

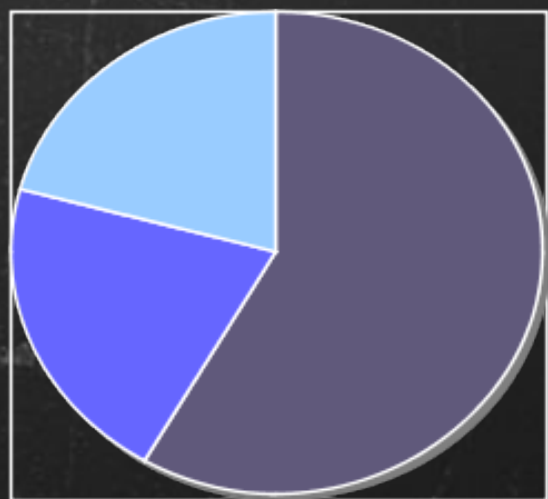
ISRN 2008 Presentation
Vancouver Theme III

Richard Smith, SFU
Paulina Chow-White, USC

Vancouver Theme III Update

- Completed first round of in-depth interviews using original questionnaire
- Transcribed verbatim
- Looking at social inclusion, civic engagement and new forms of governance
- Interested in two key themes:
 - Creative Cities
 - Immigration Integration
- About to begin next round of interviews

Statistics on Interview Pool



■ **Non-Profits**
■ **Government**
■ **Other**

- 25 interviews
- 1,633 total interview minutes
- Sectors:
 - 14 Non-profit
 - 5 Government
 - 5 Other (professional associations, community organizers, charitable foundations)

Global Issues: Immigration & Innovation

- Significant skills shortage (H-1B visa program)
- Competition will only intensify
- Many potential solutions/policy prescriptions:
 - Improvements in advanced education
 - Lifelong Learning
 - Investment in research
 - New forms of governance (i.e. Federal Agency to oversee innovation)
- Clearly need multi-prong approach
- Immigration needs to be included in discussions

How immigration can contribute to innovation: Canadian context

- Demographic trends:
 - Low birthrates
 - Ageing population
- Stabilizes workforce
- Points systems facilitates skills selection
- Supplies highly-skilled & education

How immigration can contribute to innovation cont'd

- Can improve opportunities for:
 - FDI
 - International investment opportunities
- Can accentuate creativity
 - Expertise gained elsewhere introduces new ideas and approaches to the creative process
- Contributes to creative city index
 - Diversity
- Findings on association between creativity and immigration are inconclusive

Brain Waste: Skills Underutilization

- Canada is competitive when it comes to bringing in highly-skilled immigrants
- But we tend to underutilize their skills, which results in “brain waste”
- Estimated cost of brain waste:
 - 1996 estimated \$2.4 billion related to skills underutilization
 - \$3.4 - 5 billion annually in lost earnings due to un/underemployment effects (CBC, 2005)
 - Majority of costs borne by immigrants living in Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal

Enlightened view of “integration”

- Integration brings up potential tensions
- Peter S. Li (2003):
 - Must take into account how Canadian society and its institution perform toward newcomers
 - Access behaviours and attitudes of institutions, communities, individual Canadians
 - Requires policy-makers and researchers to issue report card for Canada as a society

Three major institutional barriers

- Licensing and accreditation
 - Costly and can take years
 - Licensing bodies not open to newcomers
 - “arcane” and “idiosyncratic” (Reitz, 2001)
 - “Accreditation means lack of participation”
 - Employer biases against foreign training and education
- Limits of language training
 - BC exceptional, only goes to level 3
 - Does not meet needs of highly-skilled

Language needs of highly skilled cont'd

- Disconnect between what immigrants are told and “what they find when they arrive”

Suggestions & ideas for policy directions

- One-on-one mentoring program
 - From job search to on the job mentorship is needed
 - Provide practical as well as social skills (i.e. professional networking)
 - Must join-up government, businesses
 - Business needs highly-skilled labour, immigrants want to work, governments, business, and non-profits can bridge the gap

Suggestions & ideas for policy directions cont'd

- Bring ESL/ELSA caps in-line with other provinces
- Provide advanced language training for highly-skilled
- Peer-to-peer networks
- Gender specific support for professional women
- Holistic approach, case-by-case support needed

Conclusion

- Immigration key factor in creating supportive context for innovation
- Opportunities for associative governance
- Must involve variety of stakeholders
 - Businesses, non-profits, municipal, national, provincial governments
 - Immigrant settlement service agencies & neighbourhood houses uniquely positioned to play leading role
- OECD (2008) recommendation

Every OECD nations must make
immigrant integration a priority

“It is socially, politically, ethically and
morally correct, but it is also an act of
sheer economic rationality.” (OECD,
2008)