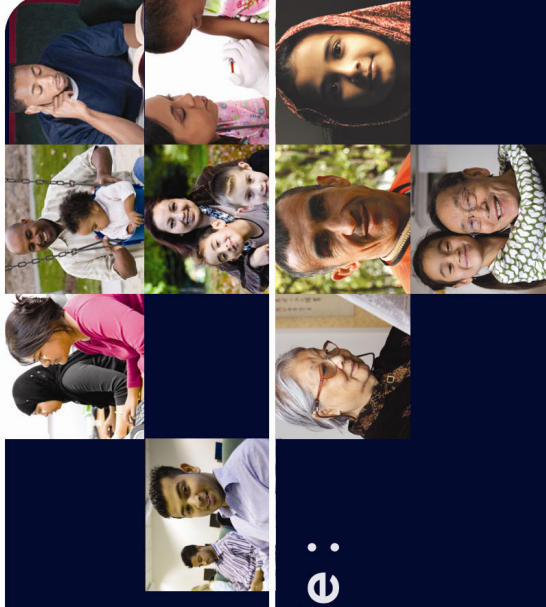


Communities Within: Diversity and Exclusion in Ottawa

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 for Ottawa's Somali Community

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



Communities Within: Diversity and Exclusion in Ottawa

- The Somali community was chosen as a case study community because:
 - The largest visible minority group in Ottawa is the black community. However, it is very diverse.
 - The Somali community is the largest community within the Black community
 - Somalis have been identified as the largest African community in Ottawa
 - The community is a very new group to Ottawa
 - Somalis came as refugees
 - The community is 97% Muslim
 - The community's experience sheds light on how issues of race, religion and refugee status intersect with exclusion.
 - As well, the community was poorly received. This allows us to study how a group which is not welcomed can integrate

Communities Within: Diversity and Exclusion in Ottawa, Cont'd

- This report uses the term “Somalis” and “Somali community” to identify a group of Ottawa residents who have familial and cultural roots in Somalia, regardless of where they were born, their citizenship, or how long they have been in Canada. As is noted later in the report, these individuals almost universally identify themselves as both Somali and Canadian. The statistics are based on those who self-identified as “Somali” on the census.
- We examine social and economic exclusion as an outcome – by comparing how the community is doing in relation to other visible minority populations and in relation to all others
- We also examine social and economic exclusion as a process – by looking at the systems, policies, institutions and power relations which push community members away from effective engagement in all aspects of life

An Overview Statistical Portrait

- Based on 2001 census data
- The community has worked with Statistics Canada to ensure community members are engaged in the 2006 census so the figures will provide an accurate picture
- 8,280 Somalis in Ottawa *
- Community leaders generally put the size of the Somali community at 25,000 to 40,000 or up to 5 times the official figure.
- 97% of Somali residents aged 15+ are first generation immigrants
- 29.6% of the total community are Canadian born
- 100% of the Somali community would be identified as visible minority
- 97% of Somalis are Muslim
- The Somali community is quite diverse along clan, dialect and region of origin

Age Group Distribution

- 63.5% of the community is 24 and under, including 43.5% aged 14 and under
- This has profound implications for the levels of poverty and the need for child and youth related services and supports

**Table 2:
Percent of Ottawa Residents by Age Groups and Selected Characteristics, 2001**

Age Group	Somali	All Visible Minority	All Others
0 – 14 years	43.5	26.2	17.9
15 – 24 years	20.0	15.9	12.9
25 – 44 years	26.6	35.3	32.2
45 – 64 years	8.2	17.3	25.3
65 years +	1.8	5.4	11.6
Total	100.0	100.00	100.0

Somali Community History

- It is a new community in which most arrived over a very short period of time.
 - 81% arrived between 1991 and 2000
 - 18% arrived between 1981 and 1990
 - There was no pre-existing Somali community infrastructure
- The majority came as refugees, either through step or chain migration
- They experienced the additional challenges of refugees including
 - unplanned departure and leaving everything behind
 - family disruption, with a high percentage of female led single parent families
 - legacies of the civil war: Clan identity, internal divisions and split co-operations

“Despite the fact that Somalis were allowed to come to Canada as refugees and immigrants, after that initial invitation, other doors that lead to full participation have been closed to them. There is a Somali proverb that says “You don’t enter an open door, you enter because there is an open face” and this open face is not there for groups like the Somalis. So, after they came through the gate, the welcome ended there and it has been a struggle ever since.” (Key informant)

A Lukewarm to Hostile Reception

A key informant characterized the community's reception as a type of 'group branding', identified as "the three Rs" of Somali adversity:

- Religion (98% are Muslim)
 - Public paranoia, exacerbated by 9 / 11
 - The community is free to practice its' religion. In activities of daily living it faces Islamophobia. Women may be particularly targeted because of identification based on clothing.
- Refugee Status (Most arrived as refugees)
 - The legal framework for their naturalization significantly delayed settlement (including access to education and the labour market). In particular, in 1993 and 1997 the Federal governments passed legislation which delayed landed status for refugee claimants without identity papers. In both cases, the Somali community took the Federal government to Court and won changes to these laws.
 - No organized welcome in contrast to some other communities
- Race (ism)
 - Racialization of poverty
 - Experiences of racism in daily life, including some incidents of racially motivated violence

As well, there was an economic recession in the early years of the arrival, which exacerbated the hostility to the group and made economic integration more difficult

Economic Exclusion and Inclusion

- Very high incidence of poverty
- Median income of \$11,693 which is dramatically below all visible minorities (\$19,422) and all others (\$31,437)
- Labour market barriers for those with foreign acquired credentials and for those educated in Canada – under-employment and disproportionate unemployment
- The community has responded with some asset based approaches, including the creation of networks for mutual financial aid. They mutual aid groups collect money to support school-related activities by their children, to support other activities in the community, and to send back to Somalia. These community based approaches to address economic hardship and support asset development are not accessible to those on social assistance, who are among the poorest in the community, because of social assistance legislation

Economic Exclusion and Inclusion, Cont'd

- *When you are mopping the floor you are not going to make more than \$20,000 a year, and to sponsor your family members you need at least \$30,000 and more. And when it comes to the intergenerational gap, if you are working long hours in sectors such as cleaning which are often done in the evenings, of course you are going to miss out on important times with your children. At the same time, you cannot sponsor family members who could have helped you with the children. So, then you run into difficulties, for example, your child could be integrating faster than you, knows the language, and so on. You want to teach your child your culture and help adjust to their new environment, but when you are working long hours with no support, that is very difficult to do. Also the parent's frustration with unemployment and underemployment affects the children. If they see their father who is an engineer doing a menial job, then the kids will probably say why should I go to university if it did not help my father? So that role modeling is lacking. (Key informant)*

Incidence of Low Income

A Priority Issue

- 61.4% live below the low income cut off, compared to 29.1% for all visible minorities and 7.8% for all others
- 18.3 % of the community have no income
- 73.8 % have an income under \$20,000
- Only 2% have incomes of \$60,000 or higher
- Factors contributing to the profound rate of poverty are:
 - Demographic structure of the community
 - Almost half the community is aged 0 – 14 (43.5%) and almost two thirds are aged 0 – 24 (63.5%)
 - Higher incidence of single parent families, particularly female led (may be single earner or not in the labour market)
 - Higher percentage of larger families with dependent children
 - Labour market exclusion
 - For seniors, although they are a small portion of the community, may have poor pensions due to collapse of the Somali government
 - Some incidence of marginal self-employment
 - Delays in the naturalization process which delayed engagement in the labour market

Access to the Labour Market

- The participation rate for Somalis is lower, significantly reflecting the higher incidence of lone parent families as well as a significant proportion of the community pursuing education
- For those in the labour market, the rate of unemployment (21.2) is roughly twice that of all visible minority residents (10.8) and almost five times that of all others (4.8)

Percent of Ottawa Residents by Employment and Participation Rates and Selected Characteristics, 2001			
	Somali	All Visible Minorities	All Others
Participation Rate	50.8	67.6	70.7
Employment Rate	40.0	60.0	67.0
Unemployment Rate	21.2	10.8	4.8

- A significant issue is under-employment. There is a tendency to be segregated into poorer paying occupations:
 - Sales and services (31.2%)
 - Occupations unique to processing and manufacturing and utilities (20.7%)
 - Business and administration (12%)

Labour Market Barriers

Tell me who you are and I will tell you what you do

Focus group participants identified the following barriers

- Non-recognition of foreign acquired credentials
- Islamophobia
 - Affects hiring practices
 - Incidents and lack of safety in the workplace, particularly for some women whose clothing identifies them
- Racism
 - Even the generation who were educated in Canada are having difficulties in getting employment in their fields.
 - Lack of mobility in the workplace
 - Racist incidents in workplaces
- Bilingualism (English / French) as a systemic barrier
 - A significantly higher percentage of Somalis have English only, French only or only a non-official language, compared to all visible minority residents and all others

Labour Market Barriers

Tell me who you are and I will tell you what you do, Cont'd

The challenge is after 15 years of living in Ottawa is how to deal with the systemic barriers that block opportunities not only from the first generation Somalis who were trained in Somalia but also the younger generations who went to Canadian universities and are still not finding opportunities for employment in Ottawa. (Focus group participant)

Self-Employment

- Research participants saw self-employment as a viable route for individual and community prosperity, with the proper supports
- Strengths within the community
 - Entrepreneurial
 - Very strong connections to Somalis in other parts of the world (the Diaspora) to facilitate business relations
 - Some access to capital through culturally or religiously based financial instruments
- Barriers to successful business development
 - Access to credit, related to their recent arrival in the country and persistent low income
 - Access to networks

Self-Employment, Cont'd

The idea is with government support these marginalized communities can create their own jobs and become self-employed. As you can see, without any support from the government the Somali community has succeeded in opening successful businesses for the last ten years, imagine if we got government help – the community's economic development would have been even stronger. The barrier is access to money. The banks are not lending people the money because they are lacking the credit that is necessary to get the loan. When you have a low paying job you don't build a good history and even if you apply for a card and you get it then you will only get a credit card with a 500 dollar limit. It's the poverty and it is a cycle that just repeats itself. So that is why the government has to come in as a guarantor. (Key informant)

Education Levels

- The Somali community in Ottawa has not attained levels of higher education comparable to other visible minority residents or all others (see Table below).
 - The significant youth cohort provides an opportunity for this to change
 - The ability to access student loans will be important here, and was previously affected by delays in the naturalization process

Figure 12: Ottawa Residents by Highest Educational Levels, 2001.

Educational Level	Somali	All Visible Minority	Non Visible Minority
Less than high school graduation certificate	40.6	22.2	20.2
High school graduation certificate only	16.5	9.9	12.7
Some postsecondary education	14.5	12.9	12.1
Trades certificate or diploma	4.0	5.1	7.4
College certificate or diploma	9.3	11.6	17.9
University certificate or diploma below bachelor's degree	2.2	3.6	2.1
University degree	12.9	34.5	27.6

Source: Statistics Canada; Census 2001.

Engagement with the Education System

- Adults in the research project placed a high value on their children's educational success
- Engagement with the school system was a significant point of tension
 - Active discouragements by some educators
 - Tensions with peers, teachers administration and policies particularly in relation to male teenagers
 - Feeling of a disrespect for Islam
 - Lack of representativeness within the school structures (staffing, administration and decision making)
- Community as a whole only marginally engaged in the formal routes of engagement with the school system due to circumstances of the family (meeting basic needs), disillusionment, and processes which are not inclusive
- Some groups within the community have been very active in this area – creating new points of engagement with schools and the school systems

Engagement with the Education System, Cont'd

- *The schools for example are still an area where many issues come up. It is important to point out that Somalis have been here for quite sometime. If you don't know the community after sixteen years there is something wrong with that institution. ... there is the idea if we understand the culture we could do better. But I would say the problem is not the culture. We need to look at the current experience the Somalis are having which is a Canadian experience, Canadian reality which is shared by other blacks and other minorities. What has the map of Somalia got to do with a child who is feeling excluded in a classroom in Ottawa? (Female key informant interviewee)*

Family Circumstances

- Only 35.1% of population legally married (also reflects number of young people)
- Family breakdowns – higher percentage of single parent families especially female led
 - Separation through the migration process
 - Economic difficulties in family sponsorship
 - Separation due to husbands' job-hunting
 - Separation due to changing expectations
 - Loss of the extended family structure for support
- Role overload, loss of status and family tensions
 - Mothers juggling large families with night-shift employment
 - Housework, homework and hobbies: Strain on young women
 - Exploitation, poverty and fear of “corruption” among young boys
 - Loss of status of men

Family Circumstances, Cont'd

- Higher incidence of large families
- Seniors are a small percentage of the community. May live with the family or may be isolated. They often face greater language barriers, loss of role (tending gardens or grandchildren) and feelings of uselessness or dependency.
- Despite this, families are still an important strength. Families are re-defining themselves, youth are playing important contributory roles
- Community interconnections also a significant strength.

A Critical Need to Focus on Youth

- *Youth are disillusioned by the fact that their father is unemployed or working in a menial job, despite having one or several degrees, while their white peers are prospering. In frustration, the young people drop out of school, feeling that there is no point to getting an education. Or worse, they end up in trouble with the law. (Focus group participant)*
- *One of the things that happened is that because the home becomes so volatile and affects the youth especially the boys, some parents send boys back home. It is interesting to see parents sending their sons to unsafe environments that they themselves ran away from – because they believe in that environment at least their child won't become involved with the criminal justice system. A good question to ask then is what does that say about Canada? (Key informant)*

A Critical Need to Focus on Youth

- Transition dilemmas
 - Parents concerned about the children drifting from their culture, a lessened role of religion, language loss
 - Leads to disagreements within the families – a key stress
 - Some parents are deeply demoralized by this culture clash, and what they perceive as losing their children.
 - Youth feel the tug of war – between parents and children, between male and female children (especially youth) and between older and younger children
- The need to build positive sense of self for children and youth
 - Pressing need for opportunities for meaningful engagement
 - Recreation important
 - Some parents consider sending their youth back to Somalia

Gender Issues

- Genders roles are changing for adults and for young people – creating tension in the family and the community.
- Men are experiencing unemployment and at times a reduced economic role, and with that, a loss in status.
- Mothers often work and this gives the women an economic power that is inevitably expressed in a greater decision-making role within the family.
- *[Without the extended family] ... now the family is placed in a vacuum and this brings all sorts of difficulties of the family unit. Lack of employment, poverty and social marginalization of course exacerbate the issues. The home is a contested arena: All of a sudden gender roles have changed, the woman has more burdens than ever before, she is taking care of a family of 7 or 8 and she has to at the same time take care of the emotional needs of a man with a broken spirit, so all of this affects the family and the home becomes a contested arena. What also contributes to tensions in the family is the younger generation. Those who came when they were young or were born here, have difficulties adhering to their parents' culture... (Key informant)*

Gender Issues, Cont'd

- Girls feel that more is expected of them than of their brothers, in helping around the house, in scholastic achievement, and in socializing. Some girls felt they had better opportunities in Ottawa than in the countries from which they came (through migration)
- Areas of conflict for young women: School – parents expectations too high; Choice of careers – degree of choice; clothing and social activities; perceived inequity of boys being permitted more freedom
- Areas of conflict for young men: Source of role models and authority – mothers or other young men; teenage social behaviour; disengagement from school in some cases

Housing

- Affordability a significant problem given rate of low income
- Has led to many securing housing in public housing
 - Much of the stock is in poor physical condition
 - Deteriorated environments and safety concerns a big issue also “bad influences”
 - Are disproportionately affected by public housing policies – including entire family being evicted if one member gets in trouble with the law
- Over-crowding a problem for many families, given family size and low incomes
- Some experiences of discrimination in efforts to rent in the private market – also reports of security checks in addition to credit checks

Housing, Cont'd

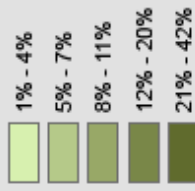
- Shortage of housing stock in Ottawa for large or extended families, particularly in the rental market
- Home ownership seen as an important asset building strategy
- Need innovative strategies to facilitate greater home ownership, in light of barriers
 - Low income level of the community
 - for some, religious opposition to interest which mitigates against obtaining a market mortgage
- *Many people won't pay [mortgages] because the interest is in conflict with their religious beliefs. So, the Somalis are looking for alternatives but the banks are not offering the needed alternatives. So we are hoping that one of the banks will become innovative and will put forward an alternative for the Somali community and in the process this Bank will benefit because they are tapping into a community that no one else has tapped into before. (Key informant)*

Somalis: Neighbourhoods

- Somalis are most numerous in the following areas: Alta Vista (21%), Gloucester-Southgate (14.4%), and Bay (13.8%)
 - See maps for details
- Some concentration in social housing
 - Feel area may be somewhat unsafe (although not necessarily), maintenance standards poor and the schools may provide a lower standard of education.
 - However, addresses affordability and sometime are living close to other Somalis so that is a positive
- Safety a big concern – including “bad influences” the neighbourhood

Somali Recent Immigrants* Ottawa, 2001 (Map 1)

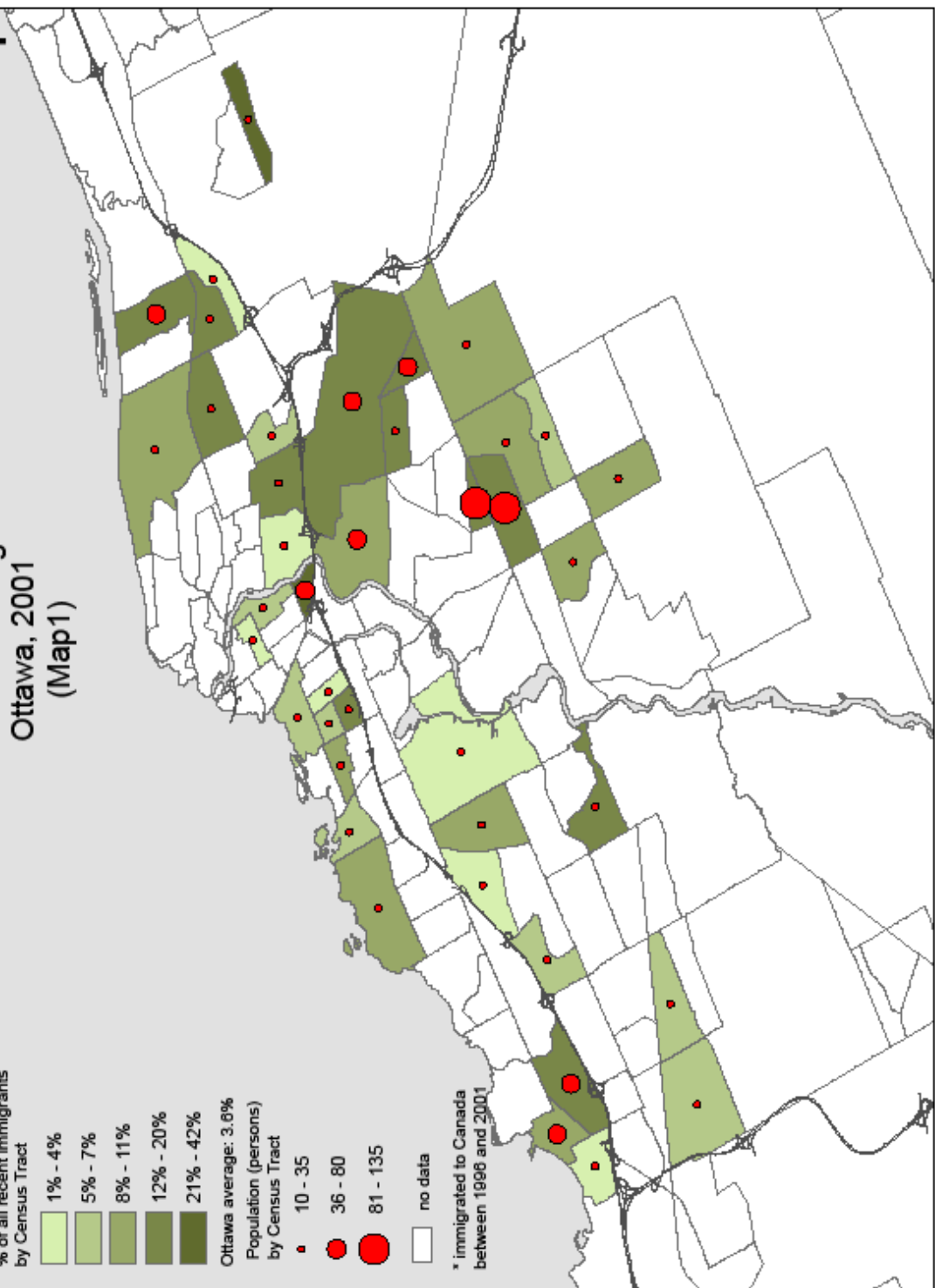
Somali recent immigrants as
% of all recent immigrants
by Census Tract



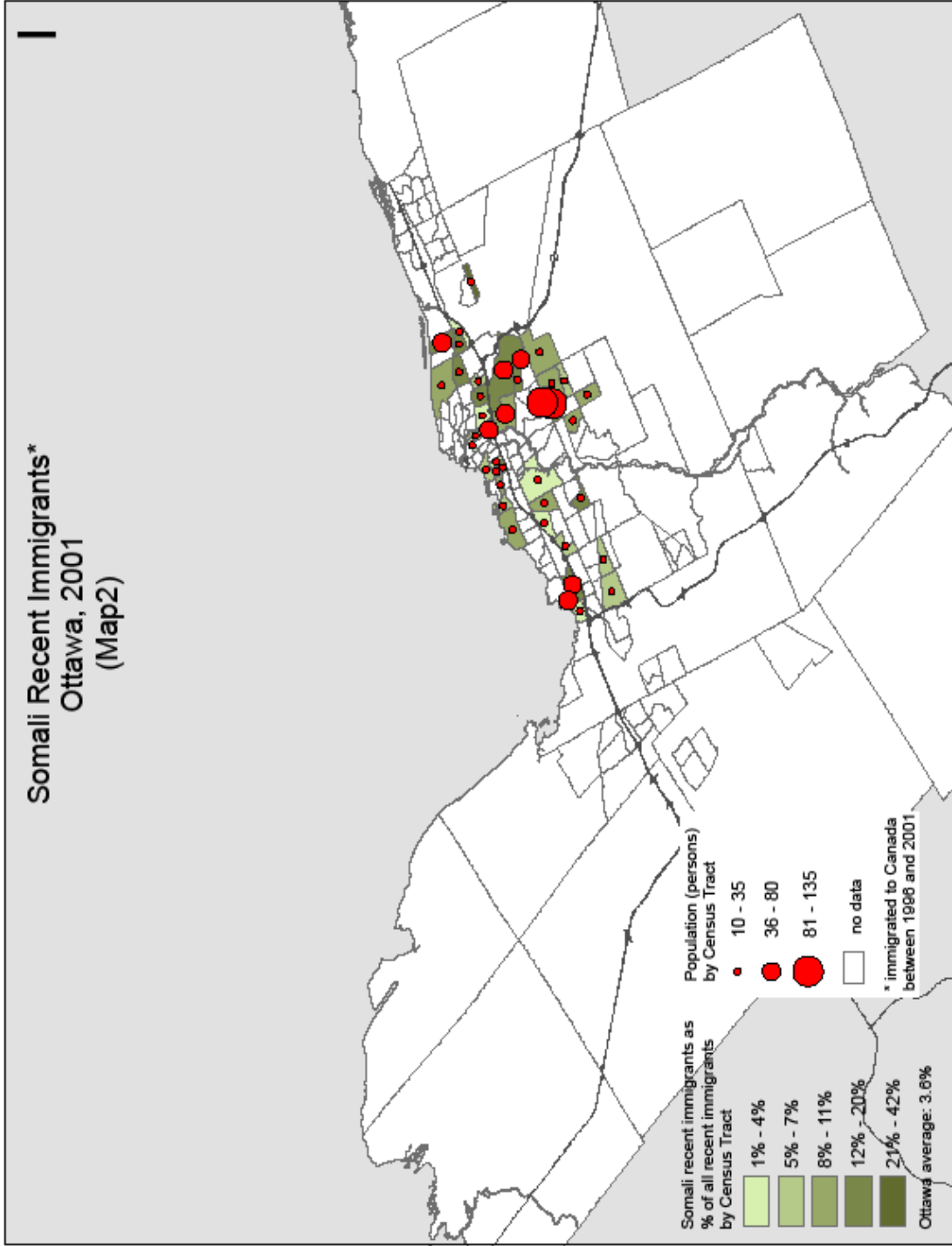
Ottawa average: 3.6%
Population (persons)
by Census Tract



* immigrated to Canada
between 1996 and 2001



Somali Recent Immigrants* Ottawa, 2001 (Map2)



Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census, DMTI Spatial

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Identity and Belonging

- Coming to grips with new social status and race consciousness – discrimination, denigration and degradation
- Focus group participants and key informants identified multiple identities for themselves – some self identified and others imposed.
- Many rejected the identify of “visible minority” as pejorative and irrelevant
- *“The term does not make sense to me. I grew up in a culture where I was the norm, so I have my identity intact, and I don’t think the label describes me; therefore I disregard it when I hear it. I am however worried for my children. Because they are growing up in this society, I am afraid they will internalize the negativity that comes with this term and that it will limit them somehow.” (Male focus group participant)*
- Connections among the Diaspora are strong

Identity and Belonging: Youth

- Criminalization of young and adult men
 - Over-representation at the Innes Jail
- Fear among the youth and parents for Somali boys
- Impact of some family members on others.
 - Whole family loses housing in public housing
- *There are theories that say it is quite important for racialized youth and children to know of their background – just so they can have a sense of belonging somewhere – because they won't see themselves reflected in the school curriculum, or in other areas of the society. But when young people identify with their parents homeland more than where they were born, this shows that they don't feel accepted in their present country (Canada). In other words it is not that young Somalis don't want to be Canadian but they often feel that they are not accepted as Canadians. (Female key informant interviewee)*
- *In our culture being together was a good thing but it is not positive in this culture. ... Black kids walking together is something suspicious. (Male key informant interviewee)*

Civic Participation: Civic Activity

- Volunteering
 - A primary engagement of Somalis in the community is through religious activities
 - Women have a strong role in informal volunteerism and mutual aid, such as babysitting for each other, helping out when needed, and fundraising for special occasions.
 - Formal volunteering was not seen to be as common, but was occurring.
- Somali participation in schools and school councils is low and some mothers found it difficult to attend events in the evening, as they did not have babysitters and language is a barrier for some women.
- There may also be cultural barriers because in Canada there is an emphasis on individual achievement in schools whereas in Somali culture there is more of an emphasis on working together and the teacher has the central place in education.
- Somali citizens are getting more sophisticated in their community involvement, expecting more from their leaders and taking a more active part.
- *I think if Somalis get jobs, if they get opportunities then they will see themselves as Canadians but if they stay marginalized from the society then they won't see themselves as citizens. (Male key informant)*

Civic participation - Electoral involvement

- Somalis have been slow to get involved in politics.
- Recently, Somali participation in the political process has increased, both in terms of general involvement (e.g. youth have been joining political parties) and in terms of voting.
- The voter turnout last year was significantly higher and candidates now actively seek out the Somali community and some organizations print out and circulate the platforms of each candidate.
- Francophone Somalis are more active, which francophone community leaders attributed to a greater interaction with French colonizers and thus familiarity with European systems.
- Some feel it is too early to expect Somalis to run for office, saying the next generation will step up but some organizations have started a program to encourage Somalis to run for public office.
- In the last municipal election, three ran for City Council and six ran for the School Board. None were elected, but one was later appointed to fill a vacancy left by a school trustee who stepped down.
- Provincial political parties have also noticed and have approached the group seeking candidates.

Civic participation - Barriers

- Barriers to Involvement in the political process:
 - a focus on survival and labour market issues.
 - delays in the naturalization process, different experience of political process
 - Lack of understanding of the system
 - Lack of role models within the political process – community members don't "see themselves" in the system
 - Lack of mentors or champions to "open doors" to civic engagement
 - Lack of economic resources to run for office
 - Fear of being excluded; Disengagement and distrust based on experience of exclusion
 - Formal volunteering was not seen to be as common, but was occurring

Civic participation: Police and Conflict with the Law

- The attitude of police was not seen as universally helpful and many in the Somali community have concerns especially with the disproportionate number of Somali youth in jail.
- People believe that there are three reasons for this:
 - Racial profiling: It is perceived that police unfairly target Somali and black youth, harassed those who were simply “hanging out”, or used force unnecessarily
 - Lack of programs for Somali youth: Lack of programs and activities for young people, and insufficient support and openness to integrate Somalis were major contributing factors in the crime rate among young men
 - Poor opportunities for economic advancement: Young men may drop out of school when they see that a high level of educational attainment has not led to good jobs for their parents. In frustration, they turn to other activities, ones that are often self-destructive and even illegal
- Some progress has been made recently in working with the police, and the hiring of three Somali officers has been very positive, as well as other activities by the police to reach out to the community.

Civic participation: Taking a leadership role

- The Somali community pursued a legal action and won.
 - Children of Somali refugees were initially denied access to student loans because they and their parents did not yet have landed immigrant status or Canadian citizenship.
 - The delays in processing meant that many Somalis had to wait years to obtain legal status. As a result of legal action, active lobbying and advocacy with key politician the government granted Somali youth the right to apply for student loans
- In 1993, the federal government enacted legislation that would require refugees (including Somali refugees) to have identity documents. That was a problem because of the many did not have official papers because of their escape from Somalia.
 - Somalis worked with legal aid organizations across Canada to bring a legal case that persuaded the government to amend this provision to allow an affidavit from someone who knows the refugee, instead of formal identification papers.

Civic participation: Taking a leadership role, Cont'd

- In 1997, the Canadian government introduced a new immigration class: “The Undocumented Refugee Class” - which allowed Somalis and Afghanistan Convention Refugees to be granted permanent residence in Canada only five years after their refugee determination, if they meet certain conditions.
- In 2001 Somali refugee activists filed a lawsuit, which resulted in a federal court-brokered agreement that allowed Somali convention refugees to be granted permanent residence if they obtain sworn affidavits from people who could confirm their identity.

Civic participation: Taking a leadership role

Somalis Organize themselves

- Somalis started to organize themselves and established a Somali youth organization, an Islamic school and a French Islamic school.
 - Homework clubs, outreach programs, and advocacy campaigns were among the activities of these early groups.
- In the early 1990's, a large number of the different Somali organizations amalgamated and the Somali Centre for Youth, Women and Community Development was established.
- Other organizations included the Somali Family Services of Ottawa, the Somali Basketball League which is sponsored by Somali businesses in the city and student associations at the university and high schools levels.
- There were also many businesses created including clothing, furniture stores, restaurants, and others.
- Key partnership has been critical:
 - Funders were initially reluctant to support Somali organizations, concerned that immigrant organizations were not sufficiently familiar with Canadian systems to be given direct control over the funds.
 - Somali Family Services created a partnership with Jewish Family Services, who agreed to be responsible for administering the funds.

The community is building a positive future

- Despite all the trials and tribulations Somalis have encountered, past and present, in Ottawa, a positive outlook does prevail:
 - An insatiable degree of pride in self and community exists among Somalis
 - Somali adults are future-oriented—much importance is placed on goals of success for children and youth in their community
 - Better futures: Hard work, resource pooling, and community asset building
 - From mentees to mentors
 - Towards a better financial security: Community approaches to asset building; home-ownership: the start of a new trend; self-sufficiency through entrepreneurship
- *So you can see all the work the Somali community is doing without the help of any government. The community is now moving forward, we are getting used to the idea that we are her to stay and that we need to work hard to make Canada a home and to put in place institutions that will support the community. After fifteen years, people have finally unpacked their bags, .. and are now buying homes and making permanent plans in Canada and want a future in Canada. (Somali male – 1 pg 4)*

Increasing Inclusion of Somali 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 within the Somali community, as well as individuals and organizations active on increasing inclusion.

Enhance supports for individuals and families to increase access to resources and opportunities

- Address the high rates of poverty
 - Better supports for basic needs.
 - Poverty reduction strategies, with particular emphasis on family policies, seniors incomes, labour market engagement, supports to the working poor and viable self-employment
- Develop a youth strategy to enhance opportunities for Somali youth – urgent need for programs for youth such as recreation activities, weekend programs, outreach and assistance in finding jobs. Would include better engagement with schools, community dialogue with the police, more focused efforts to find employment for youth
- Better access to community programs and services, at a neighbourhood level in low income neighbourhoods and with respect to cultural competency
- Increase availability of culturally competent mental health supports, particularly in relation to high stress and to post traumatic stress disorder
- Increase supports for seniors around activities of daily living and in relation to meaningful engagement

Build inclusive environments (Systemic Change)

Labour market exclusion

More and more the labour market is going to be dominated by immigrants, so if they are not employed with all their talents then all of that will be wasted, so it is imperative especially for the City of Ottawa to take this challenge. The leadership has to come from the City. They have to do something to keep this talent in the City. I think the other big player is the private sector. I think the private sector especially the banks have to become more risk takers on immigrant people. There is a tremendous resource in immigrant communities and they have great connections to other countries, so the private sector has to really look at the potential of communities. (Female key informant interviewee)

Build inclusive environments (Systemic Change), Cont'd

- Removal of barriers in the labour market including
 - Recognition of foreign acquired credentials and experience
 - Toronto model (implement a system for assessing and recognizing foreign credentials (education, work experience, professional certifications, etc.)
 - Strategy to address racism and Islamophobia in the workplace, with a particular emphasis on safety for women
 - Strategies to increase social capital so Somalis have better access to networks which would facilitate obtaining jobs
 - Improved implementation of employment equity in the Federal government and the municipal government, including building on pilot projects to hire within the police and within OC Transpo. Additional affirmative action programs.
 - Strategy to increase hiring of Somalis and other minorities in the non-profit sector
- Supports for creation of businesses including greater access to credit, greater access to capital, change in social assistance policies which mitigate against very low income residents accessing community based asset building strategies / access to capital. Work with the community to enhance opportunities to utilize the Diaspora to enhance business development.

The pressing issue now is employment. ... Our focus now is to make sure that qualified people get jobs in the different sectors of society. Our responsibility as an organization is to remove barriers to employment and to do this we need to connect with people who can help us get there. (Male key informant interviewee)

Build inclusive environments (Systemic Change)

The school system

- School boards work with community organizations to increase inclusion and address barriers to effective engagement and equitable employment outcomes – starting with clear policies to address school fees

The Justice System

- Continue and enhance collaboration with the police force and justice system to address systemic discrimination (racial profiling) and improve safety

Home Ownership

- Develop strategies to support home ownership by low income residents, including Somalis

Build inclusive environments (Systemic Change), Cont'd

Poverty Reduction

- Policy changes re asset approach to poverty reduction
- *If you look at the women ... how they created systems of saving money and supporting one another. This has given them an alternative to Banks who will not lend them money because they did not have a long credit history. Also, some of them because of their religion did not want the interest. So the positive is that they came up with ways to organize and support each other in collecting money to help their loved ones back in Somalia. In their attempt to support their people strong networks were built. For example, when donations are needed in the schools, many mainstream parents will support the school by organization bake sales and so on but the Somalis will just ask the amount of the money needed and will just go back to their networks and collect the money within a short period of time. Here you can see how a Somali system can be used to benefit their Canadian community in Ottawa. (Female key informant interview)*

Support the capacity of the Somali community infrastructure and create supports for connections with allies

Intergenerational conflict

- Enhance Somali community infrastructure
 - Community interconnections are a significant source of strength
 - Better support for Somali community agencies and for refugee serving agencies
 - Support the establishment of gathering places for Somalis
 - More supports for initiatives to address intergenerational issues

Government

- More Somalis in government and other positions of influence
- More mentors inside government and other institutions opening doors
- Supports for business development, particularly to take advantage of opportunities re import and export based on a strongly connected Diaspora

Support the capacity of the Somali community infrastructure and create supports for connections with allies

Community Organizations

- Public education to identify the contribution of Somali residents, to counter Islamophobia and to address racism.
- Processes of change in community organizations – e.g. place for collective activities not only individual. Community needs to be involved in the designing of programming for the community.

Implications for the Broader Community

- How does demographic structure affect exclusion and inclusion, including rates of poverty?
- What is the extent, nature and impact of racism, Islamophobia and anti-Arab sentiment in Ottawa?
- What are the push and pull factors affecting levels of civic engagement?
- Where are the potential points of meaningful engagement for civic engagement?
- How are different communities affected by different systemic labour market barriers?
- What is the experience of inclusion and exclusion in the school system, and how does that impact on exclusion?
- Do second generation immigrants fare better than first generation? If the experience is different between communities, what accounts for that difference and what can be done about it?
- What's working in the school-to-work and youth-to-adult transition for visible minorities? What's not working?
- How do the circumstances of settlement impact on the inclusion of the community, and for how long are these circumstances significant in the inclusion experiences of the community?