

# Ethnic Transformation & Gentrification

Robert Murdie, April 2007

## ***Ethnic Transformation and Gentrification in West-Central Toronto***

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April 2007  
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## **Why Ethnicity and Gentrification?**

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### **□ Limited Literature: race, ethnicity and gentrification**

- Loretta Lees (2000): "Gentrification researchers could explore in much more detail the relationship between race, ethnicity and gentrification."  
"A reappraisal of gentrification: towards a 'geography of gentrification'", *Progress in Human Geography*, 24, 3, 400.
  - Loretta Lees (2007): "There has been little to no work on any relationship between Third World Immigration and gentrification or on the conflicts that might occur in global cities between gentrifiers and Third World immigrants living side by side. Saying that, I would like to see gentrification research opened up to the study of all forms of immigration – whether Brits moving to Brooklyn . . . or the large number of Poles moving to London."  
"Afterword", *Environment and Planning A*, 39, 1, 230.
  - Research emphasis has been on the gentrifiers and the process of gentrification . . . Much less on the socio-demographic characteristics and experiences of non-gentrifiers living in gentrifying neighbourhoods . . .
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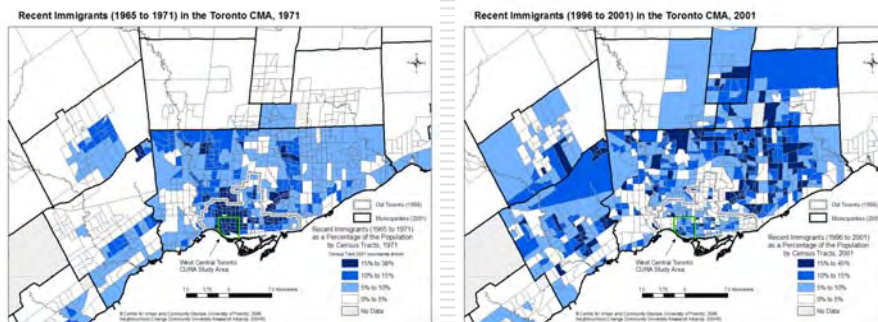
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## Why West-Central Toronto?

- Toronto's original immigrant reception area
- Focus of a CURA Project: Neighbourhood Change and Building Inclusive Communities from Within
- CURA Research Questions
  - Can we preserve existing lower-income and socially and ethnically mixed, affordable neighbourhoods in the face of forces that are raising costs (particularly housing costs) and displacing or excluding certain people, businesses, and community services?
  - How can people in urban neighbourhoods successfully shape the development of their environment to create a community that is socially cohesive and inclusive?

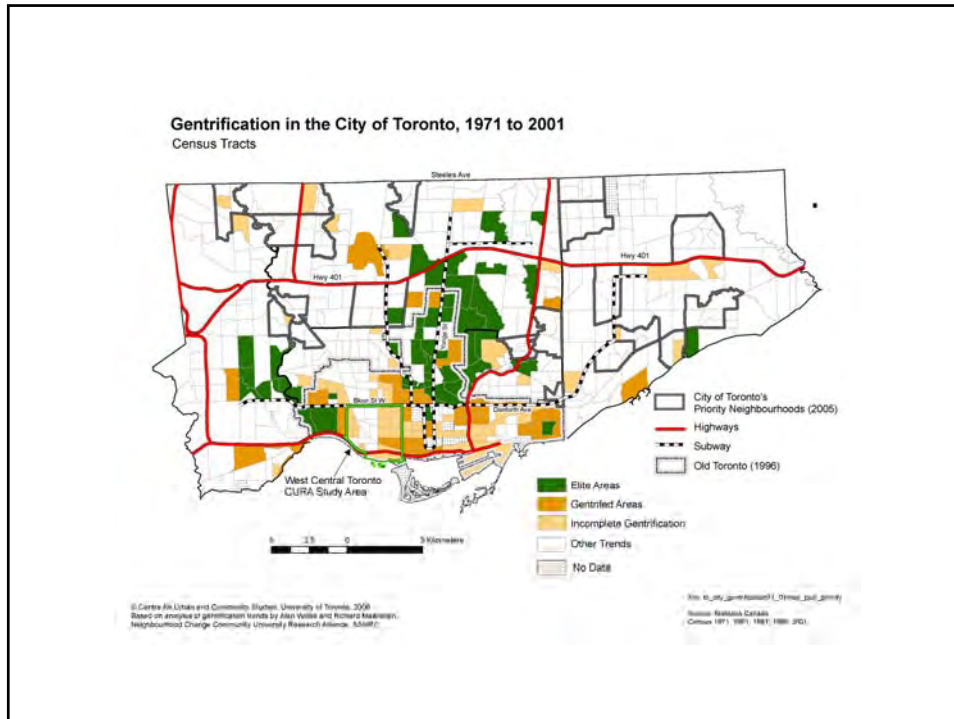
## Recent Immigrants, Toronto, 1971 & 2001



Source: Census of Canada, 1971 and 2001, map compiled by Richard Maaranen, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto

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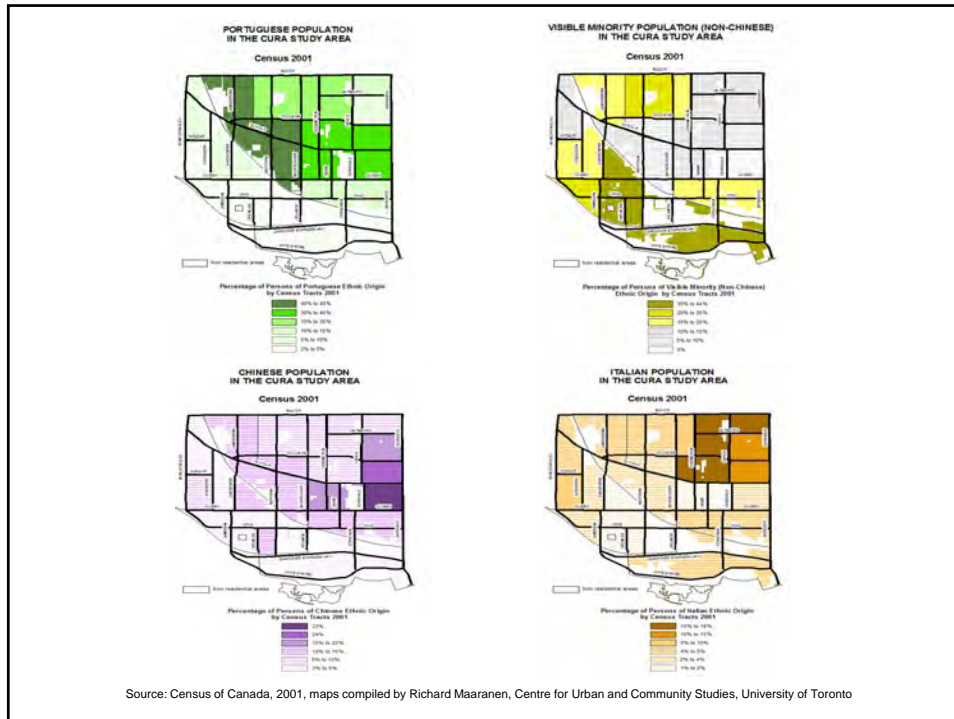
## Ethnic Transformation in West-Central Toronto, 1961-2001

1961	1981	2001
British (35.0%)	Portuguese (32.2)	Portuguese (24.3)
Italian (18.3)	British (21.7)	VISMIN (19.4)
Polish (9.1)	Italian (8.7)	Chinese (13.1)
Ukrainian (8.1)	Polish (5.6)	British (6.9)
German (5.3)	VISMIN (5.0)	Italian (5.3)

Source: Census of Canada, 1961, 1981 and 2001

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## Portugal Village



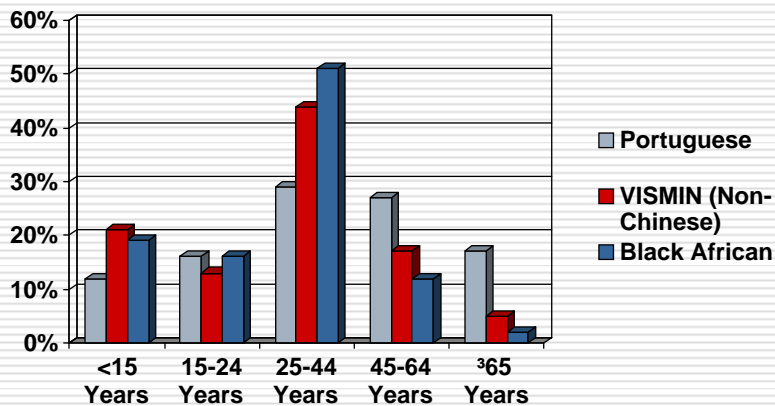
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## South Parkdale



## Age Structure: West-Central Toronto, 2001

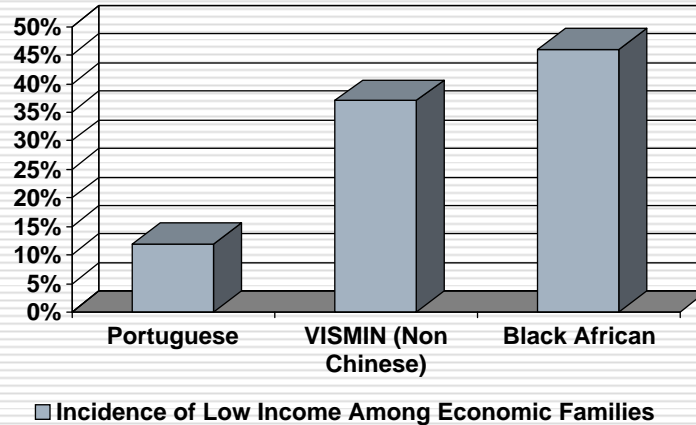


Source: Custom Tabulations, Census of Canada, 2001

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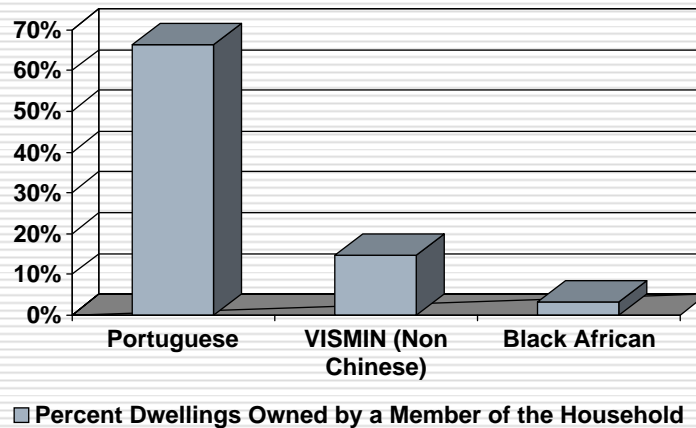
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## Income: West-Central Toronto, 2001



Source: Custom Tabulations, Census of Canada, 2001/CMA=14%; West-Central Toronto=22%

## Homeownership: West-Central Toronto, 2001

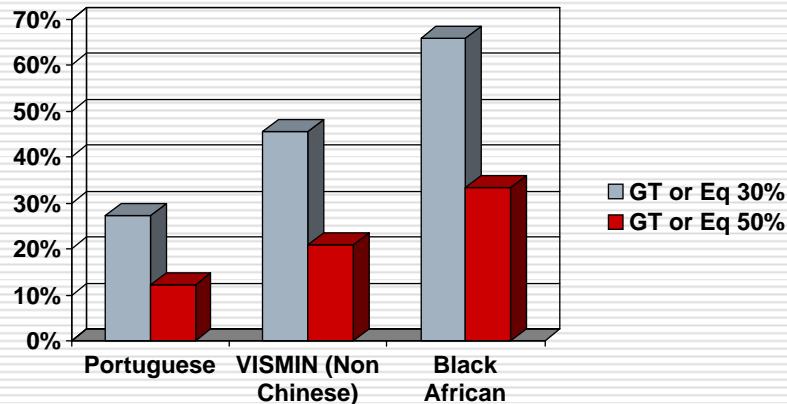


Source: Custom Tabulations, Census of Canada, 2001/CMA: Owned = 63%; West-Central Toronto: Owned=37%

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## Percent Income Spent on Housing West-Central Toronto, 2001



Source: Custom Tabulations, Census of Canada, 2001/≥30% and ≥50%: CMA 29% and 12%; West-Central Toronto 37% and 17%

## Implications of Accelerated Gentrification in West-Central Toronto

- Portuguese
  - High level of homeownership/houses generally in good condition/architectural character/benefit from increased equity
  - Can afford to move to the outer suburbs/newer & larger houses
  - Stayers (elderly) face increased taxes & maintenance costs
  - Less demand for Portuguese ethnic retailing & services
  - Difficulty maintaining social networks
  - Implications for Portuguese renters
  
- VISMIN (including Black Africans)
  - Low level of homeownership/low incomes/affordability problems
  - Gentrification brings increased amenities and services but . . .
  - Housing in well serviced, affordable and accessible central city neighbourhoods is no longer an option (exclusionary displacement)

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## Conclusion

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- ❑ Gentrification is complex and spatially uneven
  - ❑ Differential impact on ethnic communities (tenure, econ status, age of resident, length of residence, period of immigration)
  - ❑ Implications of gentrification are based on 'informed reasoning' drawn from the socio-economic characteristics of the groups
  - ❑ Need in-depth narratives of group experience (e.g., Teixeira, "Toronto's Little Portugal: A Neighbourhood in Transition")
  - ❑ Need better ways of measuring displacement
  - ❑ Are there barriers to gentrification? Retention of affordability?
  - ❑ Is the maintenance of socially (ethnically?) mixed neighbourhoods a worthwhile goal? If so how can this goal be achieved? 'mixed' versus 'inclusive'?
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## Acknowledgements

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All maps prepared by Richard Maaranen  
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