Sanctuary Cities: Challenges and Opportunities

May 24, 2016

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Cities of Migration

- **Showcasing** good ideas in the integration of urban migrants in global cities
- **Promoting** learning exchange
- **Building awareness** of the links between successful integration, inclusion and urban prosperity

www.citiesofmigration.org
Webinar agenda

Sanctuary Cities: Challenges and Opportunities

1. Presentation by Idil Atak, Assistant Professor, Ryerson University (Toronto, Canada) and Graham Hudson, Associate Professor, Ryerson University (Toronto, Canada)

2. Presentation by Sonia Lin, General Counsel, Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, New York (New York City, United States)

3. Q&A moderated by Kim Turner, Cities of Migration, Global Diversity Exchange (Toronto, Canada)

Webinar recording will be available on the website: www.citiesofmigration.ca
Sanctuary City Policy in Toronto: 

Challenges and Opportunities

- Dr. Idil Atak, Assistant Professor, Ryerson University, Toronto
- Dr. Graham Hudson, Associate Professor, Ryerson University, Toronto
City of Toronto: “Diversity is Our Strength”

Canada: 35.16 million (2013)
- 20.16% of population is foreign-born, or one in 5 foreign-born
- 250,000 new immigrants annually

City of Toronto Population: 2.6 million vs. GTA 6.5 million
- 50% foreign-born and 49% visible minority
- Home to 30% of Canada’s new immigrants
- Over 140 languages spoken; 30% speak a language other than English or French at home
Becoming Undocumented: A Growing Population

- No accurate estimates of size of undocumented population.
- How do persons become undocumented?
  1. Unauthorized entry
  2. Unauthorized stay:
     - Overstaying work, student, or visitor visas
     - Failed refugee claimants
Meeting the Challenge: The City of Toronto

• Approx. 60,000 municipal employees; 33,000 public service workers, plus agencies, boards, commissions

• Municipal government is divided into 3 main “Clusters” under the City Manager

• “Citizen” Focused Services in Cluster “A” is where services most relevant to non-status migrants are found:
  o Public Health
  o Shelters
  o Employment,
  o Children’s Services
  o Housing
  o Parks, Forestry and Recreation
  o Libraries
Access T.O. Opportunities

• In February 2013, City Council declared Toronto a “Sanctuary City”, following years of an informal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy.
• In June, 2014, this policy was officially styled “Access T.O.”.
• Access T.O. reaffirms the city’s commitment to ensuring that Torontonians, regardless of immigration status, have access to most City services without:
  a) Being asked for proof of status;
  b) Having personal information provided to federal authorities.
• City Council and civil society have called on provincial and federal governments to revise exclusionary laws and policies.
Institutionalizing Access T.O.

Policy/Managerial Level:
• Working Group on Access T.O.
• Design staff training and community outreach programs

Front-Line Level:
• Audits reveal that undocumented migrants are too often denied services to which they are entitled.
• Primary causes include:
  o Discrimination;
  o Language barriers;
  o Under-funding of training initiatives;
  o Organizational culture;
  o Continued fear and mistrust of government.
• Non-compliance contributes to lack of trust
Challenges: Service Integration

- Horizontal/cross-divisional coordination at the policy and managerial levels
- Vertical coordination within divisions.
- *But*: there is lack of horizontal, front-line communication across our many City divisions e.g. health/employment/housing, or, recreation/health/shelters/policing.
- This inhibits community outreach, training, cultivation of new organizational cultures, and economic efficiency.
- *Note*: There is similar disorganization at the grassroots level in civil society and the professions—this may be linked to limited community outreach.
Challenges: Intergovernmental Communication and Partnership

• There is a near-total absence of communication among the three levels of government on non-status migrants, with the exception of human smuggling.

• Education is a rare example of coherence between provincial legislation (s. 49.1 of the *Education Act*) and local policy/practice (Toronto District School Board).

• Health is a good example of poor communication.

• There are unofficial “short-cuts” at the local level e.g. some free medical clinics for uninsured.

• However, there needs to be enhanced and dedicated funding for community/dedicated clinics, regulation of fees for medical services, expanded eligibility criteria for insured health care (especially for children/youth).
Challenges: Demographic Data

• There is an absence of data on the demographics of undocumented migrants.

• The federal government does not track this through censuses etc.

• The municipal government does not collect data to protect against disclosure to federal law-enforcement.

• Privacy rights are a key site of contestation in the areas of policing and prospective Municipal ID cards.

• Lack, or misuse, of data impedes an understanding of unmet needs and how to improve services e.g. social determinants of health.
Ways Forward

Municipal ID Cards
• Expensive, but with accountability solves compliance issue

Regularization
• Possible, but unlikely.

Sanctuary Province?
• Expand eligibility rules for provincial and federal services, including Ontario Health Insurance Program, social assistance, Affordable Housing, employment and labour rights;
• Greater government support for collaboration among community service organizations and inter-professional dialogue;
• Provincial legislation prohibiting “ask and tell” practices e.g. police.
Thank you

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NYC: A City of Immigrants

Presentation for Cities of Migration

May 24, 2016
Building on its Charter mandate, the New York City Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs promotes the well-being of immigrant communities by recommending policies and programs that facilitate the successful integration of immigrant New Yorkers into the civic, economic, and cultural life of the City.
60% of NYC residents are immigrants or children of immigrants

23% of NYC residents are not proficient in English
A majority of NYC immigrants are naturalized U.S. citizens.

About 1 million are lawful permanent residents.

About 500,000 are undocumented immigrants.
• Immigrant inclusion
• Access to justice
• Advocacy
• Language access
• Confidentiality
THANK YOU!

Contact:
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NYC Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs
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For more information visit:
www.nyc.gov/immigrants
www.nyc.gov/idnyc
Acknowledgments

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