

Changing Faces – Profile of Oakville Newcomers

January 2010



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1. Introduction

Canada is a country of immigrants. One in five (20%) residents was born outside Canada. The proportion of immigrants varies in communities across the nation. In Halton Region, the Town of Oakville has the highest (30%) proportion of immigrants among the four local municipalities.

According to the latest Canadian Census (2006), over 6,800 foreign born individuals have settled in the Town of Oakville between 2001 and 2006. As defined by Statistics Canada, they are the recent immigrants or newcomers. However, some of them might have lived in another municipality in Ontario or another province prior to moving to Oakville.

Moving to a new country always presents challenges especially for those immigrants who speak a different language and come from a different cultural background. In order to facilitate their transition and settlement in Canada, various levels of government have put newcomer programs in place. Some of the programs are delivered by nonprofit organizations on behalf of the government. At the same time, many nonprofit social agencies also provide a variety of services to newcomers in their communities.

Given the changing face of the newcomer population in Oakville, the United Way of Oakville engaged Community Development Halton to develop a report on newcomers to order to better understand their needs and their implications for social services. For the purpose of this study, the terms of recent immigrants and newcomers are used interchangeably.

This report will provide background documentation that will allow agencies to respond to and embrace the growing diversity in Oakville. The purpose of this work is to review and document the emerging demographics of Oakville's newcomer population; to locate and map clusters (neighbourhoods) of newcomers within the Town of Oakville and to conduct a community roundtable or forum to discuss the socio-economic profiles of newcomers and the implications for social services. This study will also facilitate the development of inclusive policies, practices and programs through the system of social agencies.

1.1 Data sources

To support this study, data was used from Statistics Canada's 2006 Census. The 2006 Census is not only the most detailed and reliable source of socio-demographic characteristics of the recent immigrants or newcomers, it also allows comparison to be made across time periods.

The data on recent immigrants came from a special Target Group Profile (TGP) tabulation. However, the content of the TGP pertains only to individuals; data on recent immigrant family, household or dwelling are not available.

An on-line survey conducted by the United Way of Oakville to provide some preliminary information on the types of service being delivered by organizations providing services to newcomers. The results of this survey are contained in Appendix 1.

1.2 Geographic units

Census data are available at different level of geographies. For example, Dissemination Area (DA) covers an area with an average of 500 persons. Census Tract (CT) is a relatively permanent area with a population range of 2,500 to 8,000 and the greatest possible social and economic homogeneity. A Census Tract includes one or more Dissemination Areas. In the Town of Oakville, there are 35 Census Tracts and 258 Dissemination Areas.

In this study, planning districts (PD) were chosen as the level of geography for the presentation and display of the socio-demographic data. They are groupings of Census Tracts and Dissemination Areas. Planning districts are commonly used for planning purposes. In the Town of Oakville, they are also referred to as communities. As shown in Map 1, there are 24 Planning Districts designated for residential, industrial and employment lands uses.

Map 1. Planning District, Town of Oakville, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, Town of Oakville

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2. Geographic Distribution

In 2006, there were over 6,800 recent immigrants living in the Town of Oakville representing 4.1% of the total population. This proportion is above the national average of 3.5% and slightly below the provincial average of 4.8%.

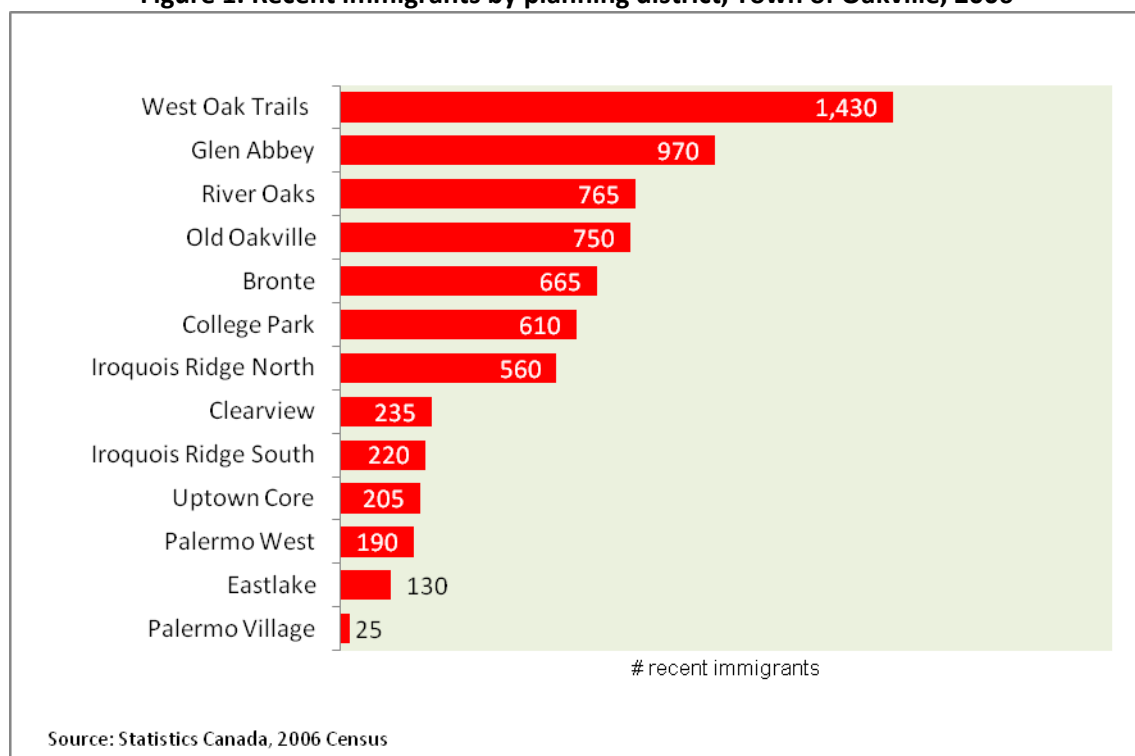
As shown in Map 2, recent immigrants are not uniformly distributed among the planning districts. For example, West Oak Trails has the highest number of recent immigrants and it has over one-fifth (21%) of Oakville's recent immigrant population.

Each one of the planning districts (Glen Abbey, River Oaks, Old Oakville and Bronte) accounts for 10% of the total recent immigrants (Figure 1). On the other hand, Eastlake has the lowest number and percentage of total recent immigrants.

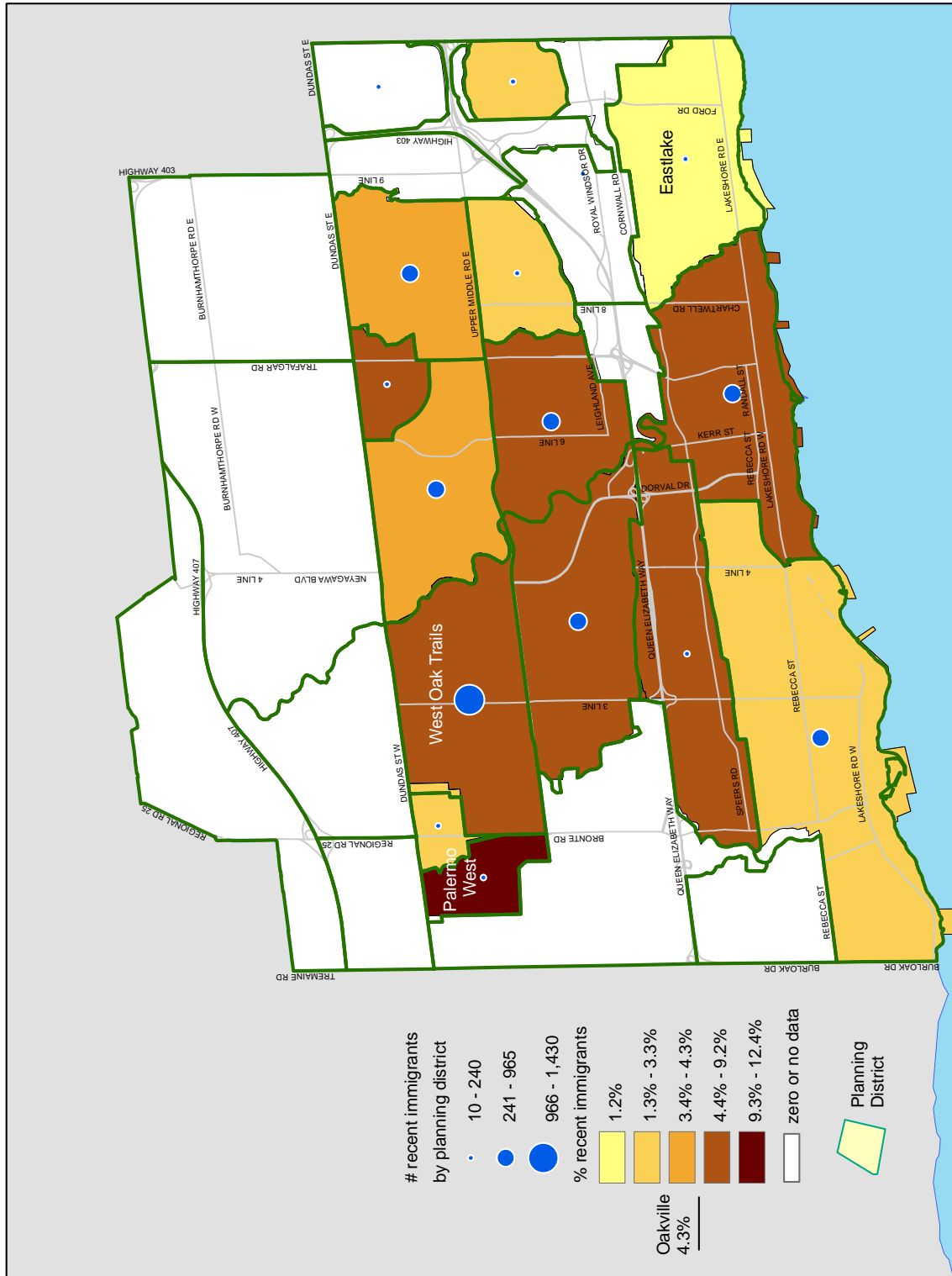
Within each planning district, the proportions of recent immigrants also vary. Although Palermo West has less than 200 recent immigrants, due to its small population base, it has the highest percentage of recent immigrants; over one in ten of the residents are a recent immigrant.

On the other hand, West Oak Trails with a population of over 22,000, the number recent immigrant represents about 6% of the total population.

Figure 1. Recent immigrants by planning district, Town of Oakville, 2006



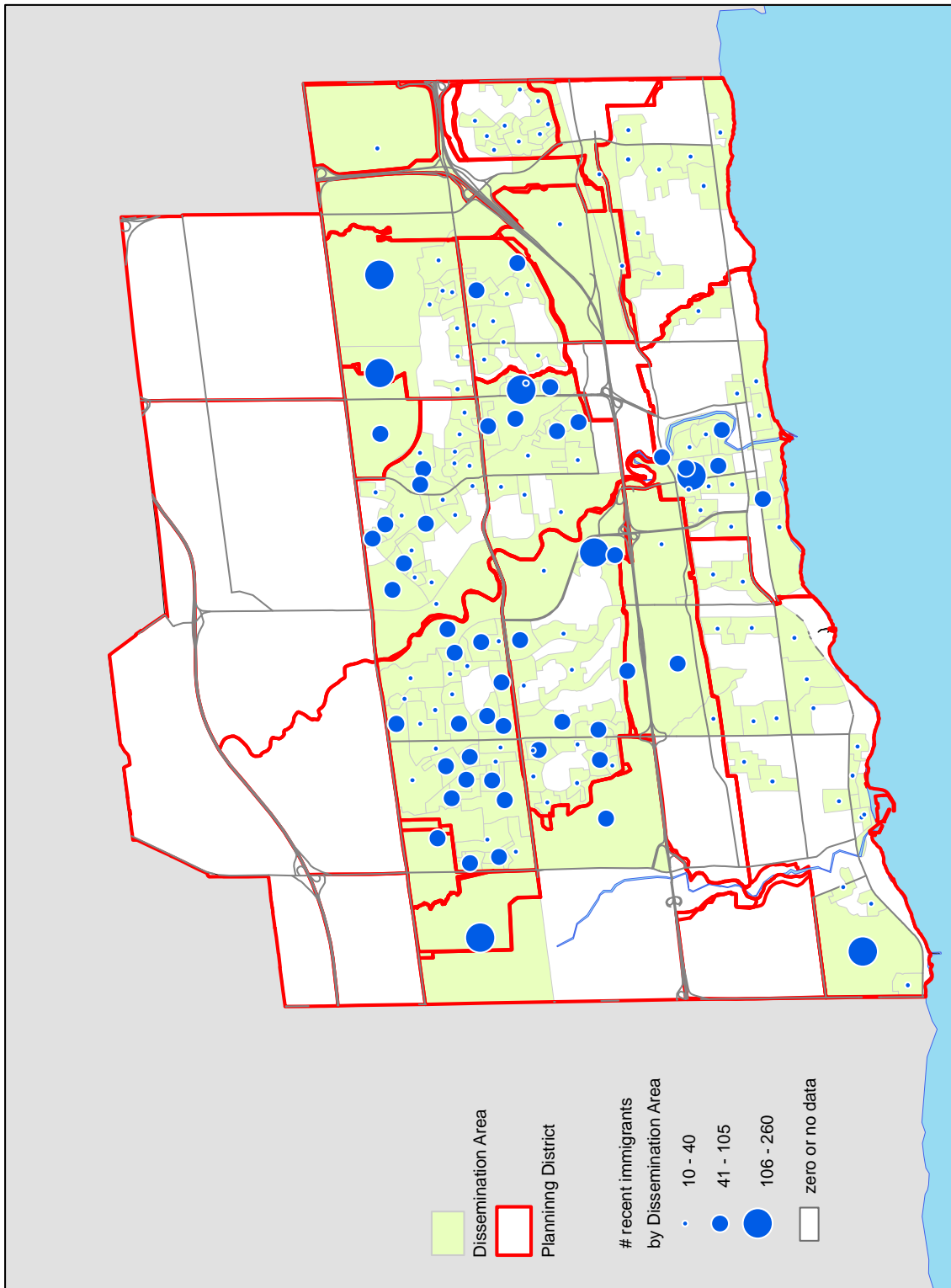
Map 2. Recent immigrants by planning district, Town of Oakville, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, Town of Oakville © 2009 Community Development Halton, all rights reserved

Map 3 shows a more detailed geographic distribution pattern of the recent immigrants by dissemination area. At this level of geography, clusters of recent immigrants are apparent within a number of the planning districts. In Old Oakville, there is a concentration of recent immigrants in an area east of Kerr Street and north of Rebecca Street. In West Oak Trails, recent immigrant population is more widely distributed throughout the planning district. In Bronte, the majority of its recent immigrant is located towards the west end of the planning district.

Map 3. Recent immigrants by dissemination area, Town of Oakville, 2006



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Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

3. Place of Birth

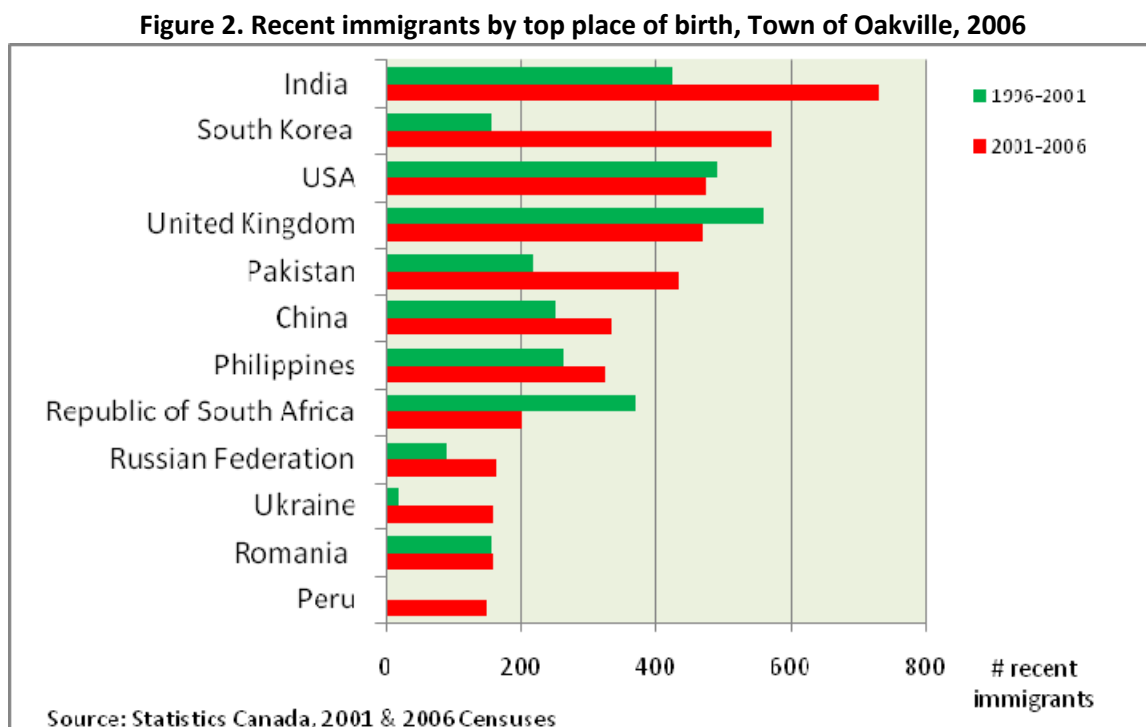
Since the 1970s, the main source of immigrants to Canada has shifted from Europe to non-European countries. In 1971, about 60% of recent immigrants (1966-1971) were from European countries; in 2006, only 16% originated from those countries.

However, between 1996 and 2001, the United Kingdom still remained as the top country of origin of the recent immigrants to Oakville. It accounted for 11% of its recent immigrants. Between 2001 and 2006, it was overtaken by India, South Korea and marginally the United States (Figure 2). The proportion of recent immigrants from the United Kingdom has dropped to less than 7%.

On the other hand, India was the top country of birth for recent immigrants to Oakville. The number of recent immigrants from India has increased by over 70%. The proportion of recent immigrant rose from 8% (1996-2001) to 11% (2001-2006) – the same dominance as the recent immigrants from the United Kingdom in 2001.

Although the total number of recent immigrants from South Korea is less than those from India, it has increased by over 250% and represents about 8% of the recent immigrant population.

Recent immigrants from the other three Asian countries (Pakistan, China, and Philippines) have also made significant gains.



4. Age Distribution

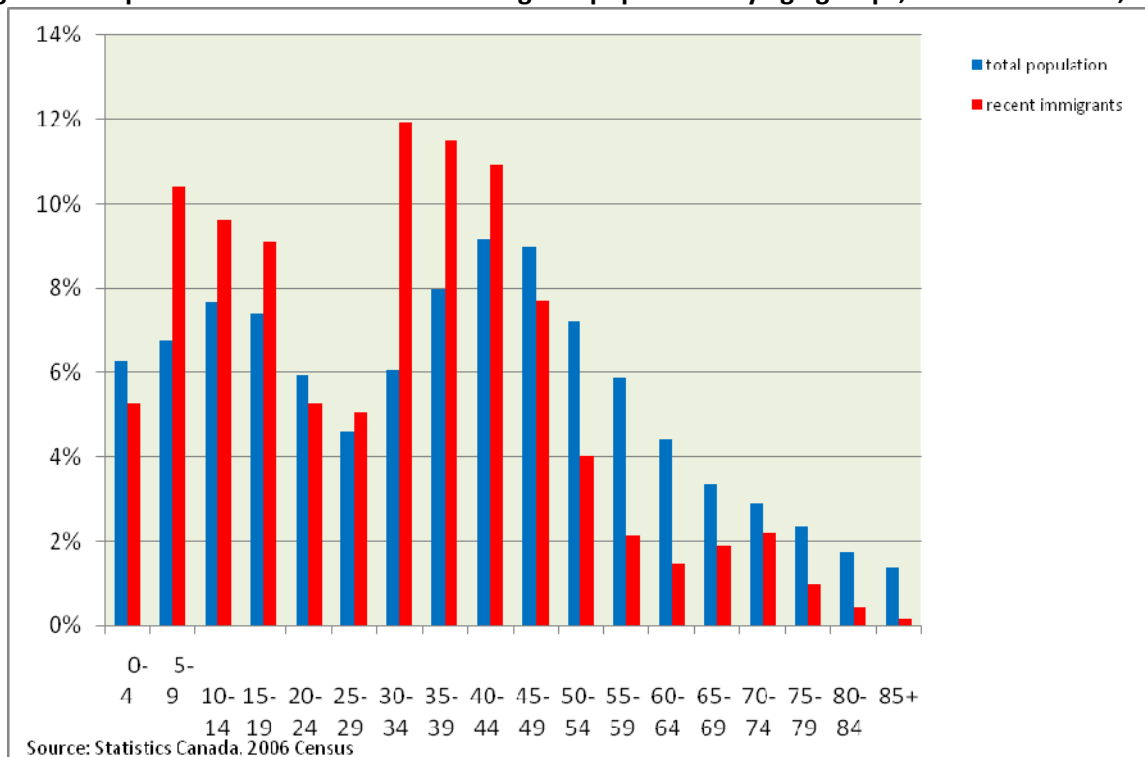
The recent immigrant population is younger than the total population. For example, as shown in Figure 3, over two-thirds (68%) of the recent immigrants are below the age of 40 compared to over half (52%) of the total population.

With the exception of the 0-4 age group, the recent immigrant population has a higher percentage in the age groups between 5 and 19.

Also, the proportion of recent immigrant in the age groups between 30 and 44 is also higher than the total population. In fact, the percentage of recent immigrant in the 30-34 age group is double that of the total population.

For all age groups over 45, the recent immigrant population has a lower proportion than the total population. For example, less than 6% of the recent immigrants are seniors compared to 12% of the total population.

Figure 3. Proportion of total and recent immigrant population by age groups, Town of Oakville, 2006



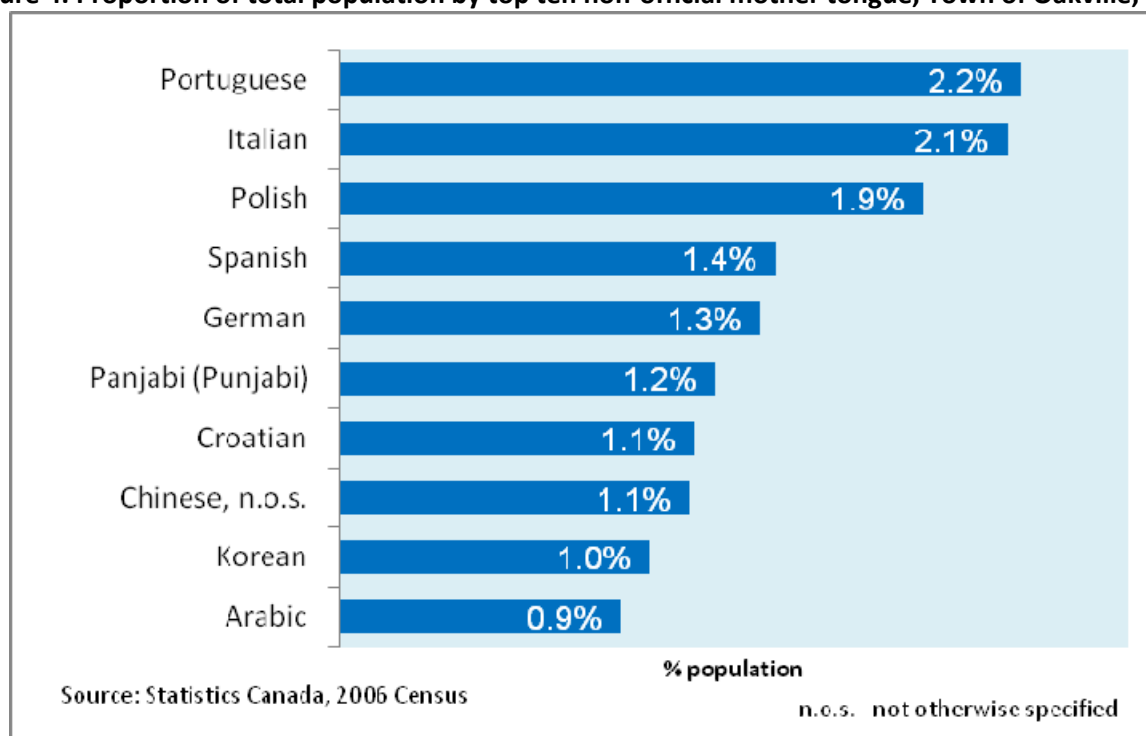
5. Mother Tongue

Mother tongue is the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the individual. People whose mother tongue is neither English nor French are allophones.

In 2006, there were more than 60 non-English or French mother tongues spoken in the Town of Oakville. There are over 39,000 allophones in Oakville representing about one-quarter (24%) of the total population.

Figure 4 shows the top ten non-official mother tongues spoken by the general population. Portuguese and Italian tie for the top spot of non-official mother tongue followed closely by Polish, Spanish, German and Panjabi.

Figure 4. Proportion of total population by top ten non-official mother tongue, Town of Oakville, 2006



Following the shift of the main source of immigrants to non-European countries, different mother tongues are spoken by the recent immigrant population. Over 70% of the recent immigrants are allophones.

As shown in Figure 5, although five of the top ten mother tongues (Portuguese, Chinese, Spanish, Panjabi and Arabic) spoken by the allophone population are still spoken by the recent immigrants, their dominances have changed.

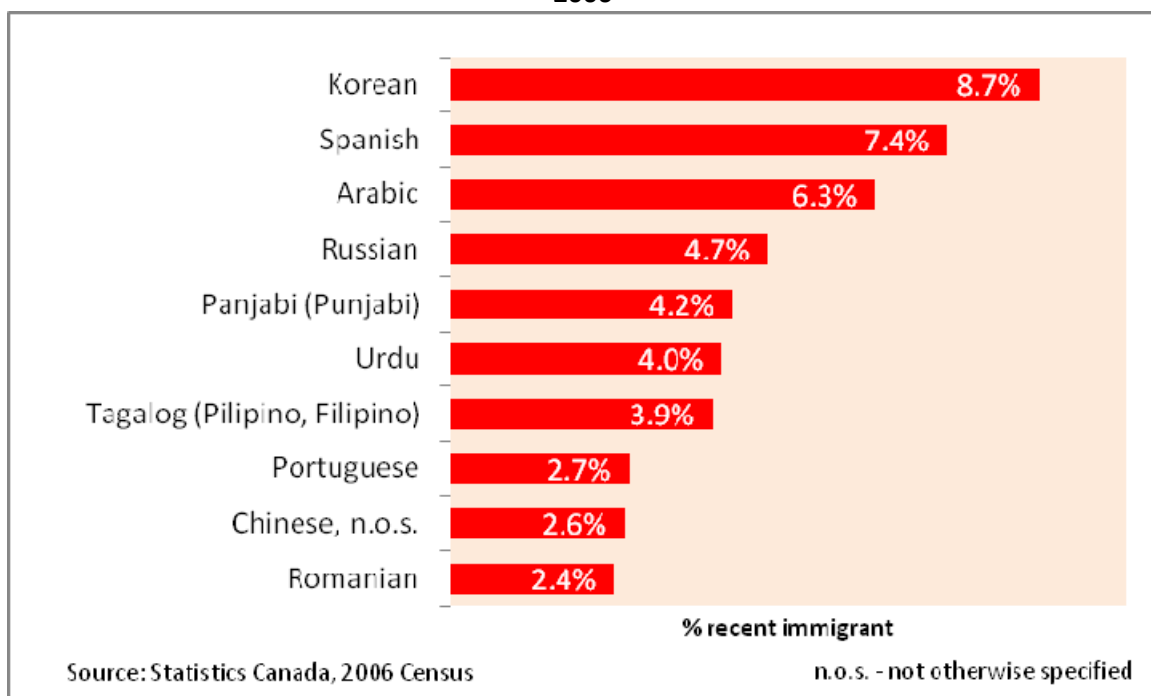
Korean has become the top non-official mother tongue for the recent immigrants.

Although India is the top source country for recent immigrants to Oakville, unlike many countries, it has many mother tongues (e.g. Panjabi, Urdu, Hindi and Gujarati). Those who speak Panjabi and Urdu represent over 8% of the recent immigrants.

On the other hand, Spanish which is the second non-official mother tongue spoken by recent immigrants in Oakville is also spoken by citizens of many countries in Central and South America as well as the Caribbean.

Similarly, Arabic is spoken by citizens from many countries in the Middle East, Africa and West Central Asia.

Figure 5. Proportion of recent immigrants by top ten non-official mother tongue, Town of Oakville, 2006



6. Home Language

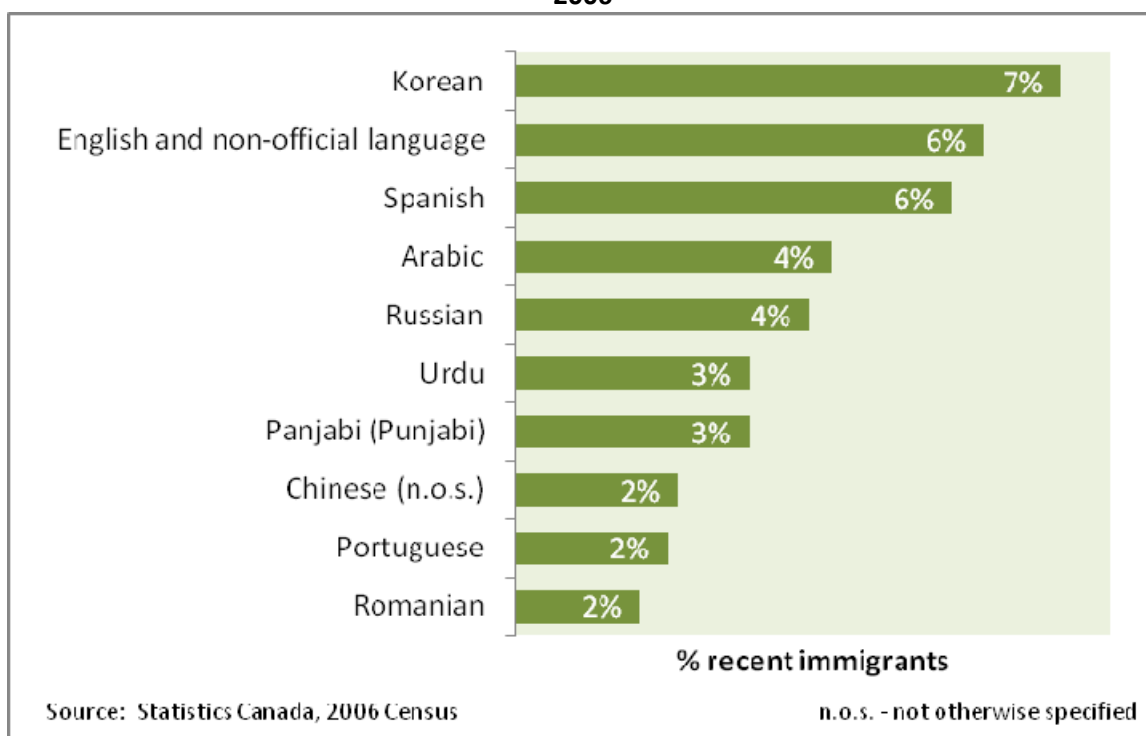
Home language refers to the language spoken most often or on a regular basis at home.

The majority (86%) of the Oakville residents speak English at home, with 11% speaking a non-official language and 2% speaking both English and a non-official language.

Among the recent immigrants, about half speak a non-official language at home, 40% speak English and about 7% speak both English and a non-official language.

As shown in Figure 6, the proportion of non-official language spoken at home are very similar to those of non-official mother tongues. Korean is the top non-official home language spoken by 7% of the recent immigrants.

Figure 6. Proportion of recent immigrants by top ten non-official home language, Town of Oakville, 2006



7. Knowledge of Official Languages

Knowledge of official languages refers to the ability to conduct a conversation in English only, in French only, in both English and French, or in neither of the official languages. It is important to note that language knowledge focuses on conversation and speaking. There is no indication to show one's ability to read or write in that language.

Majority (88%) of the recent immigrants reported having knowledge of the English language (not necessary read or write). About 5% can conduct a conversation in both English and French. About 6% were not able to carry on a conversation in neither English nor French.

8. Visible Minority

In 2006, there were more than 5 million individuals who belonged to a visible minority group in Canada, which accounted for 16% of the total population. Visible minority as defined in the Employment Equity Act are "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour".

The proportion (18%) of visible minority population in Oakville is higher than the national average. It is important to note that about one-third (33%) of the visible minority population living in Oakville was born in Canada.

The shift of the major source of immigrants to non-European countries has resulted in significant increase of the visible minority recent immigrants. Over half (61%) of the recent immigrants are visible minority.

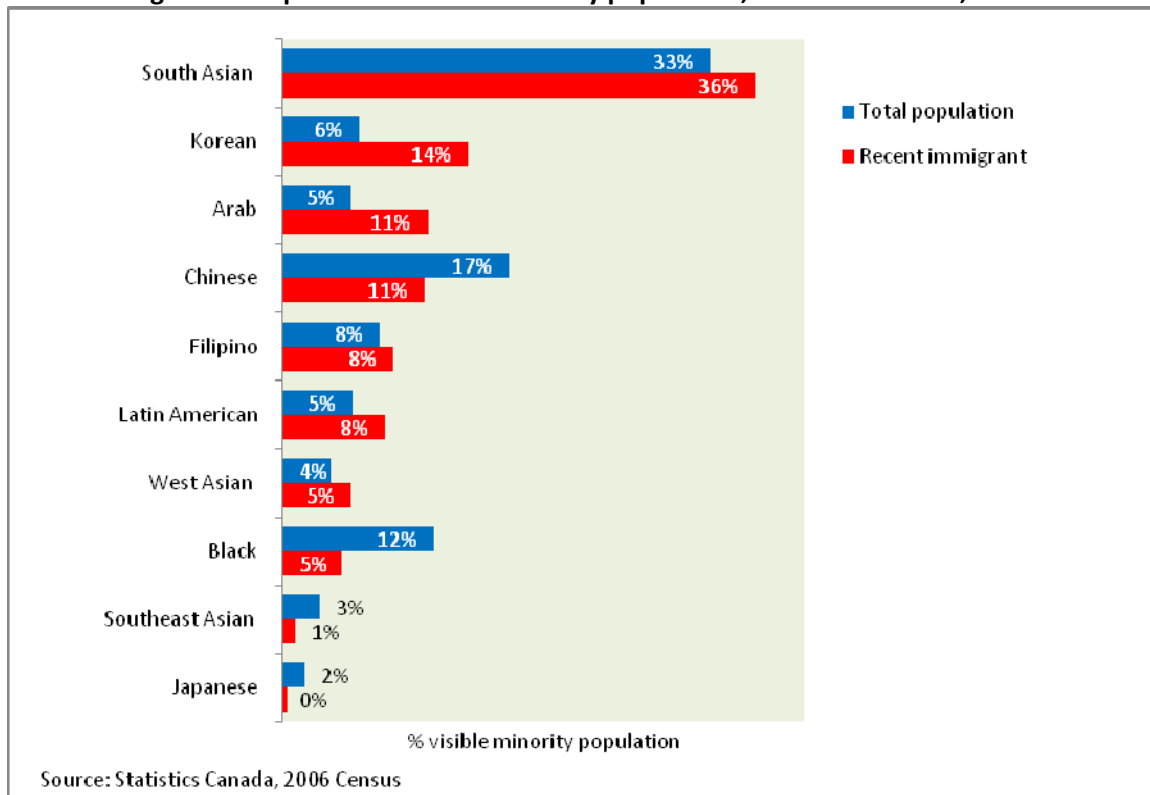
In terms of percentage distribution among the various visible minority groups, there are some differences between the recent immigrant and the general populations (Figure 7).

The dominance of South Asian as a visible minority group is evident in both population groups. They account for more than one-third (35%) of the visible minority population. The South Asian immigrants came from a number of countries including India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Guyana and Bangladesh. Over three-quarters (79%) of the South Asians came from India and Pakistan.

Korean represents the second largest group of visible minority recent immigrant followed by the Arab and Chinese.

Four visible minority groups (Chinese, Black, Southeast Asian and Japanese) are under-represented in the recent immigrant population. Their proportions are lower than those in the total population.

Figure 7. Proportion of visible minority population, Town of Oakville, 2006



9. Postsecondary Education

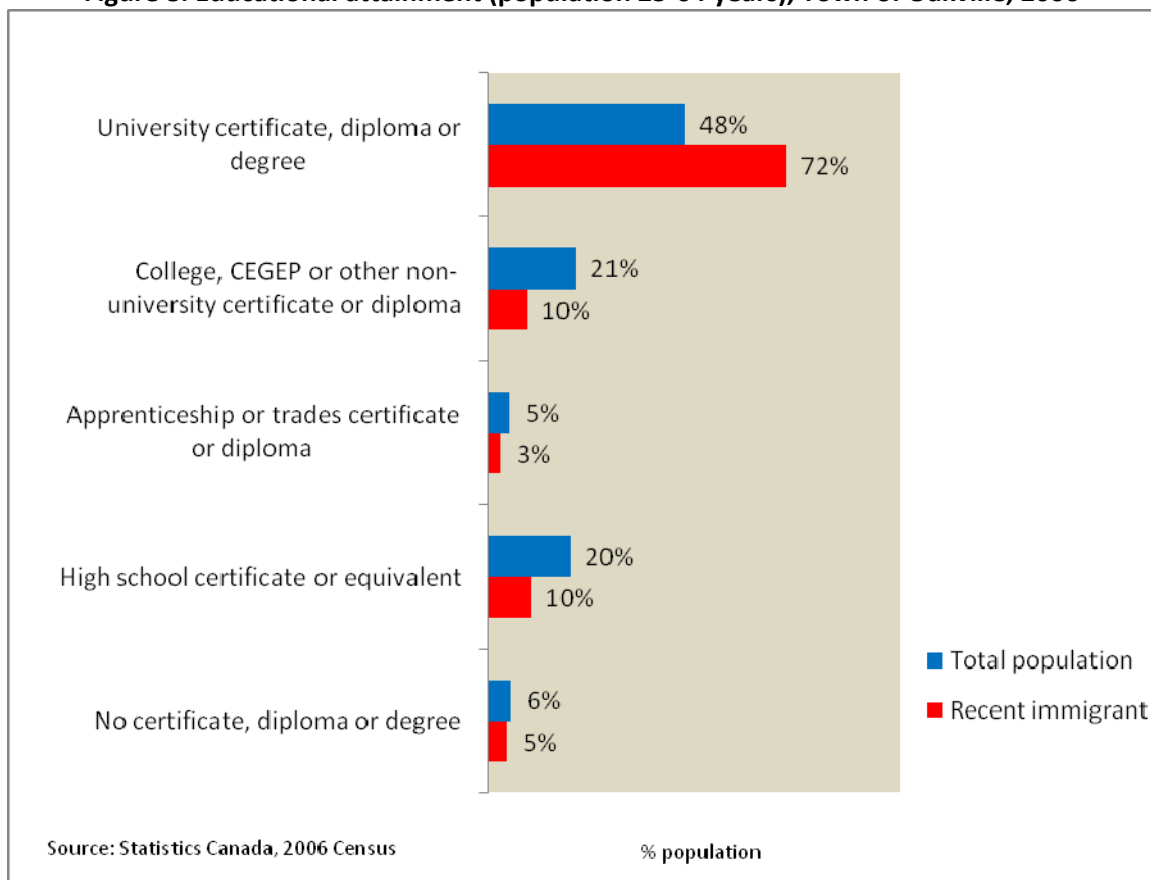
Educational attainment is the highest level of education a person has completed. According to Statistics Canada, it is a general measure of a person's knowledge and skill level.

In 2006, although the proportion of the total population and recent immigrants (25-64 years) with no certificate, diploma or degree is very similar (5-6%), there are a significantly higher proportion of recent immigrants with university certificate, diploma or degree as shown in Figure 8. The difference is about 24 percentage points.

Of those recent immigrants with a university certificate or degree, over half (53%) hold a bachelor's degree, 30% a master's degree and 3% have earned a doctorate. Another 3% of the graduates have degrees in medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine.

The majority (93%) of recent immigrants with postsecondary education obtained their degrees outside Canada compared to 23% for the general population. Some of the foreign certifications may require academic credential assessment in order to meet the requirements of trade or professional regulatory bodies in Ontario and Canada.

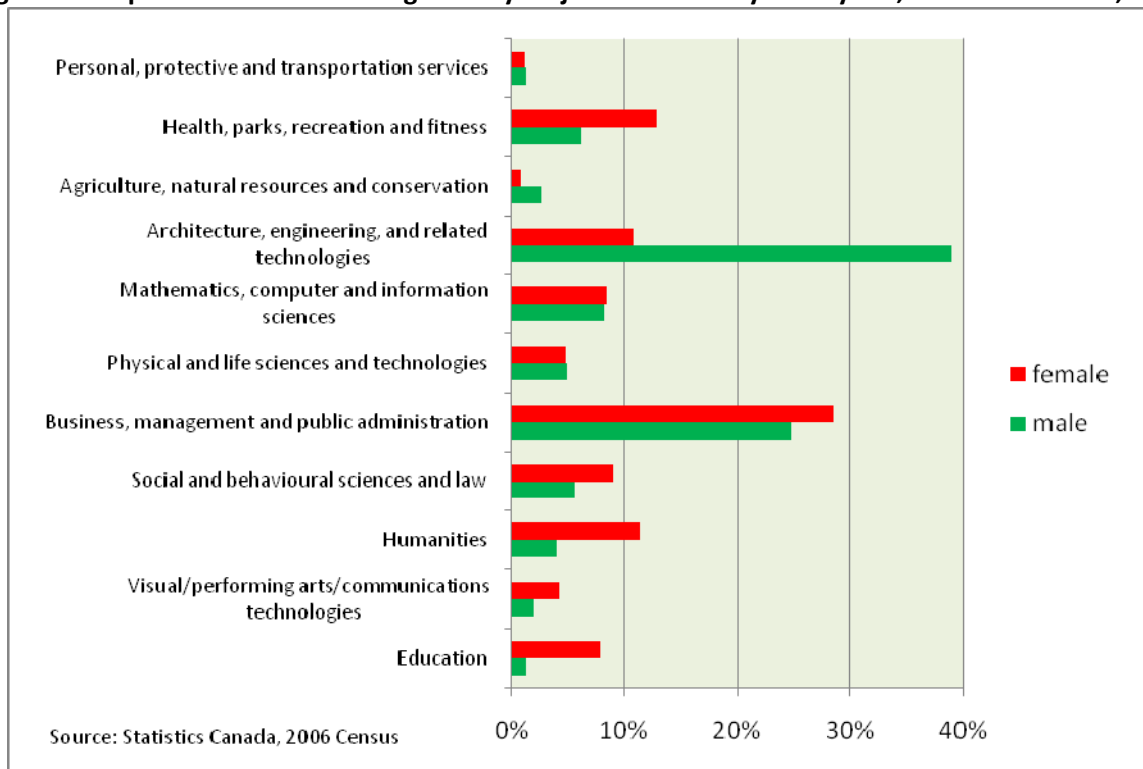
Figure 8. Educational attainment (population 25-64 years), Town of Oakville, 2006



10. Major Field of Study

The major field of study refers to the predominant discipline or area of learning or training of a person's highest postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree. The three most popular major fields of study for the recent immigrants aged 25 to 64 are business, management and public administration; architecture, engineering and related technologies; and health, parks, recreation and fitness.

Figure 9. Proportion of recent immigrants by major field of study and by sex, Town of Oakville, 2006



As shown in Figure 9, there are significant gender differences in a number of the major fields of study. For example, the most popular field of study for men is architecture, engineering and related technologies and the most popular field of study for women is business, management and public administration. Almost 40% of the male recent immigrants have chosen architecture, engineering and related technologies compared to 10% for their female peers. About 8% of the female recent immigrants had studied education compared to less than 2%.

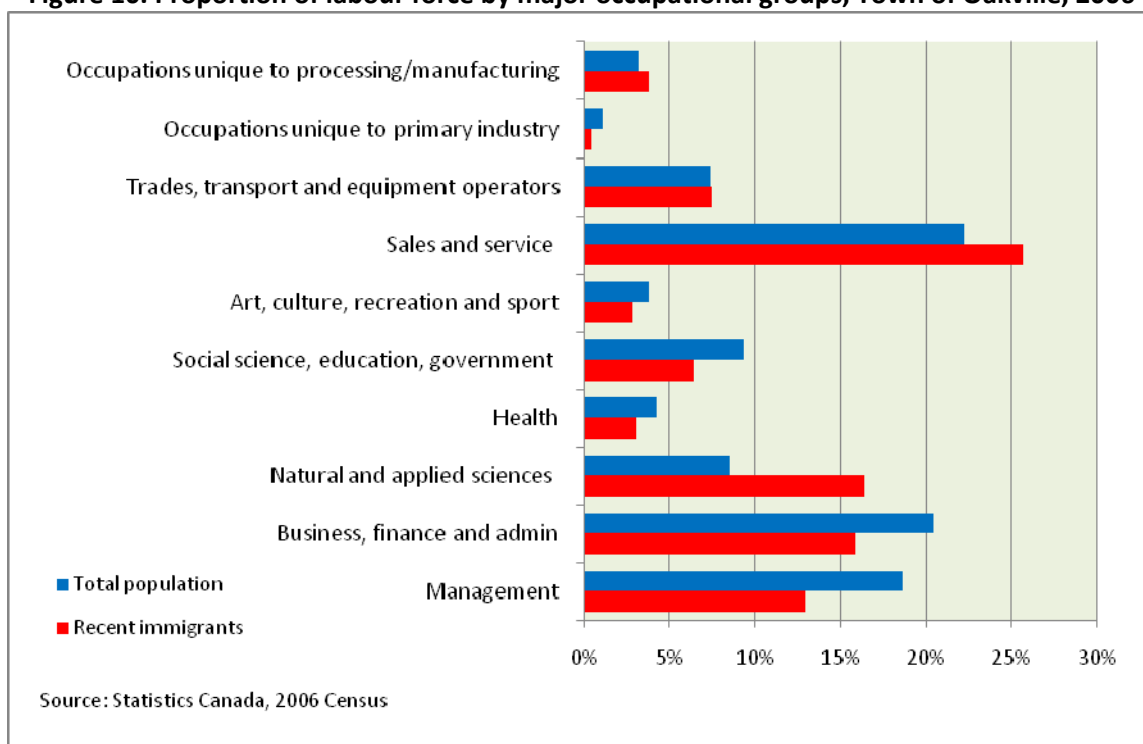
11. Occupations

“Occupation” describes the type of work an individual does in a work place. There were two major occupation groups with a higher proportion of recent immigrants than the total labour force (Figure 10). The proportion of recent immigrants working in the natural and applied sciences and related occupation is twice higher (16% versus 8%). Examples of natural and applied sciences and related occupations include: engineers, architects, chemists, biologists, and computer and information systems professionals. There were also a higher proportion of recent immigrants in the sales and service occupations.

On the other hand, recent immigrants were underrepresented in major occupation groups such as social science, education, government and religion, business, finance and administration, and management.

In the trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations, the proportion for the two population groups is the same at 7%.

Figure 10. Proportion of labour force by major occupational groups, Town of Oakville, 2006

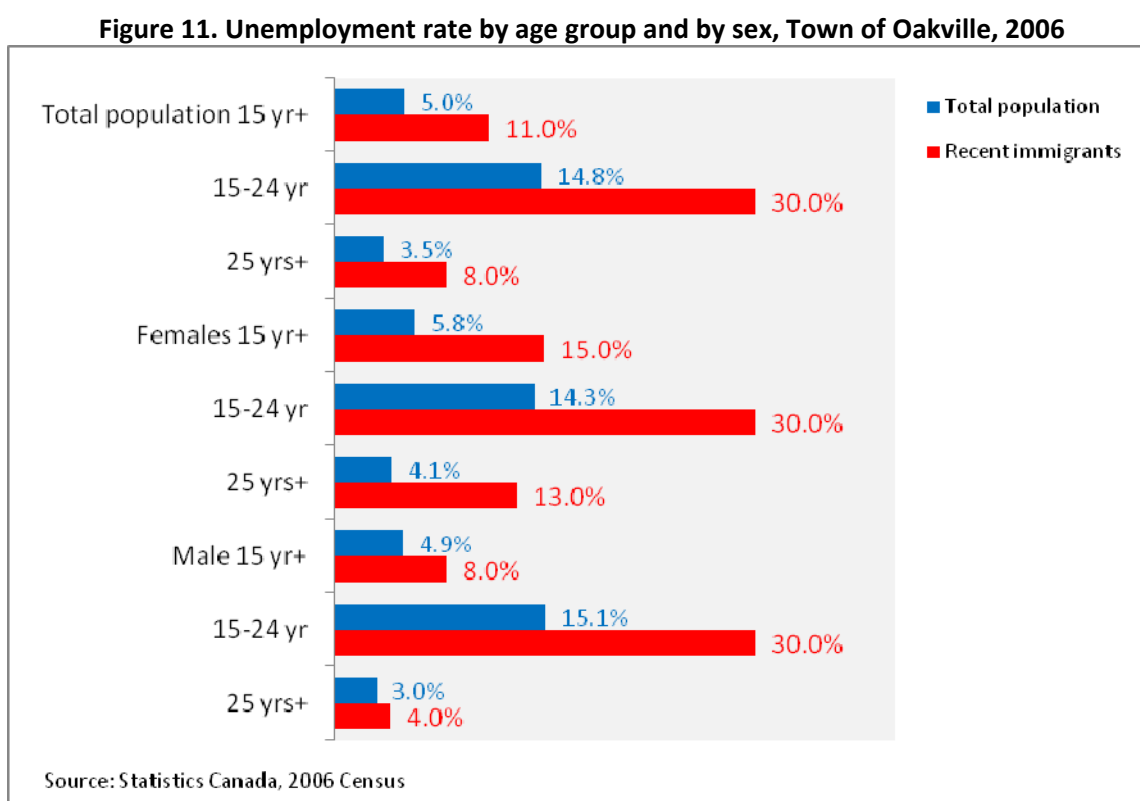


12. Labour Force Activity

Recent immigrants have a higher unemployment rate than the general population, as shown in Figure 11. This gap exists across various age groups and both genders.

In 2006, over one in ten (11%) recent immigrants in Oakville was unemployed compared to 5% of the population (15 years and over). Three in ten recent immigrants (male and female) between 15 and 24 years were unemployed. The gap becomes narrower for the age group over 25 years (8% versus 3.5%).

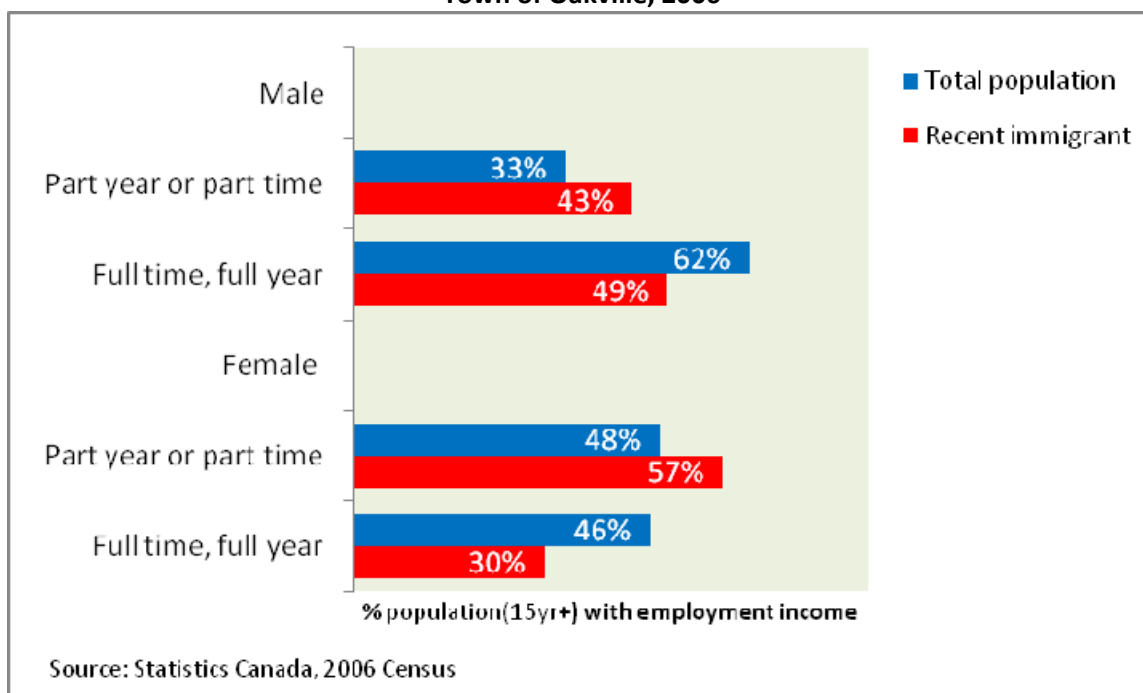
The unemployment rate for male recent immigrants (15 years +) is lower than their female peers (4.9% versus 5.8%). Female recent immigrants aged 25 years and over were three times more likely unemployed than their male counterparts



Over half (54%) of the total population (15 years+) with employment income worked full time, full year. They worked 30 hours or more per week and 49 to 52 weeks per year (Figure 12).

Less than half (49%) of the male recent immigrants worked full time and full year compared to 62% of the male population. On the other hand, over half (57%) of the female recent immigrants worked part year or part time (less than 49 weeks per year or less than 30 hours per week) compared to less than half (48%) of the female population.

Figure 12. Proportion of population (15 years +) with employment income by work activity and by sex, Town of Oakville, 2006



13. Median income

Although average income is often used to provide an aggregate income value for a population, it is sensitive to extreme high and low income values. In order to minimize distortion from extremely high or low incomes, median income is used instead. Median income is the dollar amount which divides the population into two halves; the incomes of the first half are below the median, while those of the second half are above the median.

There is a significant gap in median total income between recent immigrants and the total population. As shown in Figure 13, the 2005 median total income for the recent immigrant is less than half (48%) of the total population. In addition, there is also a gender gap. The median incomes of the male and female recent immigrants are 48% and 50% of the general population respectively.

Figure 13. Median total income by sex, Town of Oakville, 2005

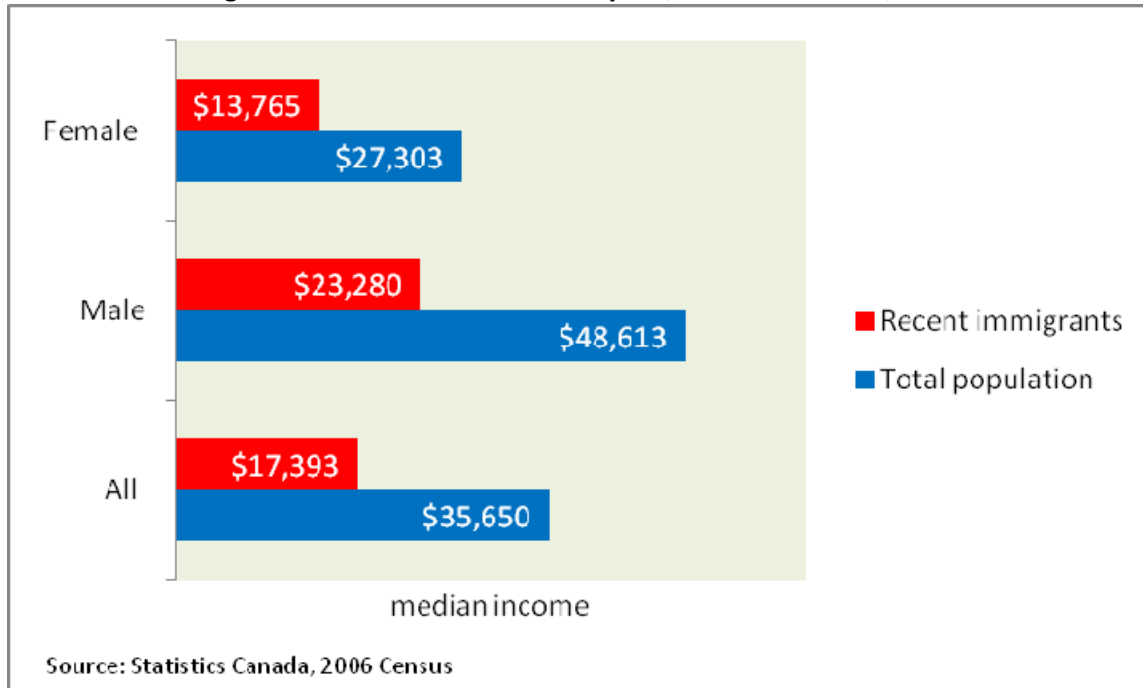
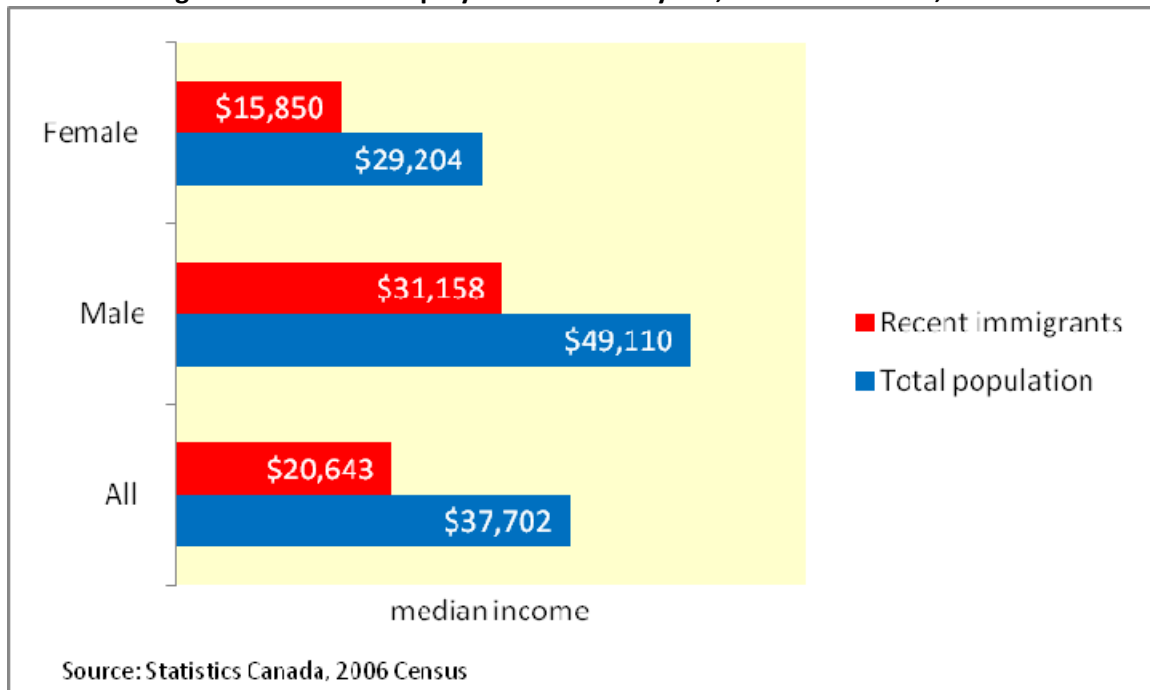


Figure 14 shows that the gap in median employment income is slightly narrower. Recent immigrants earned about 55 cents for every dollar made by the general population. The employment income gap between male recent immigrants and the male population is about 63%.

Figure 14. Median employment income by sex, Town of Oakville, 2005



14. Low Income

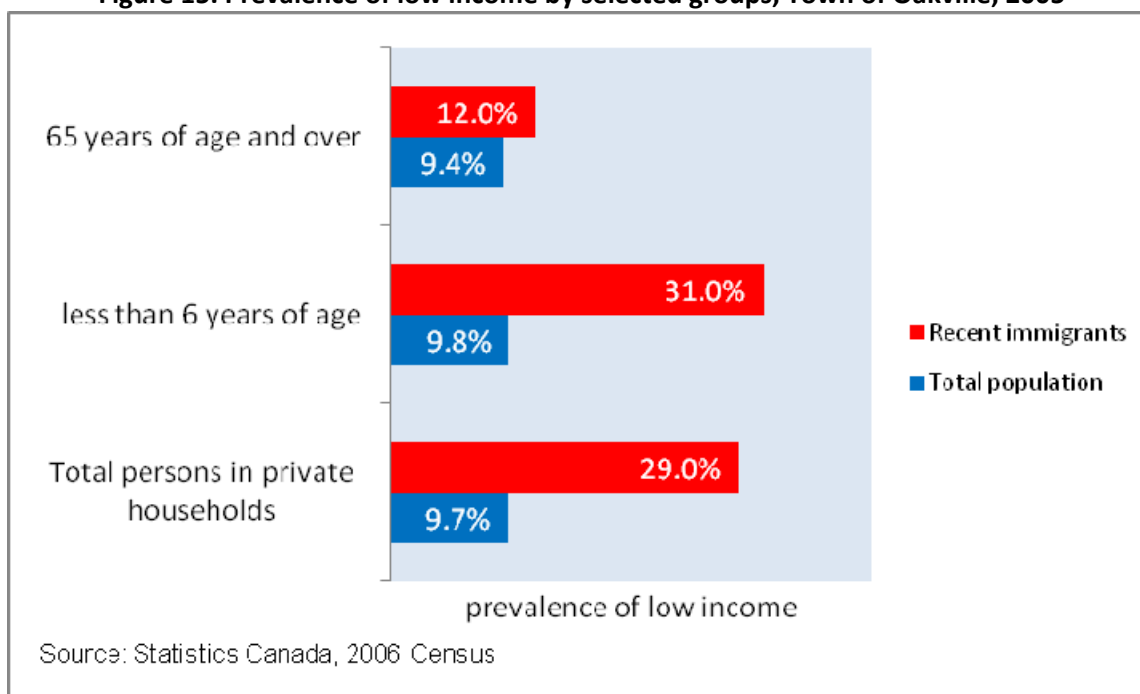
The Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) established by Statistics Canada represents a widely recognized approach to estimating low income thresholds below which a family or individual will likely spend 20% or more than average on food, shelter and clothing.

Although Statistics Canada maintains that LICO thresholds do not necessarily imply poverty, they have been generally accepted as measures of economic hardship faced by families and individuals.

Prevalence (incidence) of low income refers to the percentage of individuals or families who lived below the LICO thresholds.

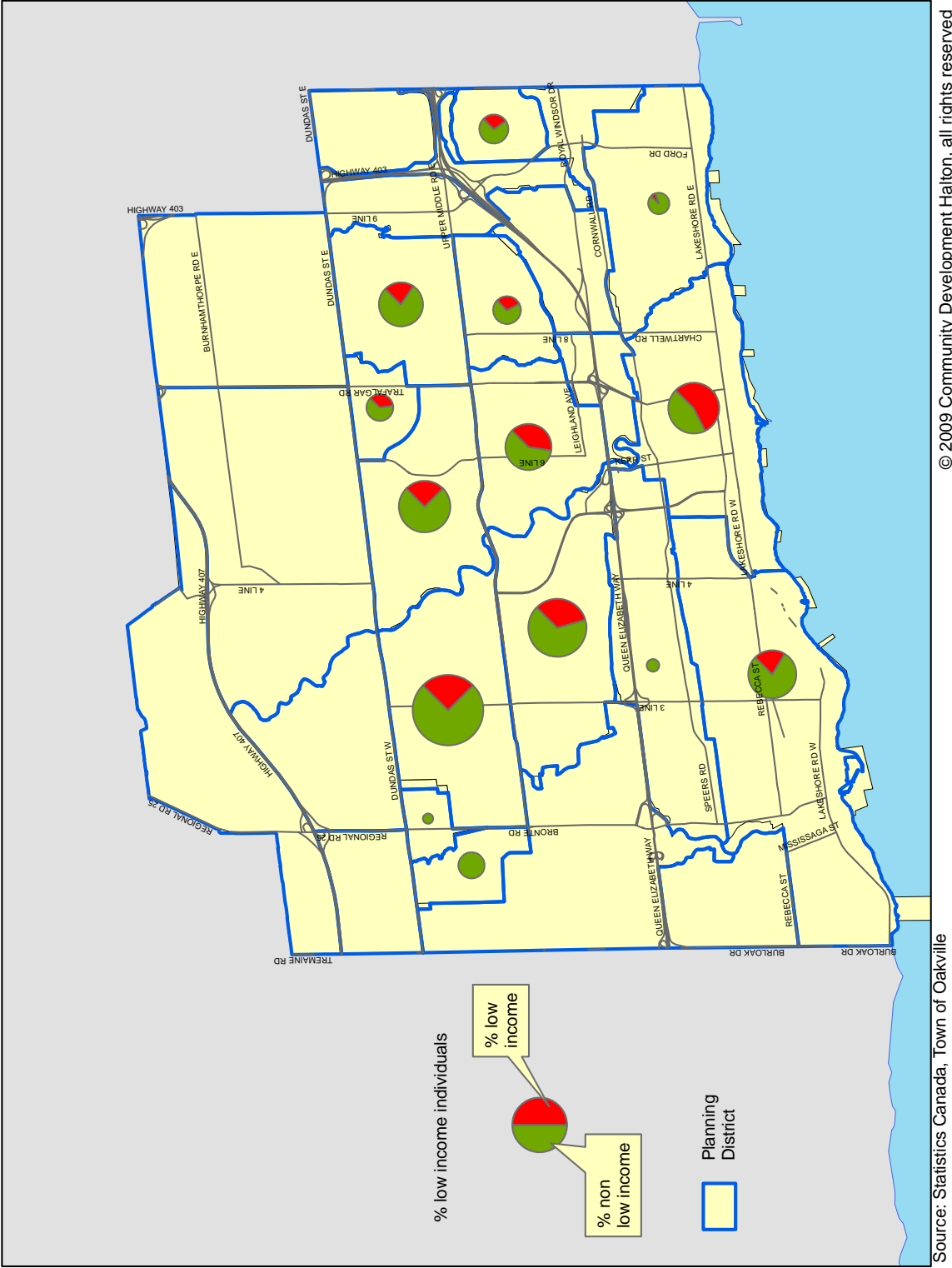
The prevalence of low income is about three times higher for recent immigrants than the general population (Figure 15). Three in ten recent immigrants lived below the low income threshold. Children of recent immigrants also had the same high prevalence of low income.

Figure 15. Prevalence of low income by selected groups, Town of Oakville, 2005



Map 4 shows geographic distribution pattern of low income recent immigrants by planning district. Old Oakville has the highest number and percentage of low income recent immigrants among the planning districts. Over half (55%) of the recent immigrants living in Old Oakville are low income. Although West Oak Trails has the highest number of recent immigrants, less than one-quarter (24%) of them are low income.

Map 4. Low income recent immigrants by planning district, Town of Oakville, 2005



15. Organizations Providing Services to Newcomers

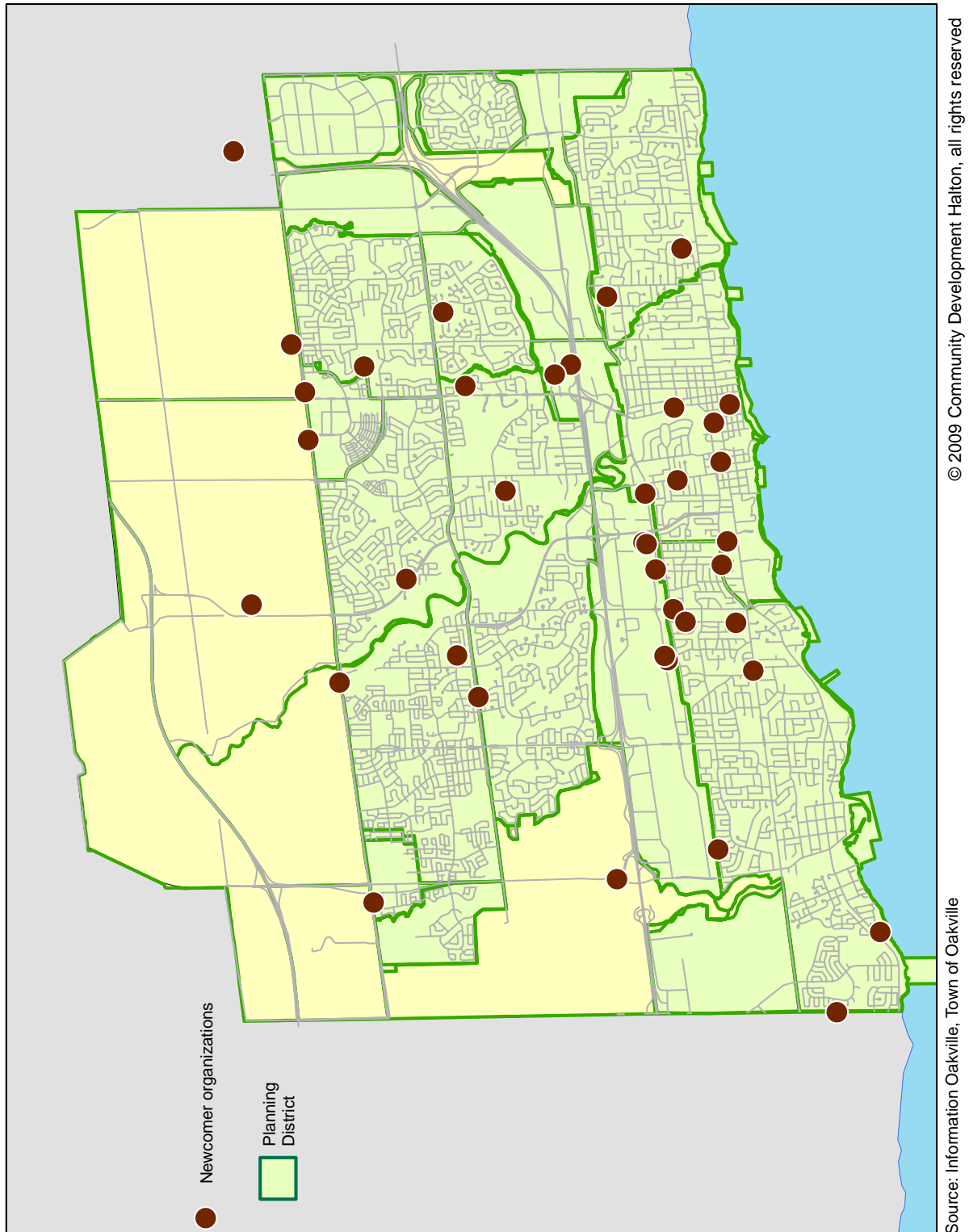
Both government and the nonprofit sector have developed programs directed to the needs of newcomers. Through Information Oakville's database on community and human services, a total of 65 organizations have been identified that provide services to newcomers and recent immigrants. Map 5 shows the locations of those organizations. Note that some of organizations provide services at multiple sites, as well as some sites may house several organizations and both these situations are reflected on the map.

Some of the organizations are departments or agencies of the government, such as the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, Halton Social and Community Services Department and the Oakville Public Library).

A number of the organizations are non-governmental, nonprofit agencies such as The Centre for Skills Development and Training and the Halton Multicultural Council. Education institutions such as Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning also provide services to newcomers.

Faith groups such as St. Anthony's Roman Catholic Church and Vaisho Devi Temple, as well as cultural associations such as Muslim Community Services, Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton and the Canada Pakistan Cultural Association have specific newcomer programs.

Map 5. Location of newcomer serving organizations, Town of Oakville, 2009



16. Summary

The *Profile of Oakville Newcomers* has presented a portrait of the recent immigrants in the Town of Oakville. It highlights some of their major socio-economic characteristics and compares them with those of the general population.

Although the recent immigrants represent about 4.3% of Oakville's population, in many aspects, they are different from those who settled in Canada earlier as well as the general population.

Most of the recent immigrants came from non-European countries. Over half came from countries in Asia and South America. India was the top country of origin. The number of recent immigrants from India has increased by over 70%.

Over 60% of the recent immigrants belong to one of the visible minority groups. The dominant visible minority group is South Asians followed by Korean.

Korean is also the top non-official mother tongue and home language. About half of the recent immigrants speak a non-official language at home, 40% speak English and about 7% speak both English and a non-official language.

The newcomers are younger. Over two-thirds of them are below the age of 40 compared to about half of the total population.

About 85% of the newcomers (25-64 years) have obtained postsecondary education. Over 90% of the postsecondary education was obtained outside Canada.

About 40% of the male recent immigrants have chosen architecture, engineering and related technologies as their major field of study. Business, management and public administration was the popular field of study for the female recent immigrants.

There were a high proportion of newcomers working in the sales and service occupation and the natural and applied sciences occupation. However, they were under-represented in the business/finance, management and social science, education occupations.

Recent immigrants had higher unemployment rates than the general population. As a group, they were twice as likely to be unemployed. Female recent immigrants over age 25 were three times as likely to be unemployed.

There were high proportions of recent immigrants working part year or part time.

Economically, they were not as prosperous as their counterparts. Their median employment income was significantly less than that of the general population. On average, they made about 46% less. Female recent immigrants earned less than half of what their peers earned.

The prevalence of low income among recent immigrants and their children was three times higher than the general population.

There are over 60 government and non-government organizations providing a host of services to newcomers. Many of them are catered to all recent immigrants while some cultural associations have specific programs to certain sub groups of newcomers. Some organizations deliver their services from one location and a few has multiple service points

Appendix 1 – Survey Results

An on-line survey conducted by the United Way of Oakville identifies the types of service being delivered by organizations providing services to newcomers. A total of fourteen organizations out of fifty organizations solicited responded to the survey for a 28% response rate.

Services Provided and Accessed by Newcomers

Each organization was asked to list the top five services that are accessed by the highest number of newcomers. Based on the ten organizations that responded to this question, the top service accessed was for information and referral. While the information and referral service may cover a broad spectrum of subject areas, some of the referral services include community programs for newcomers and professional organizations.

Academic, employment and language training account for the second highest type of service provided. Language training includes programs such as Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC); English as a Second Language (ESL); Enhanced Language Training (ELT) and Occupation Specific Language Training (OSLT). Credential assessment support is also being provided as part of employment training.

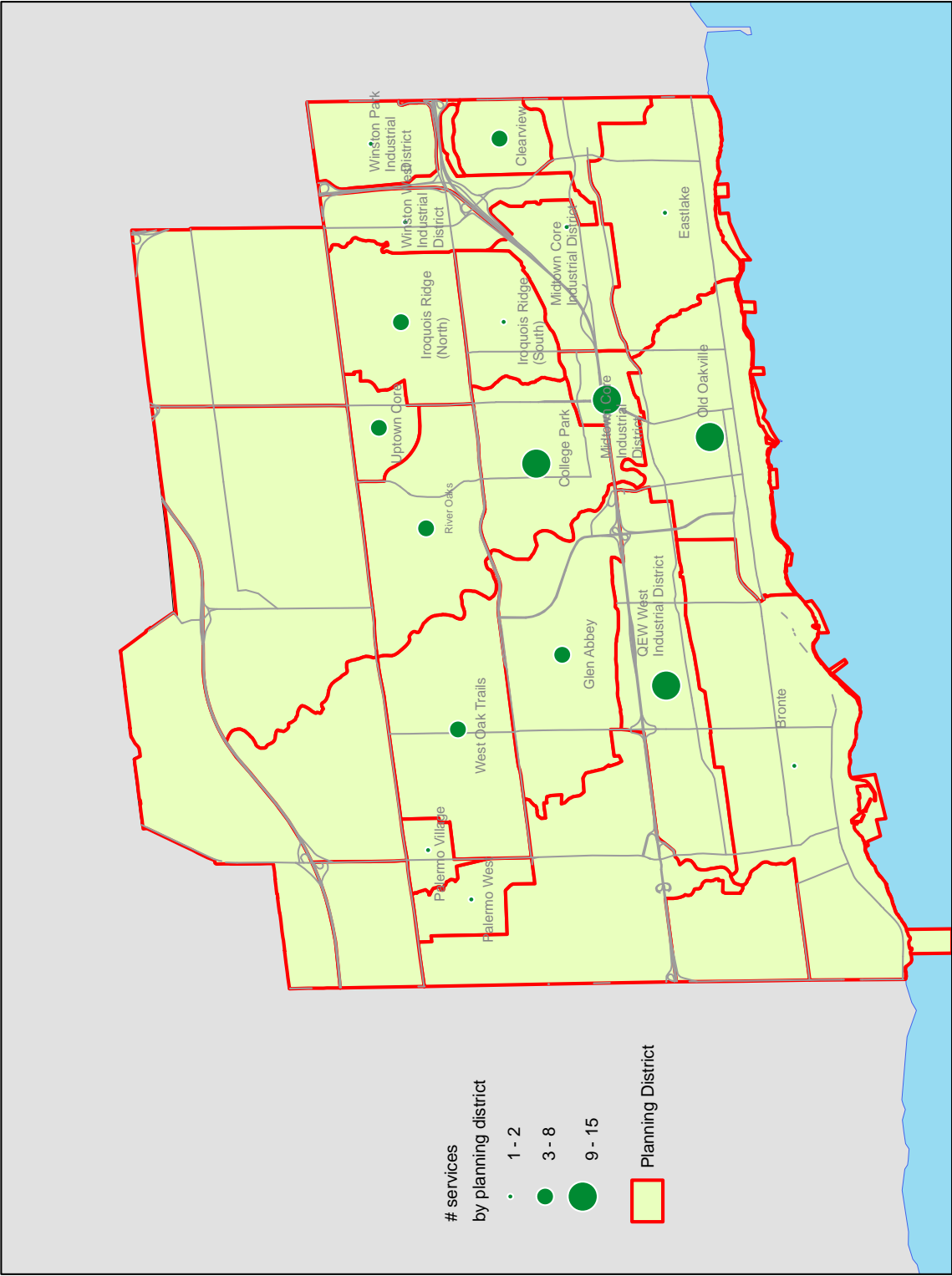
Newcomers also use the internet, photocopying and printing services provided by some organizations.

Location of Services

Many of the services for newcomers are provided by organizations at a single location. However, some organizations, such as the Oakville Public Library, have their services available in various locations.

Eight organizations responded to the question on location of services by planning district and the following map shows the locations of services for newcomers. There are four planning districts with ten or more services available. Both Old Oakville and College Park Planning Districts have the highest number of services for newcomers. On the other hand, many planning districts have very limited services. Among the five multiple service point organizations that have responded to the survey, one organization indicates that it provides service to all planning districts. The service provided is one-on-one adult literacy tutoring. It is very likely that the organization does not have actual service points in all planning districts but makes its service available on demand within the community.

Location of services by planning district, Town of Oakville, 2009



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Source: UWO Survey, 2009