

Urban Migration in, and to, Ottawa: A Better Knowledge Base for Better Public Policy

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The project has four components

- A statistical analysis of the migration of women and men to the Ottawa-Gatineau region and within the City of Ottawa,
- An examination of relevant information collected as part of the Panel Study on Homelessness in Ottawa,
- Qualitative interviews and
- The formulation of public policy recommendations and the mobilizing of support for these recommendations within the City of Ottawa

Qualitative Interviews

- The purpose of the study is to examine the mobility process of Aboriginal and foreign born women and men from two perspectives:
 - the initial move to Ottawa and
 - the subsequent patterns of movement within Ottawa

in order to examine the role played by public services, public policies and community-based services and groups in the mobility processes.

Conti...

- The main objective of the research is to build a better understanding of the dynamics of migration to the Ottawa-Gatineau region and within the city of Ottawa in order to make recommendations for better public policy and to work for their implementation in the city of Ottawa

Methods of the Study

- The study is exploratory and used qualitative methodology
- The study used non probability sampling techniques – snowball sampling methods

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- A total of 37 women and men of Aboriginal, Chinese and Somali origins participated in the study.
- The foreign-born participants of Somali and Chinese origins were chosen because they represent the largest recent immigrant communities in Ottawa

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- Data were collected using an in-depth interview method.
- The interview consisted of 35 open ended and closed questions.
- Analysis of the data was done by factoring the responses into the following four major themes
 - The reasons for internal migration. Their expectations.
 - The Past, Present, and the Future of their movement.
 - The use of public services and their levels of satisfaction and
 - The role of cultural groups in their family and community lives

Findings of the study:

1. Reasons for internal migration

- Both the Somali and Chinese origin respondents gave the following major reasons for moving to Ottawa
 - Better employment opportunities
 - “Better quality of life” in the city
 - More active community life and
 - Better education

Reasons for internal migration

- Aboriginal women and men moved to Ottawa for various reasons. The main reasons, however, are:
 - “ Safety”
 - “Social problems” & “homelessness” in the place of origin and
 - Looking for better services such as medical facilities.

Reasons for internal migration, and their expectations

- Almost all the respondents expected to get:
 - a job
 - education
 - better social services
 - resources for their children & themselves and
 - a “ quiet ” , “ clean ” , “safe ” & “beautiful” city

Although some of their expectations were realized, they still have problems getting jobs, and accessing health services, in particular in getting a family doctor

2. The Past, Present, and the Future of their movement

- Prior to moving to Ottawa, many of the Somali & Chinese origin participants had lived in only one other Canadian city and for many of them it was Toronto.
- Almost all Aboriginal participants had lived in at least two different cities in Canada. With the exception of some the Inuit women and man who came from Nunavut, the rest of the Aboriginal participants came from different provinces.

The Past, Present, and the Future of their movement

- Ottawa is the city most liked for many of the Aboriginal, Somali & Chinese origin participants. They provided reasons such as:
 - “ the quality of life”, “ quiet, calm, safe and beautiful city”
- Many of them have the intention to stay in Ottawa. However, some Chinese origin women and men indicated that their intention to stay in Ottawa is contingent on the availability of jobs.
- Three Inuit women, four First Nation men and a woman said “ we don’t know . We are here for medical services”.

The Past, Present, and the Future of their movement

- Many of the Chinese and Somali origin participants have moved within Ottawa at least once for reasons such as:
 - “affordability of housing”, “proximity to children’s school & social services”, “buying houses” & “moving from shelter to social housing”.
- Almost all Aboriginal women and men have moved within Ottawa at least twice. The main reasons include:
 - “Safety”, “financial problems”, “drinking problems” & “proximity to health services & drop-in centers”.

The Past, Present, and the Future of their movement

- Most of the Chinese origin women and men, & some of the Somali origin women and men indicated that they have no intention of moving to a new neighbourhood for reasons such as:
 - affordability of housing
 - proximity to children's school & workplace and
 - the good quality of their present neighbourhood

The Past, Present, and the Future of their movement

- More than half of the Somali origin women & some of the men & two Chinese origin women have intention of moving to a new neighbourhood. The reasons include:
 - buying a house
 - renting a private house and
 - poor quality of their present neighbourhood
- Some Aboriginal origin women and men have intention to move for reasons such as:
 - “to be closer to people that they know”
 - “to be closer to town for jobs and city life style” &
 - to a “less expensive city”

The Past, Present, and the Future of their movement

- Respondents gave various reasons for other people moving within Ottawa.
 - The single most important reason, according to the Somali women, was . “ Safety of neighbourhood”.
 - For the Chinese women and men, “ proximity to children’s school”; and
 - For the Aboriginal women and men, “ housing affordability”.

The Past, Present, and the Future of their movement

- Many of the respondents mentioned that living in Ottawa has brought for the most part positive changes in their own, their family and community lives.
 - For the Somali origin women & men the positive changes include: “ opportunities to learn”, “ being involved in different activities” & “ getting support for their school age children”,
 - For the Chinese origin women and men the changes include: “ availability and accessibility of different recreational activities” & “ opportunities to learn”
 - For the Aboriginal origin women and men the changes include: “ feeling healthier, feeling good & feeling comfortable”, “ availability of services”, “ having a lot of friends and family” & “ the appreciation and respect for aboriginal culture”.

The Past, Present, and the Future of their movement

- As for the challenges of living in Ottawa, the Somali and Chinese origin women and men mentioned language barriers in particular the requirement of French language in getting jobs, the instability of jobs and worries about their partners getting jobs
- Some aboriginal women and men mentioned challenges such as: “ feelings of not being free anymore”, “ losing interest in doing things” & “ feelings of resentment”.

3. The use of Public services and their levels of satisfaction

- After arriving in Ottawa, all the respondents received support form:
 - agencies
 - community health centers, and
 - social networks

The Chinese origin women and men used the internet to find information about the available services & resources both before and after their arrival.

- They learned about services from the above sources. As well from the internet, they yellow page, by word of mouth, referrals and walking by.

The use of Public services and their levels of satisfaction

- All participants have accessed:
 - educational, employment, health and housing services
- Many of the respondents were satisfied with the services they accessed. However, some expressed dissatisfaction

4. The role of Culture in their life, family life & community life

- All the respondents mentioned that culture has positive roles such as
 - Socializing with people of the same background, supporting each other, sharing information, communicating in their own languages and transmitting their culture to their children
- All the Chinese origin women and men and a Somali origin woman indicated that culture has negative roles.

The role of Culture in their life, family life & community life

- As for the negative roles of culture, the Chinese origin respondents mentioned:
 - “ looking different and being treated by other people differently”
 - “ a tendency to live in one area which is not convenient to learn other languages”
 - “ being shy and not open ”
 - “ a very strong culture which makes integration into other cultures difficult ”
- For the Somali origin woman, the negative role of culture is:
 - “ the conflict between reserving our culture and integrating into the mainstream ”

Conclusions

- As illustrated by the results of the study, many interconnected factors are instrumental in inducing and shaping migration
- In the decision to migrate, quantitative factors such as income, family size etc and qualitative factors such as social networks, safety and quality of life etc. have an important role to play.
- For any given individual, however, the decision to migrate is conditioned by her/his particular economic, family and social circumstances, and her/his perception of these realities, and expected outcomes from migrating.

Conclusions

- Because the causes of migration are diverse, one embracing solution is impossible to suggest. However, cutting across the migration decisions of many of the respondents is the motivation for socio-economic betterment. Therefore:
 - Public policies that expand productive employment opportunities could contribute significantly to improving the process of migration.
 - In addition, improvements in public services would also bring about more positive results of the migration dynamics



Thank you