Integrating Migrants through Inclusive Planning and Local Decision-Making Practice

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Overview

• Introduction to research program
  • Municipal policy responsiveness to multiculturalism and diversity
    • Context and literature review
    • Findings
    • Discussion and recommendations
• Next steps
Introduction to Research Program

• Explore intersection of migrant integration and public participation in planning
• Planning *for* versus planning *with* newcomers
• How to capture diversity of interests within public decision-making processes in order to identify the ‘common good’
• Research objectives:
  1. How engaging newcomers in planning processes facilitates integration
  2. How inclusive decision-making can lead to better planning outcomes
Context

• Federal-provincial-municipal responsibilities for migration
• Municipal policy responsiveness to multiculturalism and diversity:
  • Immigrant settlement policy acknowledging municipal role
  • Support for community organizations and community needs
  • Mechanisms to increase newcomer political inclusiveness
Literature Review

• Most outstanding studies:
  • Good (2009): Role of civil society organizations (CSOs) and coalescing of migrant communities
  • Tossutti (2012): Relationships between local governments and CSOs and communal or local identity
  • Fourot’s (2015) model features mechanism to determine how policy trajectories change over time
• Utilize creative participation techniques to engage not one, but multiple ‘publics’ (Nguyen et al., 2015)
  • Expectations must be carefully managed on potential scope, outcomes, and impact of such processes
• Planners must accept that they are uniquely positioned to facilitate marginalized groups’ access in taking their rightful seat at the table in decision-making within planning (Rios, 2015)
  • Existence of unspoken ‘cultural contracts’ that measure how values and commitments are exchanged
  • Developing and demonstrating cultural competence
Study Area
Analysis

• Conclusions of other studies:
  1. City of Toronto: “Very responsive”
  2. Town of Markham: “Semi-responsive”
  3. City of Brampton: “Unresponsive”

• Factors assessed in present study:
  1. Acknowledging community identities
  2. Partnering with civil society organizations
  3. Engaging newcomers in civic affairs
1. Acknowledging Community Identities

• Refers both to migrant and municipal community identities

• Migrant groups that are not able to organize as communities are limited in pressure they can exert on municipalities

  • Brampton: 2040 Vision, fostering “community-based organization... [for inclusion of] cultural groups and foster individual group profile, expression, celebration, and identity”; committing to establish Institute for Brampton Cultural Diversity
2. Partnering with Civil Society Organizations

• Strength of relationships between municipal governments and CSOs, as well between CSOs
  • Toronto: In lead up to and following amalgamation in late-1990s, coalescing of CSOs to advance more inclusive policy agenda
• CSOs’ unique position to facilitate connections between host and newcomer populations and cultivate greater sense of acceptance

‘Monument to Multiculturalism’ by Francesco Perilli, located in front of Union Station in Toronto
3. Engaging Newcomers in Civic Affairs

• Creating occasions in which newcomers’ valued opinions can influence public decision-making processes

  • Markham: *Diversity Action Plan*, following extensive public consultation process and containing 68 recommendations around inclusion and diversity, as well as how to effectively respond to newcomers’ and ethnic minorities’ particular needs

  • Brampton: *2040 Vision*, entailed comprehensive public engagement for its preparation and committed considerable resources to future consultations
Discussion and Recommendations

• Employ symbolic and practical acknowledgement of multiculturalism
• Create community development plans to unite diverse groups through open consultation on priorities and carry out collective action
• Involve CSOs in citizen capacity building and education on nature of and how to influence municipal decision-making processes
• Increase accessibility of spaces for public engagement, with a particular focus on cultural sensitivity
Next Steps

• Scoping review on both planning for and planning with newcomers
• Interviews with:
  • Local planning officials
  • Representatives of CSOs
  • Migrant participants in public participation exercises
• On-site participant observations of planning-related public engagement activities
References


Thank you!