proportionately, non-visible minority individuals are about twice as likely to earn \$50,000 or more per year than members of the Lebanese community (27.5% vs. 14.2%)
- The first waves of Lebanese immigrants to Ottawa are relatively affluent compared to recent newcomers, creating a marked economic disparity within the community

Family Composition

- 55.5 % of all Lebanese Canadians aged 15 to 24 years are legally married
- Large, close-knit extended family systems are maintained in Ottawa
- Teenage girls are sometimes sent to Lebanon to avoid the influence of mainstream Canadian culture
- Conflicts over cultural expectations of children and youth especially young women are common
- Because of a lessened overall social network in Ottawa (compared to being in Lebanon) and exclusion from certain higher-paying jobs, a considerable degree of stress is placed on families

Housing

- Home ownership is on the rise among Lebanese Canadians in Ottawa
- Rising rents in Ottawa make it difficult for new immigrants to afford suitable housing for their families

“We were very surprised upon arriving to Canada that a minimum wage equals maybe the cheapest two bedrooms. Of course may be you can rent a bachelor or one bedroom but for a family of four with two small children if you want to be fairly comfortable you will at least take a two bedroom apartment”. Participant

Neighbourhoods

- 17.9 % of Lebanese Canadians live in Alta Vista and 13.1 % live in Gloucester-Southgate
- Less affluent Lebanese Canadians, often newcomers tend to be more spread out in neighbourhoods throughout the city to find affordable apartments

Lebanese Recent Immigrants* Ottawa, 2001 (Map1)

Lebanese recent immigrants as
% of all recent immigrants
by Census Tract

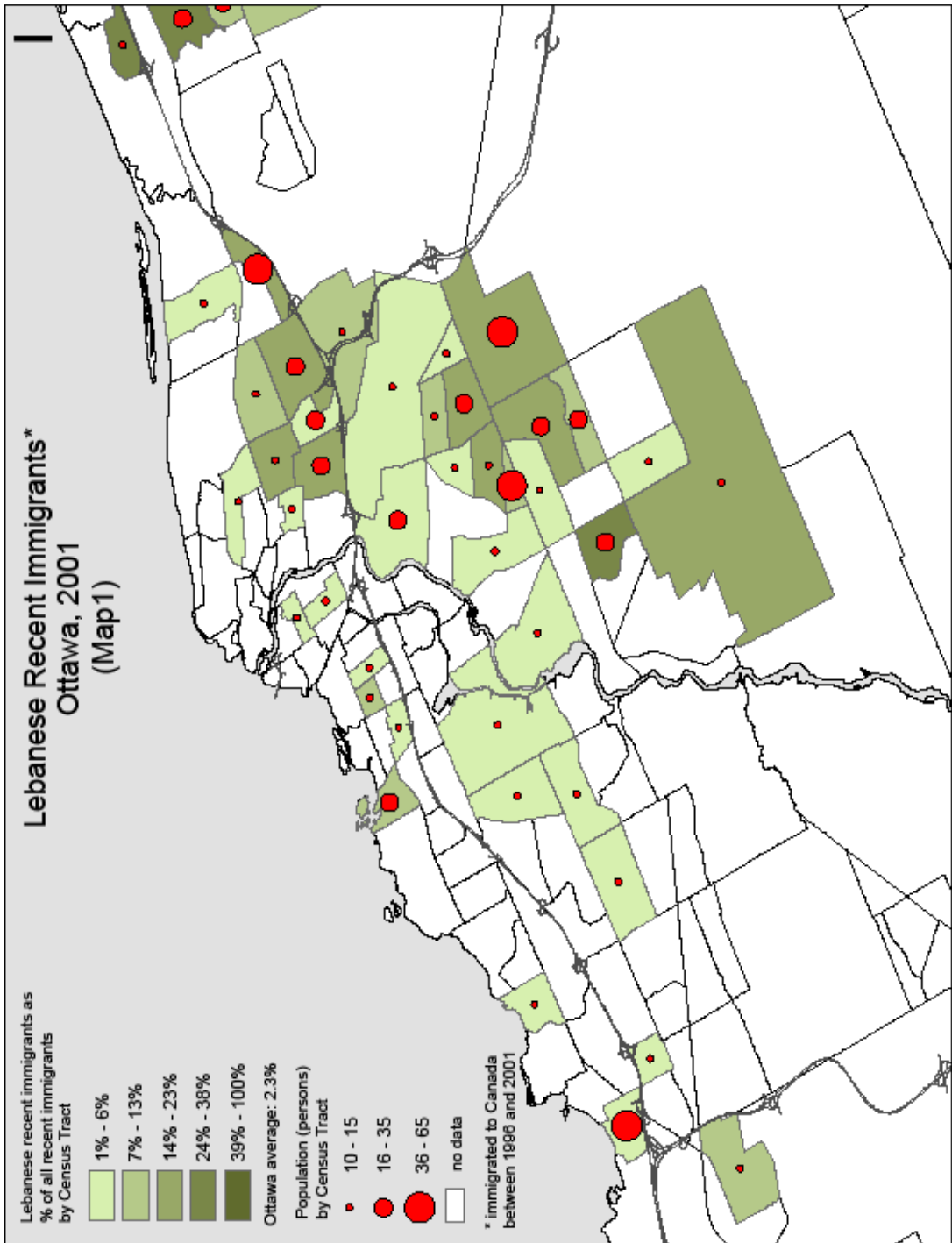
- 1% - 6%
- 7% - 13%
- 14% - 23%
- 24% - 38%
- 39% - 100%

Ottawa average: 2.3%

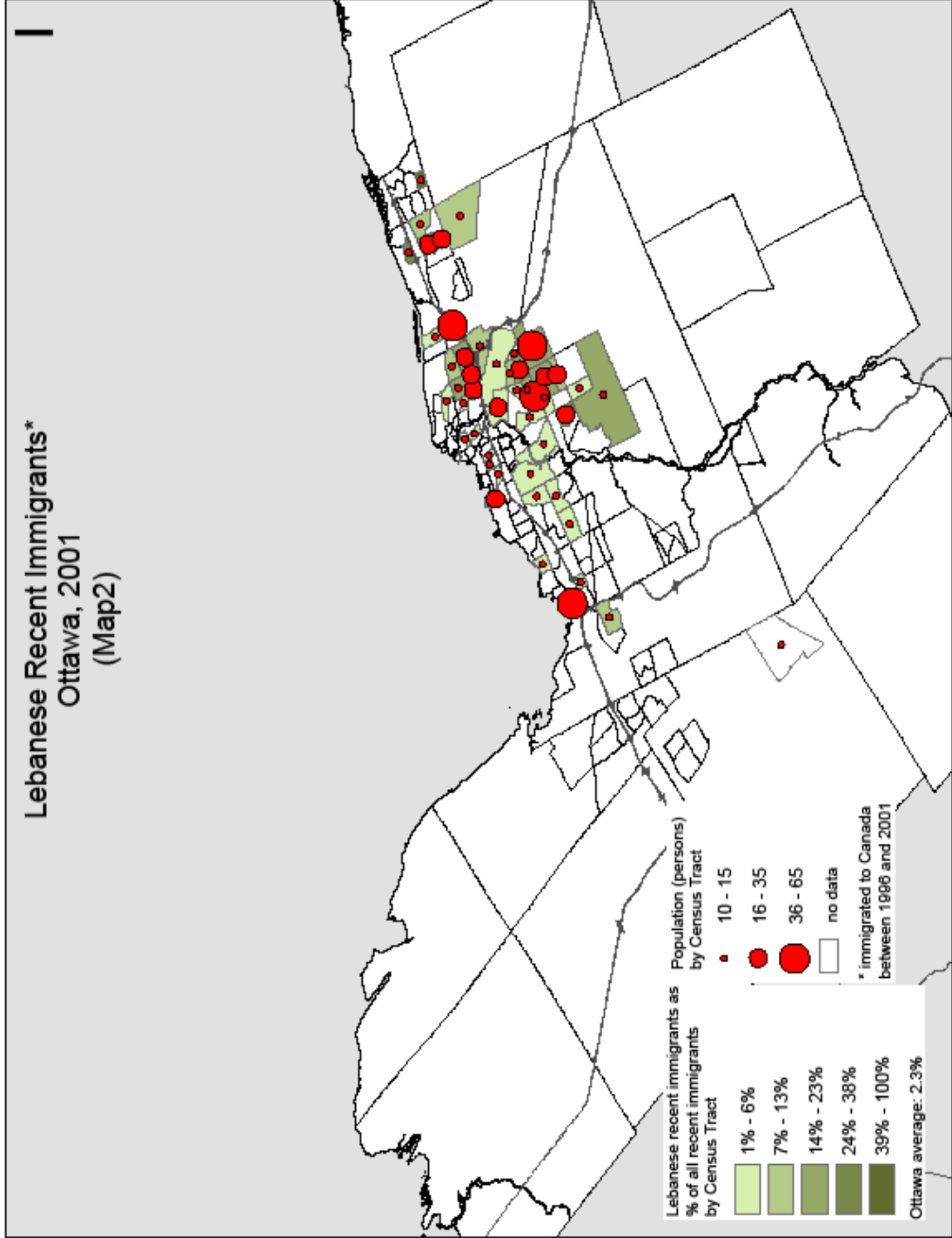
Population (persons)
by Census Tract

- 10 - 15
- 16 - 35
- 36 - 65
- no data

* immigrated to Canada
between 1996 and 2001



Lebanese Recent Immigrants* Ottawa, 2001 (Map2)



Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census, DMTI Spatial
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Identity and Belonging

- Research participants strongly objected to being identified as “visible minority”
- The Christian Lebanese community has a strong sense of belonging to a Canadian identity
- Muslim Lebanese tend to identify more with their Arabic roots
- Lebanese Canadians still have strong ties to their country of origin

“From the beginning I do not accept this idea of minority communities. We are not minorities here. We don’t feel like we are minorities here. Our people do not believe that they are minority. We are Canadian citizens getting all our benefits as the Canadians and doing as much as we can for our country Canada.” Key informant

Civic Participation: Electoral Activity

- Most research participants felt community members voted less than the general public.
- Young people in Lebanon are believed to be very engaged compared to Lebanese Canadians
- There are elected representatives of Lebanese origin at different levels of government.

“I think the community is more and more aware of their almost duty to vote, especially when they are disappointed with the system. And now they find out that their voting power is very important. You many not have political money but we certainly have the political vote.” Focus group participant

- Factors in low participation include:
 - Lack of trust in politicians and the political system
 - Economic pressures
 - Political conflict in their country of origin and a sense that politics is divisive
 - Islamophobia and Anti-Arab sentiment are major stumbling blocks as they fuel distrust

Civic Participation: Civic Activity

- Lebanese Canadians were quite active within their own social networks and community organizations, cultural activities and informal helping
- The communities have created a rich infrastructure of community institutions
- There is significant involvement in faith communities
- Youth were quite engaged in civic activity
- This type of civic activity increases bonding in the community
- Parents and youth were also involved as volunteers in the school system

Civic Participation: Political Voice

- Community members had engaged in advocacy activities, particularly related to intersections of their faith with civic society.
 - In opposition to same sex marriage
 - In efforts to negotiate enrollment for children from Orthodox backgrounds in the Catholic school system
- Have led to building of relationships with organizations in the mainstream

Increasing Inclusion of Lebanese Canadians in Ottawa

- Enhance supports for individuals, families and communities experiencing exclusion to increase their access to resources and opportunities
- Build inclusive environments
- Support the networking, social capital, planning and monitoring capacity of the community infrastructure, individuals and organizations working towards increasing inclusion

Continued...

- Encourage intergenerational and intercultural support within the Lebanese community to help newer immigrant become established
- Provide programs for new immigrants to improve skills and obtain Canadian certification
- Advise prospective immigrants to have their credentials evaluated before coming to Canada
- Civic education directed at removing negative stereotypes associated with Islamic faith and Arabic heritage

Implications for the Broader Community

- Recognition of foreign credentials is a priority
- Degree to which self-employment can be a viable means to increase family incomes
- Extended family systems are important for economic success
- Within a group there can be social and economic exclusion of a portion of the population