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# Multiculturalism, Sport, and Physical Activity

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# Multiculturalism, Sport, & Physical Activity

## What we know:

- % of pop born outside Canada is rising and is second only to Australia;
- Many immigrants live in poverty (downward mobility) and are least likely to participate in sport and physical activity.

## What we don't know:

- Chinese immigrant women's perspectives on inclusion and the role of community sport and physical activity in settlement;
- How local, provincial and federal policy makers are addressing multiculturalism, sport, and physical activity.

# Statistics

- Chinese people are the largest 'visible minority' group in Canada (Immigration and Integration Study, 2006).
- Vancouver (and Toronto) have a higher percentage - over 40% - of foreign-born residents than most other immigrant gateway cities in the world (Statistics Canada, 2003).
- The largest non-white population in Vancouver is Chinese who accounts for over 60% of the 'visible minority' population (Graham & Phillips, 2006).

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# Theoretical Strands

- **Critical policy studies and citizen engagement theory** (e.g., Chalip, 1996; Phillips & Orsini, 2002; Sam, 2003)
- **Multiculturalism** (e.g., DeSensi, 1994; Doherty & Taylor, 2007; Donnelly & Nakamura, 2006; Henry, 2005; Tracy & Toohey, 1998)
- **Social inclusion** (e.g., Donnelly & Coakley, 2002; Shakir, 2004)

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# Methods

- Interviews with 50 recent immigrant women from Mainland China, Hong Kong & Taiwan (in Mandarin, Cantonese or English).
- Interviews with 36 local, provincial & federal sport and recreation policy makers/staff.
- Interviews with 5 staff from the immigrant social service agency S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
- A workshop for all study participants to promote dialogue and action.



# Findings

- The growing population of Chinese immigrant women and their families are largely unaware of opportunities and subsidy policies, but see participation contributing to their health and settlement in important ways.

*"I feel that on the one hand, doing sport is good for health; one the other hand, it increases the chance for communication with others. When you do sports, such as go swimming and do sports together with others, you can communicate with friends and exchange information. As usually there is no such occasion for us to share information. I feel this is nice."*

(47 yrs, immigrated for 9 yrs, 1 child, family income 20-50K).

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# Findings

- Local, provincial and national policy makers see multiculturalism as an important area, but are unsure how to proceed with policy development given the complexities involved.
- Local, provincial, and federal governments have equity policies (e.g., for Aboriginals, persons with disabilities, girls & women).
- No policies related specifically to multiculturalism or visible minorities and sport participation were uncovered.



# Implications

- Partnerships with immigrant service organizations are key for fostering awareness.
- Greater linkages and information sharing are needed between local, provincial, federal levels and researchers.
- Intersectionality - immigration/race/ethnicity are linked to gender, social class, health status and all are important indicators of sport participation.
- What the women say would promote inclusion: outreach, free passes, improved policy, facility tours, information sessions, instruction in "Canadian sports", family and adult/women's programs, childcare, multi-language information, consultation regarding programs and policies.

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# Dissemination

- Hosted a two-day workshop in February 2009 where the immigrant women, policy makers, and researchers reviewed the findings and discussed action plans.
- *A Multiculturalism, Sport, and Physical Activity Workbook* has been written and will be widely distributed.
- Several presentations have been made at both professional and academic conferences.
- Papers and book chapters have been submitted to sport, immigration, feminist and policy related journals/books.