

appearance of acceptance and opportunity. Sometimes Canada is a draw for immigrants because it is the only Western country which will issue visitor Visas in their country of origin. The claims of lower crime rates and a higher standard of living within Canada are also attractive features. Just as the United Nations has declared, one gentleman in the coalition said, "People chose Canada because they know it's the best country in the world."

After hearing of Canada's friendliness and multiculturalism, immigrants and refugees will often choose to relocate to this country based on the first impression it makes. But, as was expressed by coalition members, 'the first impression is better than the second'. There are still systemic barriers which immigrants and refugees encounter which keep their hopes of meaningful participation in society from becoming reality.

Hamilton-Wentworth was 'chosen' for reasons of education (having both McMaster University and Mohawk College), low unemployment rates, less expensive housing and smaller size (as compared to Toronto,

for instance). The most prevalent reason for moving to Hamilton-Wentworth was that friends and/or family were already residing in the Region, providing a variety of supports for newcomers.

Barriers Faced By Newcomers

Employment

The most burning need among immigrants and refugees is employment. Professionals from other countries are immigrating to Canada, yet are being denied employment because their training and experience are not deemed valid. Employers are telling newcomers they must have "Canadian" experience, which is basically a hidden barrier put in place to keep immigrants out of the workforce. Even when attempting to acquire "Canadian" experience through volunteer work, individuals have been turned down for unpaid labour because they do not have the elusive "Canadian" experience.

Immigrants are told prior to emigrating that there are many jobs in Canada and that Canadian employers hire according to skill. Upon arriving, however, they discover jobs are not as widely available as portrayed

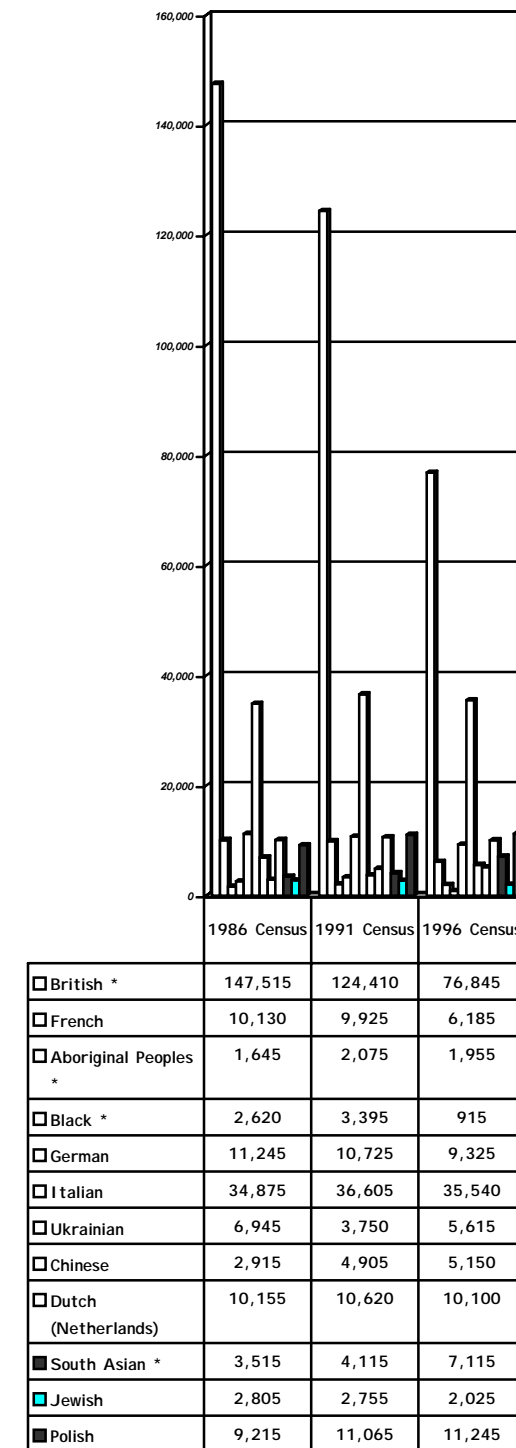
and their credentials are not recognized. Education and experience obtained in other countries are deemed not applicable to the Canadian labour market. Individuals and families are selling everything they own and moving to a new country, but before they can get jobs they must spend thousands of dollars on re-schooling in order to practice their already-learned profession. Some are also told they are overqualified and, thus, are not hired.

Language

Other areas of concern for immigrants and refugees include finding information in their first language, such as brochures directing them to services. English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are available, but have been reduced to three month blocks, which is unlikely to provide the necessary education on a language as complex as English.

Barriers such as language, lack of

Twelve Prominent Ethnic Groups in Hamilton Wentworth 1986, 1991, 1996



people born in Canada who live in Hamilton-Wentworth increased by 12,030 since 1991, while the number of people born outside of Canada and living in the Region increased by 5,250. The number of immigrants from the United Kingdom and other European countries decreased, as did those from the United States, and Central & South America. Immigration from Africa, India and other Asian countries continued to show the small increases evident in previous censuses.

Ethnic Origins

'Ethnic origin' is the ethnic or cultural group (s) to which a person's ancestors belonged.² The definitions of various ethnic groups have changed between censuses, which may result in changing and incomplete numbers. As well, growing numbers of people are identifying with multiple ethnicities, rather than one single ethnic group.

The large decreases of British and French ethnic origins demonstrates a change in traditional immigration patterns. The number of people self-identifying as 'Canadian' increased from 27,775 people in 1991 to 53,405 people in 1996, almost twice as many.

The following is a list of twelve prominent ethnic groups in the last three census years. The 1996 census contains one hundred ethnic origins, more than could be reported here. If more detail is needed, call the Social Planning & Research Council.

SISO has noted that they have seen a recent and notable increase in the number of Czech, Arabic, Russian and Serbo-Croatian clients settling in east Hamilton and Stoney Creek who are accessing services.

These numbers do not sum to the Regional population total because there are many ethnic groups containing smaller numbers of people which are not listed here. **British** includes British, English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh and other British. **French** includes French, Acadian, French Canadian and Quebecois. **Aboriginal Peoples** includes Inuit, Metis and North American Indian. **Black** includes Black and African Black. **South Asian** includes Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Singhalese, Tamil, Bangladeshi, East Indian (not included elsewhere), Pakistani and Sri Lankan. **Multiple Origins** includes persons who report more than one ethnic origin.

Mother Tongue

It is very important that we know what languages people speak upon immigrating to Canada so service providers are aware of possible

language barriers.

In 1996, over 106,000 people spoke in a primary language that was not English. While some may be able to speak some English as well, it is

necessary that resources be as accommodating as possible, providing information in various languages, while people are learning English as a second language.

Mother Tongue	1986 Census	1991 Census	1996 Census
Single responses	404,805	438,025	456,060
English	326,190	348,735	349,460
French	5,175	5,925	6,265
Italian	21,165	20,030	21,505
German	6,530	6,065	6,530
Chinese	2,275	3,570	4,870
Ukrainian	4,090	3,345	3,110
Portuguese	5,105	6,595	7,360
Dutch	3,935	3,810	3,915
Polish	5,555	7,335	9,135
Greek	1,820	1,835	2,280
Spanish	1,075	2,950	4,005
Hungarian	3,055	3,180	3,175
Punjabi	710	1,235	2,505
Tagalog	495	1,010	1,710
Vietnamese	595	1,480	2,175
Arabic	515	1,295	2,575
Aboriginal	5	85	0*
Multiple responses	18,595	13,635	6,495

These numbers do not sum to the Regional population total because there are many mother tongue groups not included in this list which represent smaller numbers.

Many Aboriginal people do not consider themselves 'Canadian', but rather 'First Nations' since they were on this land before it became known as Canada, and do not participate in the census.

More Recent Information

The Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration Canada (CIC) is able to provide more recent information on immigration in Hamilton-Wentworth. However, this information is

quite limited for two reasons. First, CIC does not count the number of refugees because refugees do not have official status. It would be useful to have some idea of how many refugees are in certain areas so that we can better

understand their needs. As of now, only immigrants are counted.

Secondly, the whereabouts of new immigrant Canadians are

only known through the specification of 'primary destination' on their immigration papers. Often, however, newcomers do not stay in their primary destination for a long time. For example, a family may indicate that their primary destination is Toronto. Upon living in Toronto for some time, be it long or short, and having unsuccessfully tried to gain employment and adequate housing, the low unemployment rates and lower rents in Hamilton can be quite an attraction, leading the family to relocate. This is called 'secondary migration'; secondary migration is not counted by CIC. The only statistics they have are based upon the first indicated destination.

The distinction between primary and secondary migration is important. Many primary migrants have friends and/or family in the community they select who take care of them and their needs, reducing the demand on social services. Secondary migrants, on the other hand, often do not know anyone in the community and are left to rely on services and resources in the area.³

In 1998 there were 1,405 immigrants who stated their primary destination to be the Hamilton-Wentworth Region.⁴ Between 1996 and 1998, 5,289 primary migrants were destined for Hamilton-Wentworth. At SISO, they have found in the last two to three years that two-thirds of the people immigrating to Hamilton-Wentworth were secondary migrants. With approximately 3,000 primary migrants, and consequently 6,000 secondary migrants, that amounts to an estimate of 9,000 immigrants in the Region between 1998 and 2000. CIC conducted subsequent research, which showed SISO's numbers to be accurate.⁵

Reasons for Relocation to Canada & Hamilton-Wentworth

In order to better comprehend the experiences of immigrants and refugees, a focus group was arranged with the Community Coalition of Immigrants and Refugees. The members graciously provided much information on the motivations for immigrating and the most prevalent needs of the immigrant and refugee communities.

It was made clear that most people, both refugees and immigrants, do not choose to leave their country of origin, but are forced out. Many people indicated that they had to immigrate for reasons of war or civil unrest. Some people came to Canada because other family members (parents, husbands, and siblings) brought them to this country. Some individuals in the coalition who chose to immigrate did so to acquire post-secondary education.

While many were under coerced choice, it was expressed that even for refugees there is some selection available about to where they could immigrate. There are a number of countries, which have policies to accept refugees. However, the choice is often quite limited, and the countries open to refugees are often very far and very difficult, as well as some being hostile toward immigrants.

Canada's reputation in the international circles is excellent, with a well- con-

