MANY CULTURES. ONE COMMUNITY? ACHIEVING INTERCULTURAL HARMONY IN RICHMOND

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ABSTRACT

The multiculturalism policy which Richmond has adopted underscores the importance of nondiscriminatory contact between members of different racial and ethnic groups. Richmond is in the process of a cultural metamorphosis, and it is the position of this paper that constructive intercultural interaction is a necessary precursor to Richmond fulfilling the goals of its multiculturalism policy; and to Richmond planners successfully planning for growth and change.

Intercultural understanding rarely occurs by chance, because humans are programmed to think, feel, and behave in an ethnocentric way, as though anyone whose behaviour is not predictable or is peculiar in any way is strange, improper, irresponsible, or inferior. In order to foster successful intercultural encounters, people must be open to the dynamics of change and of attitudes that are less criticizing, less prejuding, less selecting, and less rejecting of other people's and cultures. This paper explores the importance of intercultural training initiatives in helping Richmond residents develop constructive intercultural interaction skills, and in helping planners, new immigrants, and host society members understand one another's cultures, patterns of communication, and the difficulties and discrepancies that they may face when North American planning ideals are implemented in a city where people have different expectations as to what those ideals should be.

To carry out this study, key informant interviews were held with the heads of various cultural and multicultural organizations, and civic service departments in Richmond. Recent publications on topics encompassing intercultural interaction, and notes from a debate by five Richmond Secondary School students on the pros and cons of ESL programs were used as secondary data sources. The study suggests that the assumptions outlined are supported by the data collected throughout this research report.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to examine and evaluate what is being undertaken in the City of Richmond, British Columbia to promote effective intercultural communication, understanding and harmony among Richmond residents and ethnocultural groups; and to explore how to further existing initiatives. Community harmony is an important planning goal, and it is the intention of this study to explore how important intercultural training initiatives are in helping Richmond meet this goal.

It is the position of this study that effective intercultural communication and understanding are the keys to constructive intercultural interaction and harmony (*intercultural communication* refers to the ability of an individual or a group to achieve understanding through verbal and non-verbal exchange and interaction between cultures; *effective communication* refers to communication which minimizes misunderstandings). In order to eliminate stereotypes and reduce prejudice, discrimination, and negative attitudes towards people of different ethnocultural groups; and enable individuals to understand one another's cultures, beliefs, and value systems, intercultural interaction must be present. Ideally, this interaction should be a result of planned exchanges on the part of persons who not only desire favourable results, but have the skills necessary for generating and supporting positive outcomes (Ricard, 1993).

1.1 Significance of Study

From a community and regional planning perspective, intercultural communication, understanding, interaction and harmony is of paramount importance in a city which is as culturally diverse as Richmond, as it will directly impact people's quality of life. During the past three decades growth in Richmond has been accompanied by changes in immigrant source-countries. As a result, there has been a shift in Richmond's population from one predominantly

comprised of European descent, to one which is almost 35% Chinese ethnic origin. (In 1961 approximately 60% of Richmond's 43,323 residents were of British descent, and .07% of the population was of Chinese descent. In 1994 approximately 23,500 residents, or 17% of the population was of British descent, and 49,000 of Richmond's 140,024 residents (35%) were of Chinese descent). Richmond planners are therefore faced with a binary task of planning for growth *and* change.

Planning for growth has always been part of a planners job. Growth can be projected and anticipated within a range of scenarios and appropriately robust strategies, and cities can be designed and policies implemented to accommodate both the benefits of growth (increased job and development opportunities, increased tax base to fund public amenities and services, and the opportunity to create well designed, pleasing environments) and the negative aspects of population increase (increased congestion, pressures on existing amenities and services, and loss or diminution of familiar and loved environments). However, Richmond's situation is complex, because its population is no longer primarily culturally homogeneous. This presents difficulties for planners who have traditionally had little experience in planning for growth in a community of changing ethnic origins, values, attitudes, and perspectives.

From a practical planning perspective, it would be advantageous for planners to develop some means of bringing people together to discuss issues of common interest, which impact all citizens, regardless of cultural heritage, such as safety, transportation, economic development, urban design, and land use issues. A 1990 report prepared for the City of Richmond clearly states that "the population must understand the possible effects of growth and what is being done to manage it. Their involvement in developing solutions is key to managing growth" (Praxis, 1990:3). While citizen participation is an integral part of planning, it is always difficult to achieve consensus on issues which affect people's livelihood and quality of life. The inability to understand one another's cultures and patterns of communication, combined with the fact that we remain largely unconscious of the misunderstandings that result from our

intercultural or interethnic encounters, only makes reaching consensus more difficult. Planners and other community professionals need a way to effectively communicate cross-culturally, and this is becoming increasingly important as the cultural plurality of Richmond increases. Today, Richmond planners must look beyond the technical approach traditionally used in planning, and acquire skills which will enable them to embark in the successful intercultural liaisons necessary to generate positive planning outcomes.

To capitalize on the strengths of cultural diversity, a pro-active approach and strategy would be constructive. Increases in the volume of immigration and shifts in country of origin and settlement patterns require that cultural considerations be reflected and integrated throughout the City's legislation, policy, practice and structure. Planning for intercultural interaction is a means by which Richmond can successfully implement the multiculturalism policy which it has chosen to adopt. It is through structured processes designed to foster understanding, acceptance, and constructive relations among people of many different cultures, that the barriers preventing intercultural interaction can be replaced with bridges which lead to community harmony. If planners, community professionals and Richmond citizens have a basic understanding and appreciation for cultural differences, then they will all be less judgemental according to inherent cultural standards, and the planning process will become less controversial and divisive.

1.2 Thesis Assertions

The primary assertion of this thesis is that constructive intercultural interaction is a necessary precursor to a) Richmond fulfilling the goals of the multiculturalism policy which it has chosen to adopt (see Appendix A), and b) Richmond planners successfully planning for growth and change.

The secondary assertion of this study is that since intercultural sensitivity is not "natural" to any single culture (Bennett, 1986), the development of this ability demands new awareness and

attitudes. Therefore, intercultural training initiatives are an important element in helping Richmond residents develop constructive intercultural interaction skills.

1.3 Thesis Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To gain a better understanding of what is being undertaken in Richmond to promote intercultural communication, understanding, and harmony among Richmond residents;

2. To determine what can be done to further existing initiatives;

3. To identify the greatest barriers to constructive intercultural interaction in Richmond;

4. To suggest ways of counteracting the barriers to constructive intercultural interaction in Richmond; and

5. To provide a descriptive analysis of Richmond's multicultural planning initiatives which can be used as a guide for planners in other cities and municipalities who wish to implement intercultural planning techniques in their practises.

1.4 Methodology

The main research strategy used in this thesis is structured interviews with key informants. Employees of numerous multicultural organizations, cultural organizations, and civic service departments in Richmond were presented with a questionnaire (see Appendix B) and were

interviewed to inquire about what the organizations and departments which they represented are doing to promote constructive intercultural interaction, understanding, and harmony.

The key informants were selected for their position as the head of their respective organizations and civic service departments. The organizations and civic service departments were selected for their potential to be players in promoting constructive intercultural interaction in Richmond.

The key informant interviews were supplemented with a review of existing literature on intercultural interactions, and by notes from a debate by five Richmond Secondary School students on the pros and cons of ESL programs.

1.5 Thesis Organization

This thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter One defines the research topic and discusses the methodological approach to this study; provides a descriptive analysis of how people's cultural values, beliefs, and attitudes affect their ability to communicate effectively across cultures; and presents a brief overview of multiculturalism in Richmond. Chapter Two presents a profile of Richmond's ethnically diverse population; Chapter Three reviews and critiques Richmond's response to multiculturalism and examines means by which intercultural relations can be encouraged; and Chapter Four concludes the thesis and suggests recommendations for future research.

The following sections in this chapter have been designed to familiarize the reader with the research topic. A brief discussion of the importance of intercultural interaction is presented, followed by an account of multiculturalism in Richmond, British Columbia.

1.6 Study Background

In the past, most human beings were born, lived, and died within a limited geographical area, rarely encountering people of other races and/or cultural backgrounds. Such an existence no longer prevails in the world today. Within any nation a multitude of racial and ethnic groups exist, and their members interact daily. The multiculturalism policy which Richmond has adopted underscores the importance of nondiscriminatory contact between members of different racial and ethnic groups. To accomplish this end, people of different racial and ethnic groups need to understand one another's cultures and patterns of communication. (Stevenson, 1984).

Ricard (1993:6) states that

> In the widest anthropological sense of the meaning of the term, 'culture' is seen to include all of the accepted and patterned ways of behaviour of a given people: their ways of thinking, feeling, and acting, and the physical manifestations of these. This broad definition enables us to view the values, beliefs, attitudes, and concepts of "self" of a given people as important to understanding their behaviour, and allows us to recognize the influence of language and thought on activity and behaviour...The distinguishing characteristics of a people or culture might best be described as how the people think, feel, act and appear. Increased understanding of the beliefs, the attitudes, and the behaviours of people enables us to identify the similarities or differences that affect our ability to communicate effectively across cultures and to focus our efforts at skill development.

Gudykunst (1991:2) states that

> Many of us believe that misunderstandings in intercultural and interethnic encounters are due to one of the individuals not being competent in the other's language. Linguistic knowledge is not enough to ensure that our communication with people from other cultures or ethnic groups will progress smoothly and effectively. Misunderstandings in intercultural and interethnic encounters often stem from not knowing the norms and rules guiding the communication of people from different cultures and/or ethnic groups.

In general, observable differences are the foci of most difficult intercultural interactions because they appear to be the "problem", when the "problem" is more frequently related to attitudes, and the attitudes are related to values (Ricard, 1993). Because we learn the language rules and norms of our culture at a very early age, we are generally unaware of how culture influences our behaviour in general and our communication in particular (Hall, 1959).

Each of us came into this world knowing literally nothing of what we need to know to function acceptably in human society. Through the process of enculturation, cultural patterns are etched into our nervous system and become part of our personality and behaviour (Gudykunst, 1984). Most humans remain largely unconscious of the cultural imprinting that governs our personality and behaviour. We automatically treat what is most characteristically our own as though it were innate. We are programmed to think, feel, and behave in an ethnocentric way, as though anyone whose behaviour is not predictable or is peculiar in any way is strange, improper, irresponsible, or inferior (Gudykunst, 1984).

People who are highly ethnocentric find it extremely difficult if not impossible to understand the communication of people from other cultures. Sumner (1940:5) characterizes ethnocentrism as the "view of things in which one's own group is the centre of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it". Ethnocentrism leads people to see their own culture's ways of doing things as "right", and all others as "wrong". The major consequence of this view is our groups' values and ways of doing things are seen as superior to the other groups' values and ways of doing things. "While the tendency to make judgements according to our own cultural standards is natural, it hinders our understanding of other cultures and the patterns of communication of their people." (Gudykunst, 1984:5).

There are several erroneous assumptions which individuals can make when encountering individuals from other cultures which can create difficulties. Perhaps the most important of these is the assumption of homogeneity in the target culture, when in fact there are individual

differences (Albert, 1983). This mistaken assumption of homogeneity can lead to stereotyping. Allport (1958:202) suggests that "we can only distinguish between a stereotype and a valid generalization concerning a particular group if we have data concerning true group differences". Prejudgment of people or things or situations is the conduit for stereotypes, and prejudice affects intercultural interaction because it blocks the road to discovery and learning.

Robin Lakoff (1990:13) illustrates the problems that emerge when we interpret others' behaviours based on our frame of reference:

> We see all behaviour from our own initial perspective: what would that mean if I did it?...We assume the possibility of direct transfer of meaning, that a gesture of act in Culture A can be understood in the same way by Culture B. Often this is true: there are universals of behaviour, but as often that is a dangerous assumption; and by cavalierly ignoring the need for translation, we are making misunderstanding inevitable.

Becoming more culturally relativistic, on the other hand, can be conducive to understanding. Cultural relativism suggests the only way we can understand the behaviour of others is in the context of their culture (Gudykunst, 1984). Gudykunst, Wiseman, and Hammer (1977:197) argue that

> People who are effective in communicating with strangers do not use the perspective of their own culture when interpreting the behaviour of people from other cultures. Rather, effective communicators use a third-culture perspective, which acts as a psychological link between their cultural perspective and that of the stranger....People who have highly developed this perspective can be characterized as follows: they are open-minded toward new ideas and new experiences; they are empathic toward people from other cultures; they accurately perceive differences and similarities between the host culture and their own; they tend to describe behaviour they don't understand rather than evaluating behaviour as bad, nonsensical, or meaningless; they are relatively astute noncritical observers of their own behaviour and that of

others; they are better able to establish meaningful relationships with people from the host culture; and they are less ethnocentric.

Similarly, Kleinjans (1972:192) takes the position that the effective communicator

> sees people first and representatives of cultures second; knows people are basically good; knows the value of other cultures as well as that of his or her own; has control over his or her visceral reactions; speaks with hopefulness and candor; and has inner security and is able to feel comfortable being different from other people.

The following illustrations, which take into account interpersonal relationships, provide examples of how our attitudes and stereotypes create expectations that often lead us to misinterpret messages we receive from people. They are, out of necessity, stereotypical.

Carr (1973:77) states that

> Unlike North Americans who use four dimensions to distinguish among different types of relationships (Cooperative-friendly to competitive hostile; equal to unequal; intense to superficial; and socioemotional-informal to task-oriented-formal), the Chinese categorize people into just two categories: people they don't know - strangers, and people they know intimately.
>
> The Chinese have different rules for interacting with people in each of these categories. In dealing with strangers, the Chinese are cautious. Strangers are not seen as human; if people have contact with strangers, the strangers are not recognized as people. Asking strangers to excuse you for bumping into them is like saying "excuse me" to a chair. Consider the misunderstandings that might occur when North Americans are strangers in Asia. As previously indicated, Asians tend to avoid contact with strangers. The strangers from North America have a different approach to people who are unknown and unfamiliar: don't avoid them, approach them and try to get to know them. In other words, the strangers are applying a different communication rule for dealing with people who are unknown. Applying this rule in Asia might lead only to frustration. Since the North Americans are strangers, Asians would see them as

'nonpersons" and the rules of etiquette would not apply to interactions with them. These different rules would lead each party to make faulty attributions about the other's behaviour. The strangers, in all likelihood would see the Asians as standoffish and impolite, while the Asians might see the strangers as overly aggressive and impolite. Only by becoming aware of each other's expectations regarding categories of relationships can the two parties begin to correctly interpret and make more accurate attributions about each other's behaviour.

Triandis (1975:89,90) provides an example which can be used to illustrate the nature of intercultural attributions. Triandis describes the interaction between a North American supervisor who wants employees to participate in his decisions (a norm in the United States), and a Greek subordinate, who expects to be told what to do (a norm in Greece).

Behaviour	Attribution
American: How long will it take you to finish this report?	*American:* I asked him to participate.
	Greek: His behaviour makes no sense. He is the boss. Why doesn't he tell me?
Greek: I do not know. How long should it take?	*American:* He refuses to take responsibility.
	Greek: I asked him for an order.
American: You are in the best position to analyze time requirements.	*American:* I press him to take responsibility for his own actions.
	Greek: What nonsense! I better give him an answer.
Greek: 10 days	*American:* He lacks the ability to estimate time. This estimate is totally inadequate.
American: Take 15 days. Is it agreed you will do it in 15 days?	*American:* I offer a contract.
	Greek: These are my orders. 15 days.

In fact the report needed 30 days of regular work. So the Greek worked day and night, but at the end of the 15th day, he still needed one more day's work.

Behaviour	Attribute
American: Where is my report?	*American:* I am making sure he fulfills his contract.
	Greek: He is asking for the report.
	(Both attribute that it is not ready.)
Greek: It will be ready tomorrow.	
American: But we had agreed that it would be ready today.	*American:* I must teach him to fulfill a contract.
	Greek: The stupid, incompetent boss! Not only did he give me wrong orders, but he does not even appreciate that I did a 30-day job in 16 days.
The Greek hands in his resignation.	The American is surprised.
	Greek: I cannot work for such a man.

The above illustrates how people from different cultures may make different attributions about the same behaviour, and reinforces the importance of both parties becoming aware of how cultural norms influence behaviour.

The controversy of allowing Sikhs to wear turbans in Legion Halls and in the RCMP is a further example of problems which can emerge when we interpret others' behaviours according to our own frame of reference. It is also an indication of how Canada's multiculturalism policy can fail to do what it espouses to do, i.e. to acknowledge the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage.

> To view the turban as just another kind of hat, with no significance beyond
> sheltering the head, is to say that a cross worn on a chain is of no significance
> beyond a decoration for the neck: it is to reveal a deep ignorance of the ways
> and beliefs of others. To ban either in any context is to revel in that ignorance
> and to alienate the wearer by rejecting an intimate and fundamental part of his
> or her self (Bissoondath, 1994:121).

One last example of how our attitudes and stereotypes create expectations that often lead us to misinterpret messages we receive from people can be taken from a recent spat between the Richmond District Parents' Association (an association of parents whose children attend school in Richmond) and the Richmond Chinese Parents Association For Better Education (RCPABE) (a group of Chinese parents whose children attend school in Richmond).

The RCPABE was formed in early 1992 by Chinese parents to act as a bridge and facilitator for those Chinese parents who would otherwise have barriers in communicating with the school system. The objective of the association is to work closely and cooperatively with all other parent groups and agencies, including the Richmond District Parents' Association, to provide a better education for all children in Richmond. Karen McNulty, chair of the Richmond District Parents' Association feels that the formation of the RCPABE is "ridiculous", as it will take longer for new immigrants to assimilate into the mainstream group of parents if they form their

own cultural lobbying group. The Chinese group say their Association formed to provide a less intimidating venue for the parents of local students. Cham-Wah Yuen, chair of the Richmond Chinese Parents' group says there are good reasons why immigrants feel a need to band together on educational issues: Some Chinese parents are more comfortable discussing education issues in the Chinese language, and sometimes there is a language problem and parents may not be fully able to communicate their concerns to the appropriate authority. There is also a psychological barrier that may prevent Chinese parents from attending regular parents' meetings. Many Chinese are shy about going to the school with questions and attending regular parents' meetings. (Balcom, 1994).

McNulty, and other members of The Richmond District Parents' Association, however, seem to be interpreting the RCPABE's actions according to their own cultural norms. Jayne Biasutti (1994:9), Vice-Chair of the Richmond District Parents' Association, states that

> In Richmond, where the Chinese population is growing so rapidly, promotion of parallel organizations based on Chinese versus non-Chinese only amplifies the danger of cultural segregation. I believe this happens because it is a natural human tendency to stay within one's cultural comfort zone...My biggest worry is that this unfortunate barrier will be unintentionally ingrained in our children.

If what these groups actually do is include Chinese immigrant parents in the school system, then they should be applauded for filling a void that the mainstream system has not been able to fill. However, this type of applause is not possible to elicit if one interprets the reasons for the formation of the RCPABE in an ethnocentric manner.

This last example clearly illustrates the danger of judging others behaviours from one's own cultural perspectives and assuming a direct transfer of meaning. Perhaps McNaulty's and Biasutti's apparent lack of tolerance for the existence of the Chinese parents' group is really a misunderstanding of the culture, the values, the attitudes and the patterns of communication of the Chinese people.

Stephan and Stephan (1985:64) state that communication with strangers is usually based on negative expectations. They argue people fear four types of negative consequences when interacting with strangers of a different culture:

> First we fear negative consequences for our self-concepts. We worry about feeling incompetent, confused, and not in control, anticipate discomfort, frustration, and irritation due to the awkwardness of intergroup interactions. We also may fear the loss of self-esteem, that our social identities will be threatened, and that we will feel guilty if we behave in ways that offend strangers.

> Second, we fear negative behavioural consequences will result from our communication with strangers. We may feel that strangers will exploit us, take advantage of us, or try to dominate us. We may also worry about performing poorly in the presence of strangers or worry that physical harm or verbal conflict will occur.

> Third, we fear negative evaluations of strangers. We fear rejection, disapproval, and being stereotyped negatively. These negative evaluations, in turn, can be seen as threats to our social identities.

> Finally, we fear negative evaluations by member of our own groups. If we interact with strangers, members of our ingroups may disapprove. We may fear that ingroup members will reject us, apply sanctions, or identify us with the outgroup.

Many people assume that if they have contact with members of other groups, their attitudes toward those groups will become more positive. This is not necessarily the case, as is illustrated in the example of the spat between the Richmond District Parents Association and the RCPABE. There is conflicting evidence on the exact nature of the effect of contact with strangers on intergroup attitudes. Some of the favourable conditions which tend to reduce prejudice are outlined by Amir (1969:102).

When there is equal status contact between the members of various ethnic groups; when the contact is between members of a majority group and higher status members of a minority group; when an "authority" and/or social climate are in favour of and promote the intergroup contact; when the contact is of an intimate rather than a casual nature; when the ethnic intergroup contact is pleasant or rewarding; when the members of both groups in a particular contact situation interact in functionally important activities or develop common goals or superordinate goals that are higher ranking in importance than the individual goals of each of the groups.

Similar dimensions have been presented by Walter Stephan (1985) and Cook (1957) and Allport (1954). Stephan (1985:79) isolated 13 characteristics of the contact situation that are necessary for positive attitude change toward a social group to occur as a result of individual contact with specific strangers.

1. Cooperation within groups should be maximized and competition between groups minimized.

2. Members of the in-group (groups with which people identify).
and the out-group should be of equal status both within and outside the contact situation.

3. Similarity of group members on nonstatus dimensions (beliefs, values, etc.) appears to be desirable.

4. Differences in competence should be avoided.

5. The outcomes should be positive.

6. Strong normative and institutional support for the contact should be provided.

7. The intergroup contact should have the potential to extend beyond the immediate situation.

8. Individuation of group members should be promoted.

9. Nonsuperficial contact (e.g. mutual disclosure of information) should be encouraged.

10. The contact should be voluntary.

11. Positive effects are likely to correlate with the duration of the contact.

12. The contact should occur in a variety of contexts with a variety of in-group and out-group members.

13. Equal numbers of in-group and out-group members should be used.

The studies by Amir and Stephan stress the importance of careful planning in the designing of programs which are meant to enhance intercultural communication and understanding. Clearly, it is important to ensure that the arranged contact meets as many of the conditions outlined by Amir and Stephan as possible, or the contact may actually increase tension and cause violence (Amir and Garti, 1977).

1.7 Summary

The essential challenge of cultural diversity is that it highlights the need for more people to become involved in the business of understanding one other. Underlying this challenge is the realization that understanding, as part of the learning process, is person-centered and ongoing.

Clearly, effectiveness in communicating with strangers is not unidimensional. As part of a multicultural nation and world, we must not only recognize the importance of our individual roles in the development of human relationships, but we must become actively engaged in the process of communicating and interacting effectively with others.

> In becoming intercultural, we rise above the hidden grips of culture and discover that there are many ways to be "good", "true", and "beautiful". In this process, we acquire a greater capacity to overcome cultural parochialism and develop a wider circle of identification, approaching the limit of many cultures and

ultimately of humanity itself. The process of becoming intercultural...is like climbing a high mountain. As we reach the mountaintop, we see that all paths below ultimately lead to the same summit and that each path presents a unique scenery (Rohrlich, 1987:126).

The above discussion demonstrates that our attitudes of ethnocentrism and prejudice are not set for life. We can and do change if we have contact with strangers under favourable conditions, such as those outlined by Amir and Stephan, above. This discussion also reinforces the statement made at the beginning of this paper - that in order to eliminate stereotypes and reduce prejudice, discrimination, and negative attitudes towards people of different cultures and ethnic groups, intercultural interaction must be present. *Ideally, this interaction should be a result of planned exchanges on the part of persons who not only desire favourable results, but have the skills necessary for generating and supporting positive outcomes.*

1.8 Multiculturalism in Richmond

The principal force creating an ethnically diverse population is international migration. Between 1987 and 1991 Canada received approximately 190,000 immigrants per year (Immigration and Employment Canada, 1992). Of this total, an average of 25,500 settled in British Columbia, 81% (20,650) of which located in the Lower Mainland (Immigration and Employment Canada, 1992). Outside of the City of Vancouver (which receives approximately 55.2% of new Lower Mainland immigrants), Richmond has received in recent years, and is expected to continue to receive the highest share of new immigrants in the Lower Mainland. It is estimated that on an average annual basis, 9.9% of the total immigrants to the Lower Mainland habitate in Richmond (Immigration and Employment Canada, 1992).

Primary Lower Mainland Immigrant Destinations

1987-1991
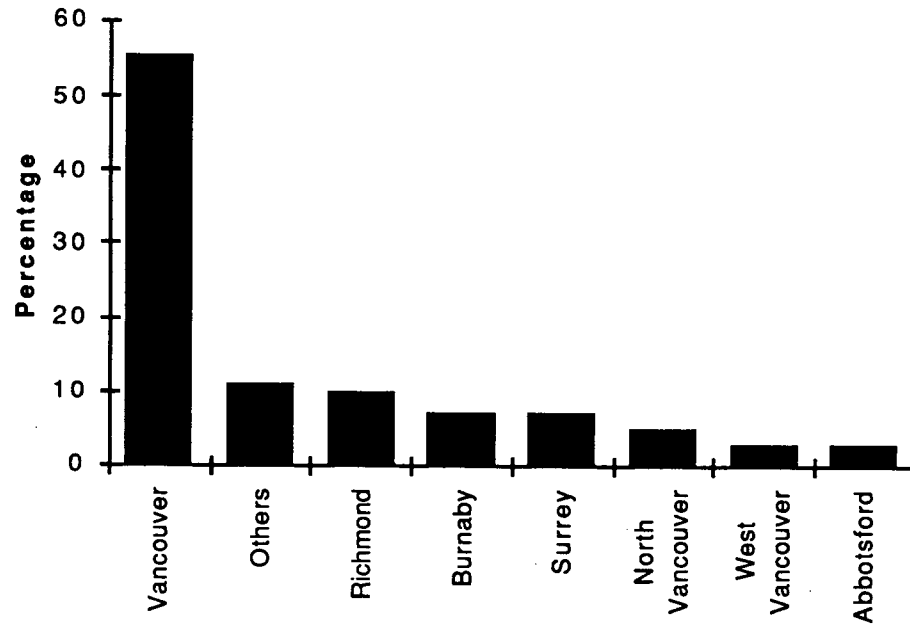
Figure 1

Source: Statistics Canada, 1991 Census

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GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF IMMIGRANTS IN THE LOWER MAINLAND, FRASER VALLEY & SECHELT PENINSULA
1991

LEGEND

☐	Total 1991 Population
▥	Total Immigrant Population
▦	Newcomers Arrived 1988-1991

GIBSONS 2875 490 10

SECHELT 6123 1040 20

CHILLIWACK 49531 7260 295

ABBOTSFORD 18864 3065 185

MISSION 26202 3950 225

MATSQUI 68064 14970 1740

MAPLE RIDGE 48422 7190 435

LANGLEY (Township & District) 86805 13650 930

PITT MEADOW 11147 1985 145

PORT COQUITLAM 36773 7265 915

COQUITLAM 84021 18640 3725

PORT MOODY 17712 3645 705

NEW WESTMINSTER 43565 8795 615

SURREY 245173 59495 7650

WHITE ROCK 16314 3570 120

DELTA 88978 18440 1930

RICHMOND 126624 36565 11920

VANCOUVER 471844 191830 37310

NORTH VANCOUVER (City & District) 113593 36475 4290

BURNABY 158858 54575 8055

WEST VANCOUVER 38783 12295 1645

SQUAMISH 11709 1875 125

Figure 2

The range of different groups in Richmond and their countries of origin has broadened in recent years. In comparison to other Lower Mainland municipalities, Richmond's population can be characterized by a relatively high degree of ethnic diversity. Using home language, mother tongue, ethnicity and place of birth as indicators of diversity, Vancouver has the highest degree of cultural diversity in the region, and Richmond is ranked second. Drawn by opportunities for a high quality of life and the dreams of freedom, of opportunity to work hard and to build a new life - a better life in a new country for oneself and one's family - these people have contributed to Richmond's rich culture and vibrant economy through their customs, traditions, architecture, dress, cuisine, and hard work.

Mr. Gerry Weiner (1991:34), Canada's former Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, wrote

> There is much debate in Canada today on the future of multiculturalism. There are some who see multiculturalism as a dangerous and divisive influence which is subverting any possibility of national unity and creating cultural and social fragmentation which is destroying the traditional values upon which Canadian society is founded. There are others who see multiculturalism as a harmless but unnecessary and expensive sideshow designed to keep ethnocultural communities happy at and between election times. There are others still who believe in multiculturalism but question its directions.

> Today's federal multiculturalism policy supports the preservation of distinct cultural heritages, not to promote or to keep Canadians apart from one another, but because a rich and broad cultural heritage is something in which all Canadians share. 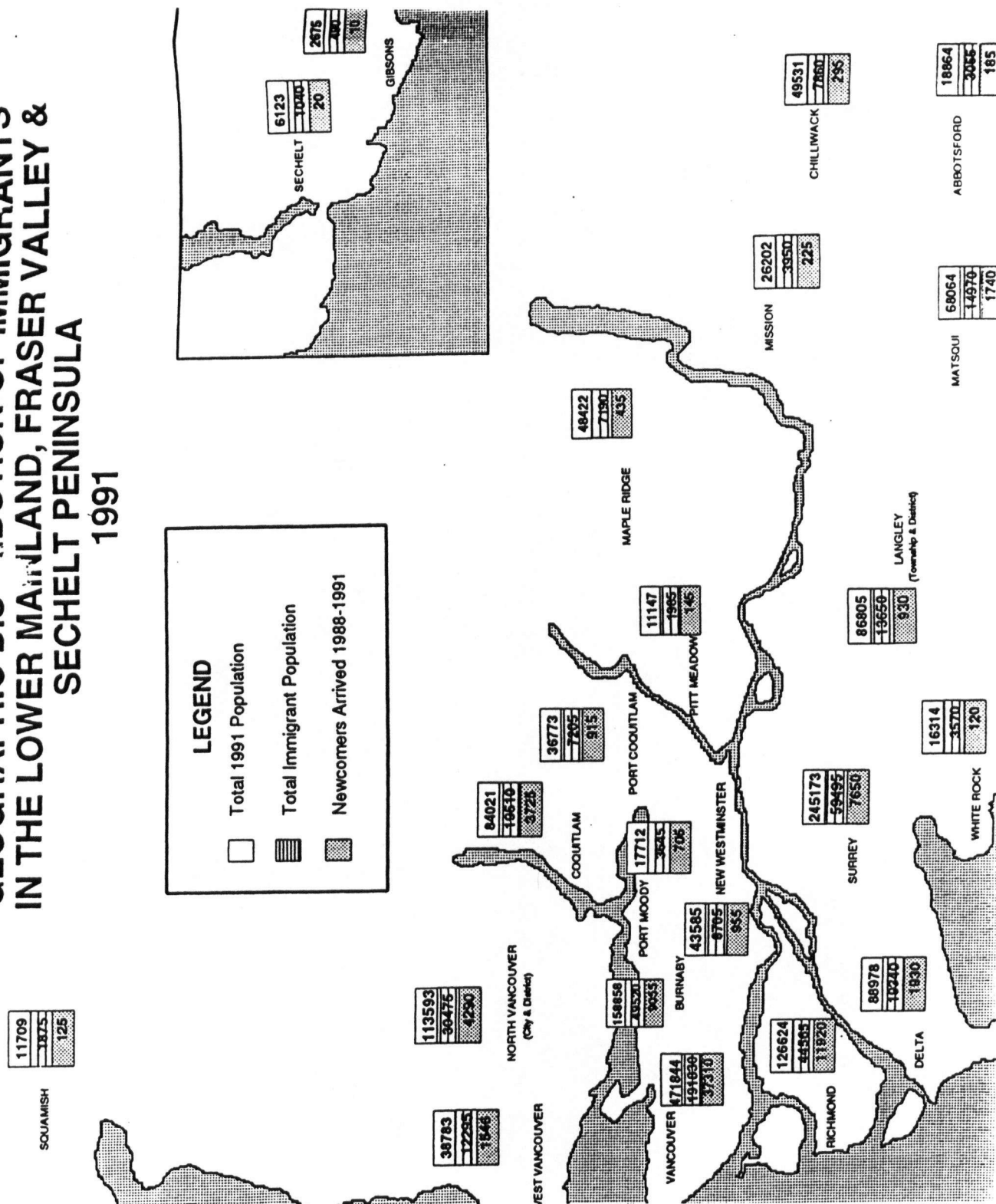It reinforces the distinctiveness of our identity and leads to social and economic opportunities. This multiculturalism is also about the removal of barriers of discrimination and ignorance which continue to stand between Canadians. Such barriers create distrust and division in our society as they inhibit the development of mutual acceptance and respect among fellow Canadians.

In keeping with the federal government's policy on multiculturalism, Richmond City Council adopted a multiculturalism policy. Among the goals of the policy of multiculturalism that Richmond has adopted is the desire to increase the acceptance of cultural diversity. As previously stated, the essential challenge of cultural diversity is that it highlights the need for more people to become involved in the business of understanding one other.

In 1990 Richmond City Council established a Co-ordinating Committee on Ethnic Relations to promote and co-ordinate the development of policies that would encourage better understanding, sensitivity and acceptance within the Richmond community towards people of diverse ethnic groups; promote equal opportunity and participation of all citizens in community affairs; and promote community awareness through public education.

How successful has the Co-ordinating Committee on Ethnic Relations been in meetings its goals? What are the social service, cultural, and civic service departments in Richmond doing to promote intercultural understanding and community harmony? What can be done to further existing initiatives? What are the greatest barriers to constructive interaction between cultural groups in Richmond? What can be done to counteract these barriers? The purpose of this thesis is to explore these critical issues.

CHAPTER TWO

A Profile of Richmond's Ethnically Diverse Population

Throughout its history, Richmond has been the home for numerous ethnic groups, starting with native groups that fished and hunted along the banks of the Fraser River. Overviews of Richmond's early history show that residents of Japanese and Chinese origin have had a long presence in the community. Early immigrants were drawn to Richmond in search of economic and social opportunities. These immigrants predominantly came from Europe. By the 1960s, approximately 90% of Richmond's population (39,718 of 43,323 people) had European roots, with people of British descent accounting for 60% (26,053) of the total population.

Since the 1960s, people from other regions of the world, especially from Asian countries (China, India, Korea, Vietnam, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Philippines) have settled in Richmond. In 1991, people of European descent represented approximately 35% of Richmond's total population (43,455 of 125,995 people), with people of British descent accounting for just over 21 percent (27,175). The remainder of the population (82,540) was comprised of a broad spectrum of ethnic and cultural groups, 98% (81,075) of which were of Asian descent.

Changes in the primary immigrant source-countries in part reflect worldwide changes in social, political and economic circumstances. As can be seen from the following diagrams, between the Census years of 1971 and 1991 the most dramatic changes in Richmond's ethnic origins have included decreases in the proportions of British, German, Dutch, Ukrainian, and Japanese origin residents; increases in the proportions of Chinese and Indo-Pakistani origin residents; and increases in the proportions of residents with multiple (other) ethnic origins.

Ethnic Origins of Richmond's Population 1961-1991

1961   n=43,323

Scandinavian 4.6%
Dutch 5.2%
German 8.4%
French 3.7%
Other 10.4%
Ukrainian 3.4%
British 60.1%

1971   n=62,120

French 3.3%
Other 14.3%
German 10.2%
Dutch 5.2%
Scandinavian 4%
Ukrainian 3.3%
British 59.7%
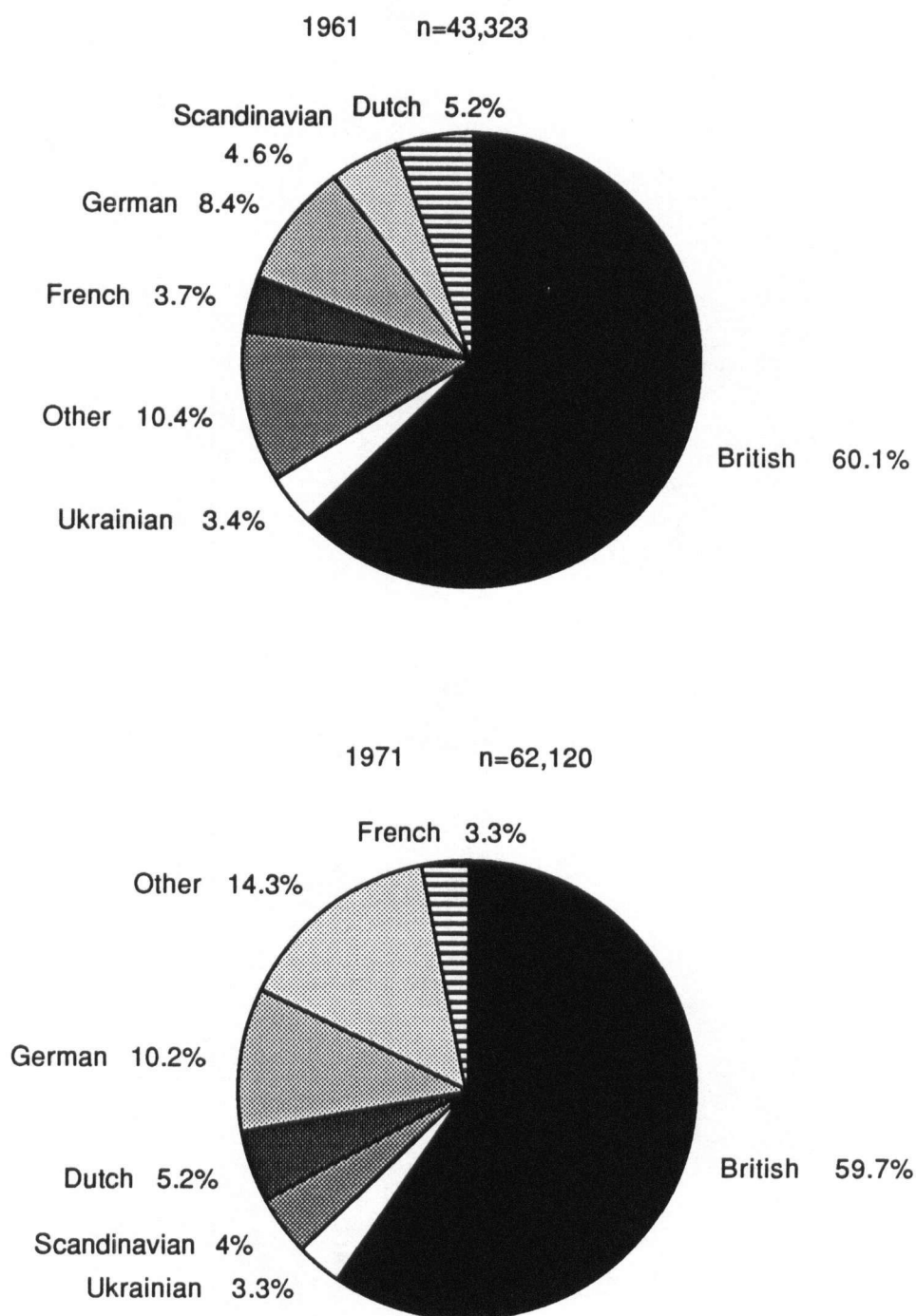
Figure 3

Source: Statistics Canada

1981   n=96,154

Chinese 7%   Dutch 2.9%
Japanese 2.6%
Indo-Pak. 4.6%
Scand. 2.2%

German 6.8%

French 2.1%

British 47.6%

Other 21.8%

Ukrainian 2.4%

1991   n=125,995

French 1.4%

British 21.6%

Other 45.8%

Ukrainian 1.2%
Dutch 1.8%

German 3.9%

Japanese 2.2%

Chinese 16.5%

Indo-Pak. 5.6%

Figure 4

Source: Statistics Canada

2.1 Recent Changes in Ethnic Origin

Statistical data from the last decade show that the numbers of immigrant landings in Richmond have been steadily increasing. About 27% of all foreign-born Richmond residents immigrated to Canada between 1988 and 1991. According to recent Employment and Immigration Canada data, the largest source of recent immigrants to Richmond has been from Hong Kong. Hong Kong immigration accounted for 38% of all immigrants to Richmond between 1988 and 1991 (1165 of 3073 people). This *proportion* peaked in 1992 at 46% of all Richmond immigrants (754 of 1622 people), and the *number* peaked in 1993 at 829 out of 2,081 immigrants (40%). Other large groups included newcomers from China, the Philippines, Taiwan, and India.

Mainland China was a major source country in 1990 and 1991 when it accounted for nearly one in four immigrants. The number of direct immigrants from China dropped to less than 5% of total Richmond immigrants in 1992 (70 of 1,622 people) and in 1993 (82 of 2,081 people). According to Richmond Planning Department (1994:3),

> This is probably more indicative of a change in route. If the birth country of 1992 and 1993 immigrants is considered, as opposed to their country of last permanent residence, the number of Hong Kong born equalled 60% of total Hong Kong emigrants in 1992 and 55% of total Hong Kong emigrants in 1993. By contrast,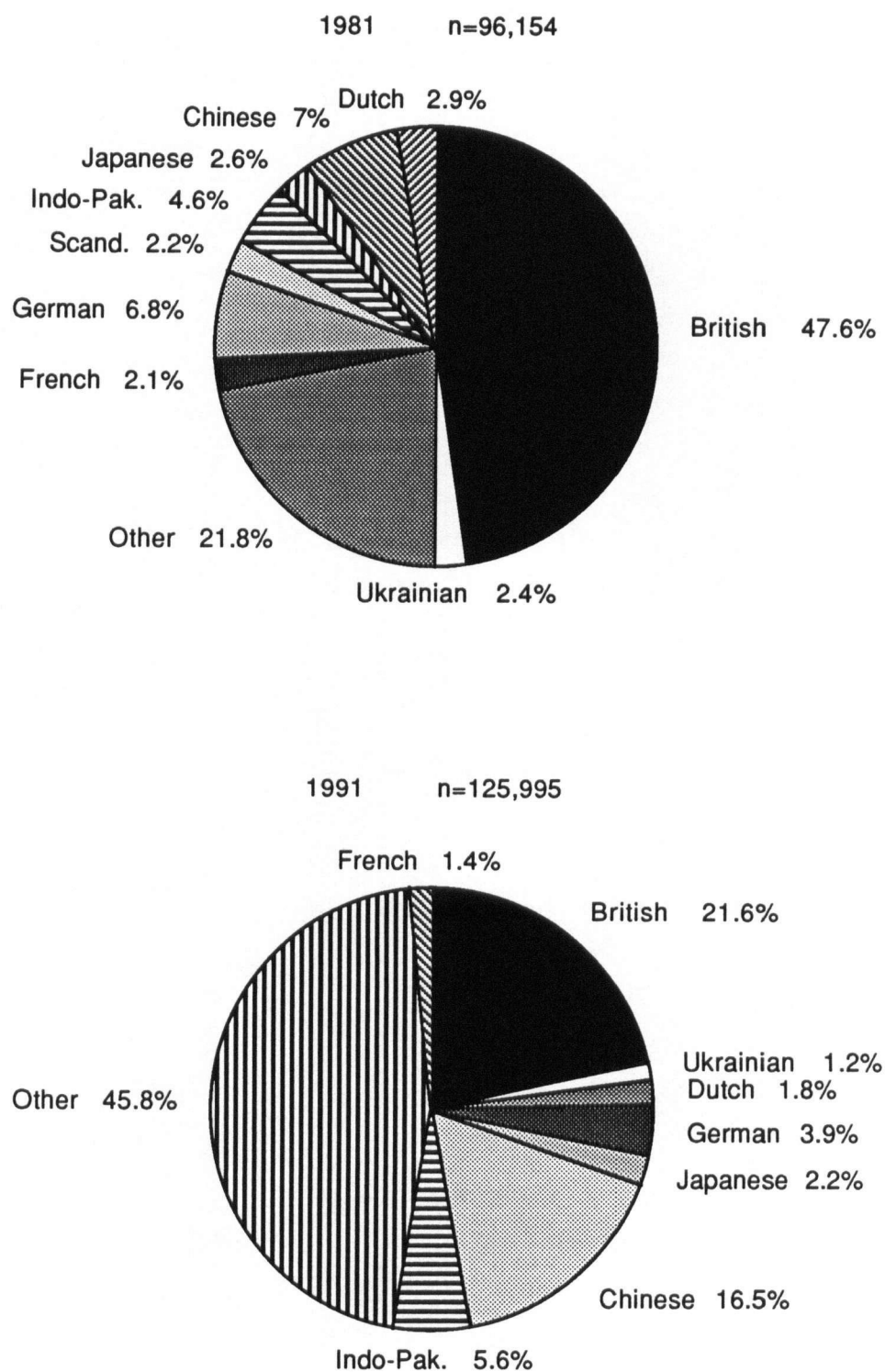 the total number of immigrants born in China was 440% in 1992 and 320% in 1993, of the number directly from China. Given the proximity and growing relationship of the two countries, one could reasonably assume that nearly half the immigrants from Hong Kong originally came from China.

After China and Hong Kong, the Philippines has been the next largest source of Richmond immigrants. Filipino immigration has grown steadily since 1990, and peaked in 1993 at nearly 15% of all Richmond immigrants (302 of 2,081 people).

Immigration from Taiwan has also increased steadily. Taiwanese immigration accounted for almost 4% of the 1990 total (35 of 832 people), and just under 9% of the 1993 immigration total (186 of 2,081 people). Immigration from India reached significant proportions in 1993, accounting for 10% of the year's total (208 of 2,081 people). These figures indicate that while the ethnic and cultural composition of Richmond has remained diverse, the origins of its immigrants have changed over recent decades, contributing to a greater degree of ethnic diversity.
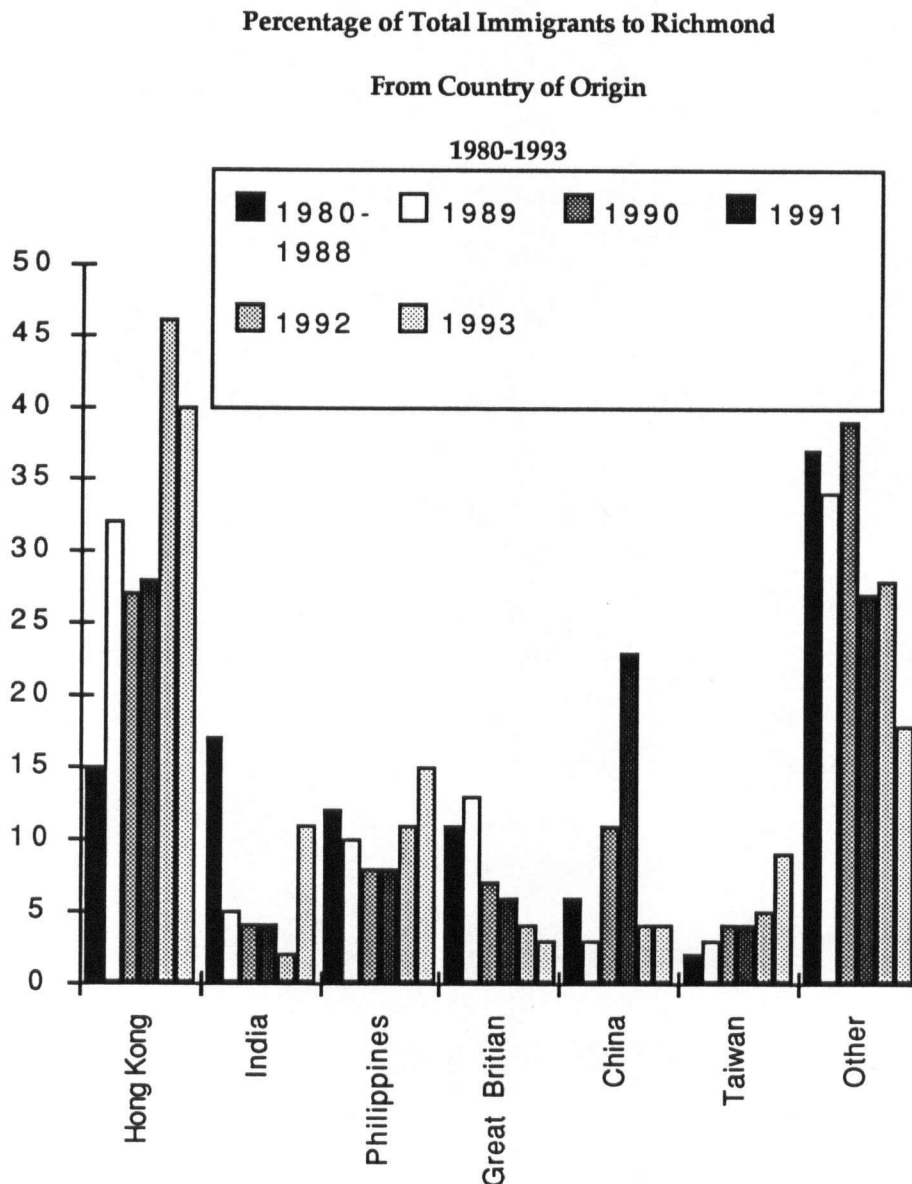
Percentage of Total Immigrants to Richmond

From Country of Origin

1980-1993

Figure 5

Source: Richmond Planning Department, 1994

2.2 Changes in Mother Tongue

According to Richmond's Economic Development Office (1994), approximately one in five Richmond residents comes from a non-English speaking background. The percentage of Richmond's population listing English as its mother tongue dropped from 83.9% (52,130 of 62,125 people) in 1971 to 77% (97,305 of 125,995 people) in 1991. According to data from immigration Canada (1994), in 1991 approximately 53% of all immigrant landings to Richmond could speak English (612 of 1,152 people). In 1992 just over 57% of all immigrant landings to Richmond could speak English (930 of 1622 people). In 1993, this number dropped slightly to 55 percent (1,200 of 2,081 people). This is low in comparison with immigrants to Delta, Burnaby, and Surrey, where 70%, 60%, and 58% respectively could speak English in 1992 (Richmond Planning Department, 1993), and is higher only when compared with immigrants to Vancouver, where 45.5% in 1992 and 45.2% in the first three quarters of 1993 had English language abilities (Richmond Planning Department, 1993).

Population By Mother Tongue (%)
Richmond, 1971-1991

	1971	1981	1991
English	83.9	76.6	69.3
French	1.1	1.1	1.1
Chinese & Japanese	2.4	6.8	*
Chinese	*	5.4	13.5
Japanese	*	1.4	*
German	5.1	3.9	2.5
Italian	0.3	0.4	0.3
Dutch	2.2	1.4	0.8
Polish	0.4	0.3	*
Punjabi	*	3.5	2.8
Ukrainian	1.2	1.1	*
Other	3.4	5.0	9.6

Figure 6

*Denotes that this language was not available to choose from in this year.
Source: Statistics Canada, 1991

In 1993, the largest group of immigrants settling in Richmond were Chinese speaking, followed by Tagalog, Punjabi, Japanese, Hindi, Spanish, and Farsi. These figures demonstrate not that the English speaking population has declined, but instead that the new growth in population is coming mainly from immigrants who are fluent in other languages (Richmond Economic Development Office, 1994).

Immigrants To Richmond By Non-English Mother Tongue, 1993
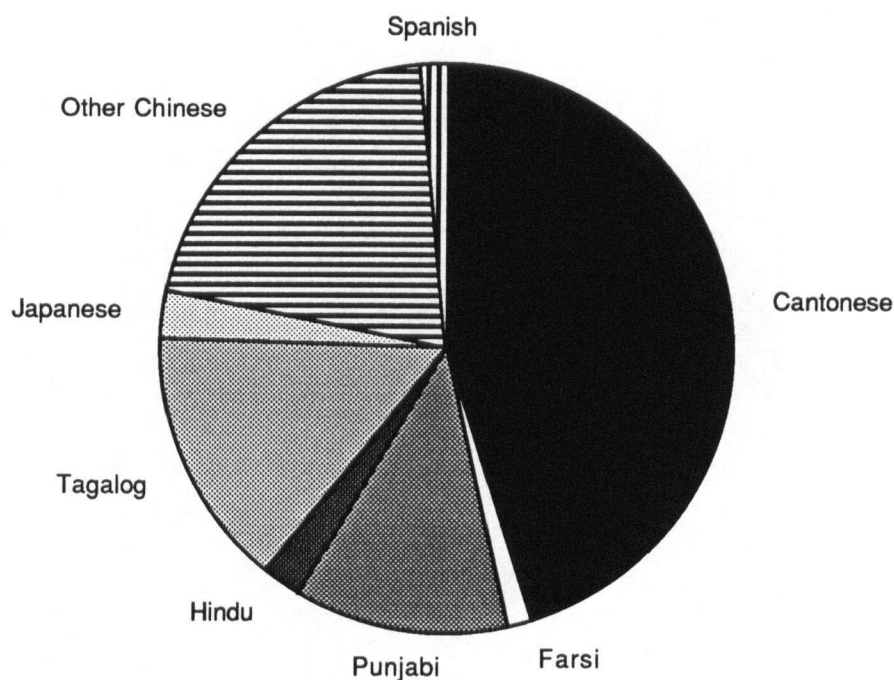
Figure 7

Source: Immigration Canada Statistics, 1990-1993

Richmond school enrollment data confirm the broader patterns suggested by immigration statistics. Between 1982 and 1987, B.C. Ministry of Education indicated that enrollment in ESL (English as a Second Language) classes averaged 200 students per year (roughly 1 percent of the student population). In 1993, 8,686 students (39% of the Richmond student population) were enrolled in ESL programs. The most dramatic gain in ESL enrollment was between 1991 and 1992, when the number of Richmond ESL students grew by almost four thousand or fifty-four

percent. Between 1992 and 1993 the number of Richmond ESL students grew by 1437, a further 17 percent. Richmond now has the second largest share of ESL students in the province, second only to Vancouver.

Enrollment In English As A Second Language Program

1982-1993
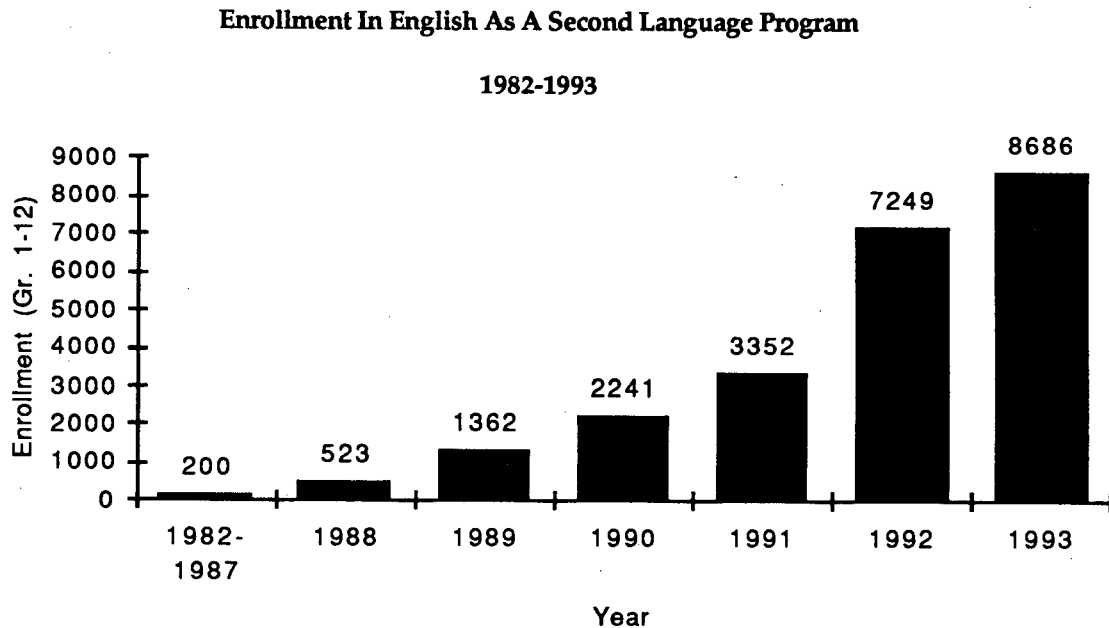
Figure 8

Source: B.C. Ministry of Education, 1994

In terms of education, ESL has become an enormous challenge in Richmond. Currently about 100 Chinese immigrants a month enter the 22,000 pupil Richmond public school system. The sheer volume is creating frustration for teachers, parents, and students. Teachers and parents are frustrated at the labour and resources that are diverted to the ESL program, often to the detriment of other programs such as enrichment. One teacher proclaimed that

> The influx of students from Hong Kong has lowered academic standards in non-
> ESL courses. Even students who arrive for a history lesson with a dictionary
> tucked under their arm still have difficulty grasping colloquialisms and
> idioms. It kills classroom discussion. Consequently, what used to be discussion
> courses now become academic courses. It's got nothing to do with their intellect -

but their ability to grasp the language. I think it's definitely holding back
classes (Puil, date unknown).

The School Board is also frustrated because while its budget has been enriched by the improved
tax base, it has not been sufficiently increased to meet existing demands (Dolphin, 1994).

2.3 Physical and Economic Planning Responses to Immigration and Growth in Richmond
Richmond has enjoyed steady growth over the years with rapid acceleration over the past
decade. During this latter period, employment grew at twice the regional rate, and business
establishments increased by over 250 percent (Richmond Economic Development Office, 1994).
Like several other Lower Mainland municipalities, Richmond's recent growth has been
attributed in part to immigration from other countries. New immigrants have contributed to
the economic activity of Richmond in major ways, resulting in expansion of the tax base. This
has allowed for the development of roads, bridges, community centres, schools, parks, and
recreational facilities (Halsey-Brandt, 1994). Immigrant investment has also created exciting
and diverse manufacturing, retail and other business services (almost 50% of the new business
licenses issued in 1993 in Richmond, were taken out by Asian entrepreneurs [Siracusa, 1994]),
which in turn has added hundreds of jobs to Richmond's employment sector.

While the face of Richmond's downtown core has been sculpted by various developers, perhaps
the most significant changes have been to the North end of Number Three Road, where
development has been due in large part to Asian entrepreneurs. The Radisson President Hotel
and Suites complex, Aberdeen Centre, Parker Place, Fairchild Square, and Yaohan Centre, are
all located within blocks of one another, are all situated on or just adjacent to Number Three
Road (the main artery of the City), are all owned by Asian entrepreneurs, and all cater to
Asian clientele. Hong Kong-style stores sell weird and wonderful Chinese herbs, antique jade,
huge selections of exotic green and black teas, $48 dollar bowls of shark's fin soup, and the
latest fashion watches, cartoonery, and accessories from Hong Kong, Taipei and Tokyo
(Dolphin, 1994). Chinese movie theaters, Chinese supermarkets, Chinese video stores, and

the affect of making new immigrants feel 'at home', and unfortunately of making many

longtime Richmond residents feel like foreigners in their own city.

The following map indicates the proximity of Yaohan Centre, President Plaza, Aberdeen Centre, and Parker Place.

The Hamptons	❶	Minoru Park; Art Gallery/Museum	❽
Lansdowne Shopping Centre	❷	Richmond Nature Park	❾
Richmond Centre Mall	❸	Fitness Centres/Bowling Lanes	❿
Aberdeen Shopping Centre	❹	Pools/Arena/Tennis Courts	⓫
Yaohan Centre	❺	Kwantlen College	⓬
President Plaza	❻	Quilchena Golf & Country Club	⓭
Parker Place	❼	Richmond Riding Club	⓮

Figure 9

These pictures illustrate the combination of Chinese and English singage at Centres catering to Chinese clientele.

Figure 10

Immigration and Asian investment have added to Richmond's employment opportunities. Richmond is currently the workplace for 83, 500 jobs (Richmond Planning Department, 1994). This represents a 52% increase over the number of jobs in 1981 (Richmond Planning Department, 1994). Now, more than one in ten of all jobs within the Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area (which stretches from Lion's Bay to Langley and Pitt Meadows) are located in Richmond. Forty-seven percent of the people who work in Richmond live in the City.

Immigrants have created a demand for new housing, and the housing inventory has grown rapidly over the past ten years. Hundreds of acres of agricultural land have been turned into residential subdivisions all over Richmond. Longtime residents of Richmond, who twenty years ago looked out their kitchen windows at cows grazing in neighbours pastures, are now looking at any number of the 1200 new housing units of various types created annually.

Housing development on the Terra Nova farmlands

Figure 11

Approximately 2000 housing units will be built around the site labeled 'Dover Crossing Park'.
Phase III of the Terra Nova development will be built on the bare patch above the 'No. 1 Road'
label. To the right of this sit the completed Phases I and II.

Figure 12

From 1986 to 1991 Richmond grew by 18,134 people, increasing at an average rate of 3.3% per

year (City of Richmond, 1994). During this period, nearly two thirds of this growth was

concentrated in three planning areas: the City Centre, which accommodated 32% of

Richmond's total population gain; Steveston, which took just under 19% of Richmond growth;

and Blundell, which took just over 14% of the total growth. Other planning areas which

accommodated significant portions of population growth included West Cambie, Broadmoor,

East Cambie, and McLennan (see following map).
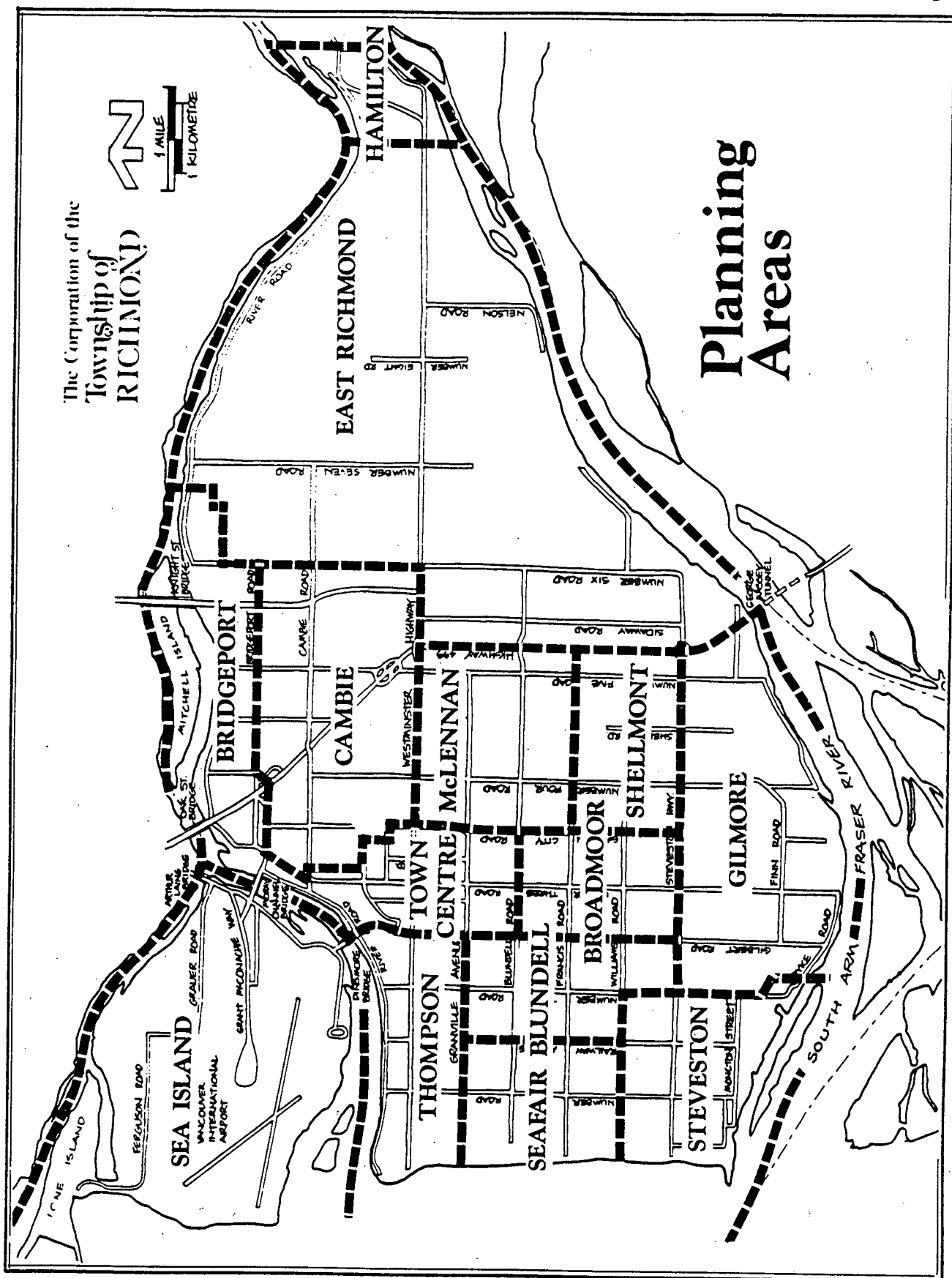
Figure 13

While it is difficult to pinpoint the exact distribution of population growth since the 1991 Census, recent housing construction activity can be studied to indicate growth patterns. In 1991 most of Richmond's new housing gains were in the City Centre (434 net units); Hamilton (187 net units); Thompson (167 net units); and West Cambie (161 net units). Net gains in 1993 were nearly 52% higher than in 1992. In 1993 most of Richmond's housing gains were predominantly in the City Centre and East Cambie. A total of 756 new dwelling units were added to the City Centre during 1993, accounting for 43% of Richmond's total net housing gain; and 514 dwelling units (or 29% of Richmond's net gain) were added in East Cambie at this time. Hamilton, East Richmond, West Cambie, and Broadmoor also experienced significant gains, but to a lesser extent. Since 1991, the development of the Terra Nova lands has accommodated a large percentage of Richmond's growing population. Detached and semi-detached residential housing units are still being developed in this area.

Terra Nova Lands Development Map

Figure 14

Richmond Housing Stock 1961-1991
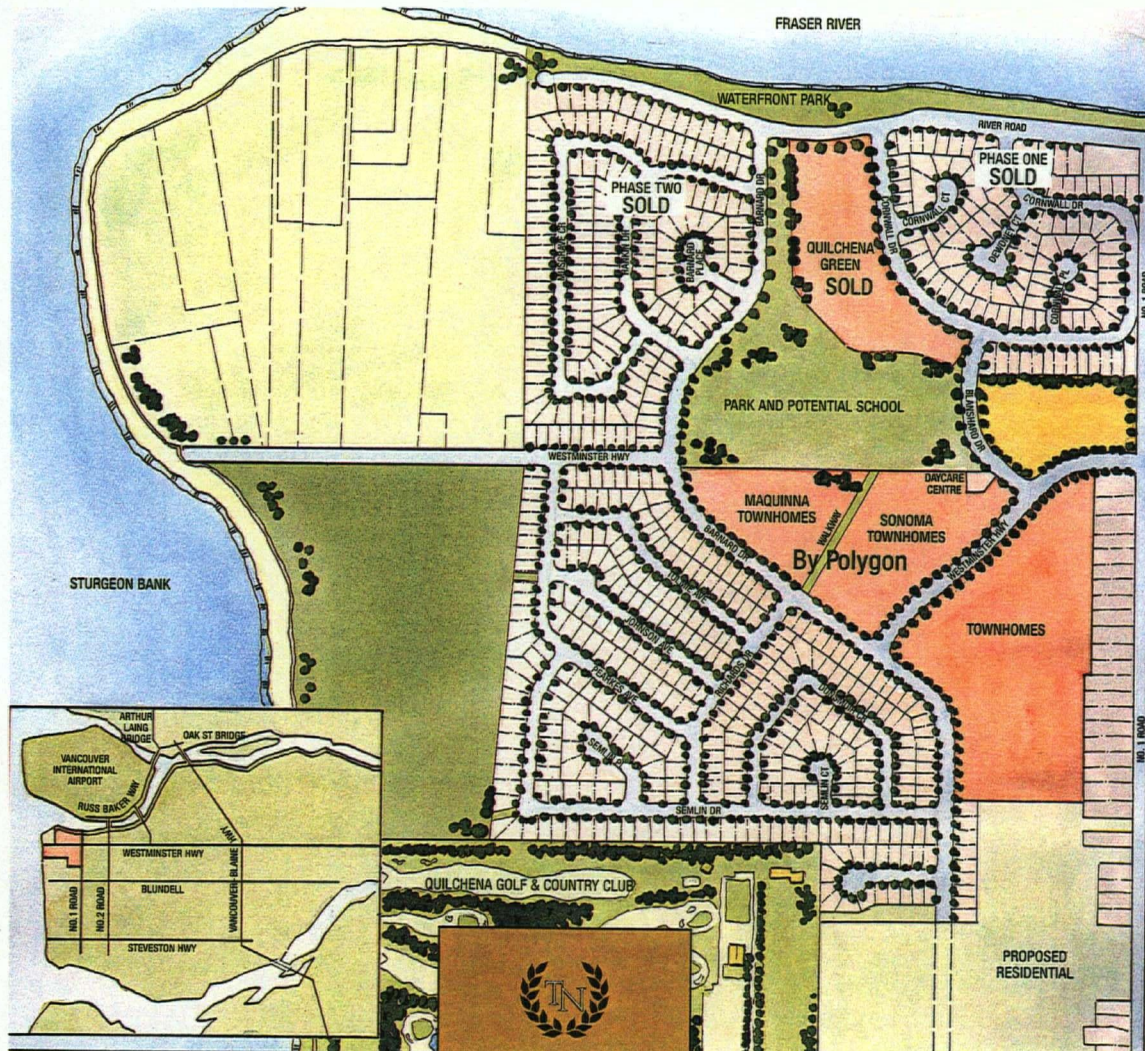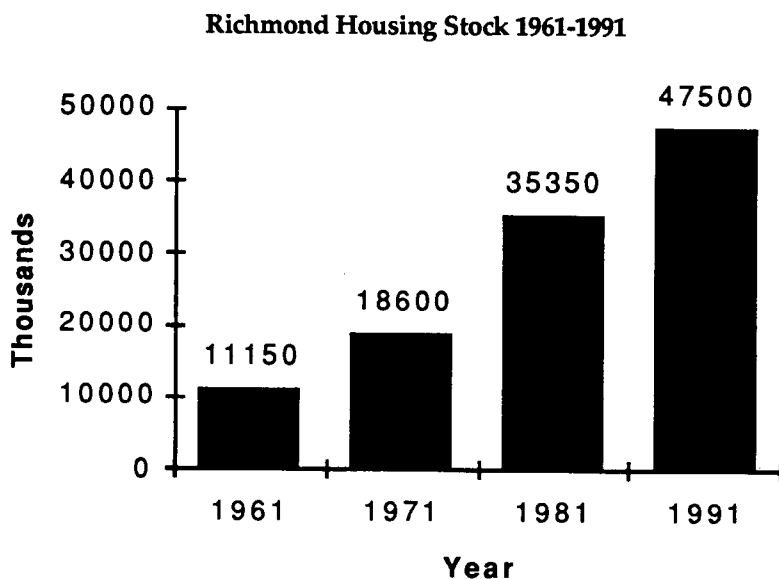
Figure 15

Source: *City of Richmond Building Permit Record*

As with the rest of the Lower Mainland, housing prices in Richmond have increased

dramatically over the past 15 years. The average price increase for all categories of housing

has been 32% since 1988 (City of Richmond, 1994). The average price increase for single family

detached homes (in dollars) over the past 15 years is depicted in the following graph.

Average Price of Single Detached Bungalow in Richmond
1979-1993
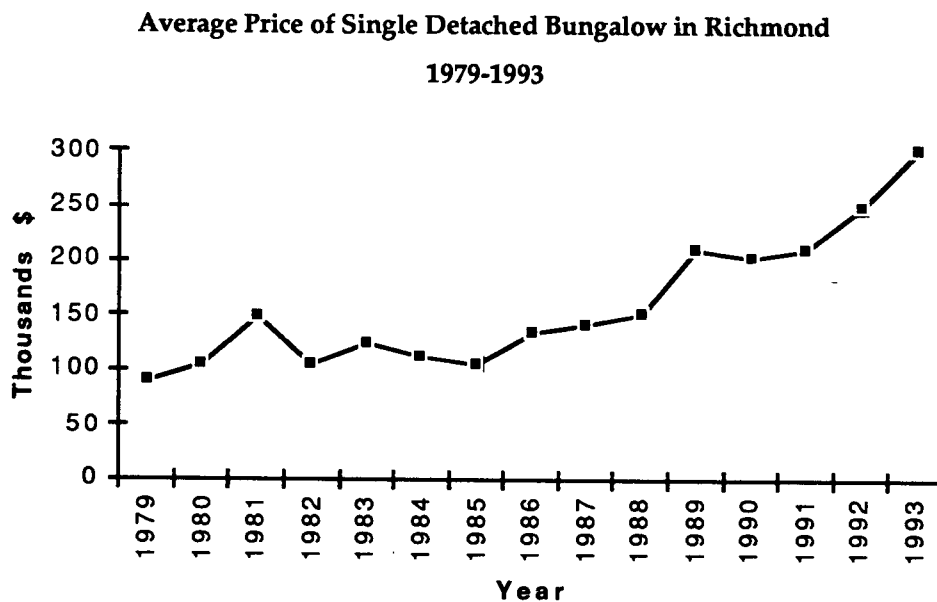
Figure 16

Source: *CMHC, 1994*

To some, the increase in housing prices is welcome news, as it indicates a vibrant growing community where a person's major investment in his/her home will be assured of positive appreciation over the years. To others, however, Richmond is growing up too quickly.

Richmond planners have had a difficult time managing the effects of the rapid growth which Richmond has experienced over the past few years. Some people feel that Richmond lacks character and that the high quality of life once boasted by the city is rapidly diminishing. While some older areas of Richmond boast strong identities, the rest of the city - sprawling hectares of condos, residential subdivisions, and shopping plazas - lacks character (Godley, 1990). This can be seen clearly in the following photographs.

While the older subdivisions in Richmond are characterized by small, well landscaped homes on medium size to large lots...

Figure 17

...the new subdivisions are characterized by large homes on small lots with very little landscaping.

Figure 18

Issues such as parking and traffic movement require special consideration in Richmond. Richmond's high water table rules out the development of underground parking spaces, so residents are often faced with the challenge of finding free parking spots at busy shopping plazas and commercial complexes. The rapid growth and development of Richmond's Town Centre has created heavy traffic at all hours of the day along Number Three Road.

The question is, why have so many people chosen Richmond as a place to reside? According to the Richmond Planning Department (1994) there are many economic, social and spiritual reasons people choose to live in Richmond: Richmond's location on the delta provides an optimum environment for commerce and industry as it is adjacent to a major international airport, close to local community airports, has easy access to waterways, and claims some of the richest agricultural land; Richmond is flat, which makes it easy to get around and ideal for building and developing; Richmond's proximity to Vancouver and the rest of the Lower Mainland allows its residents to easily access the attractions and opportunities of all the lower mainland communities without having to pay the higher cost of living associated with Vancouver; and Richmond is close to the United States border and the Tsawassen Ferry Terminal.

There are several social reasons why immigrants choose Richmond as their place of residence: Richmond's recreational, cultural and social amenities are superb as Richmond has consistently invested in providing these kinds of facilities for the needs of its growing community; services such as health, education and police protection are seen as good (Praxis Report); many immigrants have friends and family living in Richmond; the development of a second Chinatown is attracting many Chinese immigrants to the City; and access to Chinese services and stores is easy (in Richmond's downtown core, Chinese signs dominate the landscape along Number Three Road. Four Oriental Malls - Aberdeen Centre, Parker Place, President Plaza, and Yaohan Centre are situated on or close to this main street. According to one Chinese realtor

in Richmond, "None of the Chinese in the Lower Mainland shop in Chinatown anymore. That's for tourists. Aberdeen is where you can get what you want" [Dolphin, 1994:32]).

Many immigrants have spiritual reasons for residing in Richmond. Richmond is said to produce good *feng shui* (the Chinese art of placement, of balancing and enhancing the environment [Rossbach, 1987]) and many believe it is important to locate a residence to best spiritual and practical advantage. The city's Lulu island site, wedged between the north and south arms of the Fraser River, with the Pacific to the west, looks on the map like a pearl in the mouth of a dragon. To those who believe in such things, the dragon is a most auspicious presence, the pearl in its mouth an augury of fat choy, or prosperity (Dolphin, 1994).

Richmond's Position as a "Pearl in the Mouth of a Dragon"

Figure 19

Source: Westport Publishing Co., 1993

2.4 Social Impacts of Immigration and Growth In Richmond

Studies have shown that the social effects of immigration have the potential to produce a great impact on the host population. A 1991 report by the Economic Council of Canada (New Faces in the Crowd) stressed that it is clear that any sudden rapid growth in the proportion of visible minorities would have a negative impact on the attitudes of the host population.

A large proportion of new immigrants to Richmond belong to visible minority groups (eight years ago Richmond was about 8% Chinese, today it is about 35% Chinese, and by the year 2000 it is expected to be 50% Chinese). This raises questions about the potential for increased intolerance and conflict in Richmond, and establishes the need for expanded educational and informational programs designed to equip both host and newcomer with the ability to understand the needs and desires of one another.

In an article in the *Richmond News* (March 30, 1994 p. 13) Richmond Mayor Greg Halsey-Brandt discussed concerns that he was trying to be too politically correct, and acquiescing to the demands of the new immigrants, instead of taking a more proactive role to provide the vision necessary for the smooth transition of Richmond into a multicultural community without racial tension. In an article in the *Richmond Review* (May 25, 1994, p. 12) Anthony Choi, the editor of *Sei Pao* newspaper in Richmond, noted that the City should indeed be taking a more proactive role if racial tension is to be reduced. Choi stated that through multicultural initiatives the government has focused on prevention, protection, and promotion - preventing acts of racism, protecting the rights of ethnic groups, and promoting racial tolerance in general. He believes that what is missing is the need to define and promote Canada's national identity. Protectionism, without a policy that heightens awareness of traditional Canadian culture often backfires, creating racial tension. Racial tension has shown its face in Richmond through a number of different avenues. Some of these will be discussed briefly, below.

The large influx of Asian immigrants to Richmond over the past few years has coincided with an increase in ouvert intercultural tensions; and with soaring house prices, radical changes in the look of Richmond's neighbourhoods, increased auto congestion, overcrowding in schools and an increase in the number of portable classrooms, staggering increases in property tax assessments, and the development of a number of shopping plazas that cater to Asian clientele. "Some persons are sticking these two stories together, and coming up with a combined version: Asian investment is destroying the City...This is a dangerous hypothesis and it is simply not true" (Pattison, 1989:4). The assumption made by this hypothesis, does however, stress the importance of communication and education between host society members and new immigrants in order to halt the spread of racially discriminatory attitudes and false accusations.

The following letters-to-the-editor and articles which have appeared in the Richmond community newspapers over the past few years depict the hostile feelings which many residents have towards Asian immigrants.

Integration is key to participating

In respect to a recent article in your paper entitled "Second face of Parker Place coming" I just wanted to say that if the Chinese community truly wants to become part of the Canadian mosaic they should try to integrate their businesses and large projects into the community and not create another Chinatown, later to become a ghetto.

The world does not need any more such places. A man in the position of Mr. Patrick Wong of Fairchild Developments should put his energies into joining forces with Mr. Ken Lam, vice-president of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce, (also about which you had an article in the same issue) I think most Canadians want to reach the Chinese community but with articles like this I am beginning to wonder if they really want to be reached.

Our children go to school with a large portion of ESL children and the schools are trying to stamp out racism at an early age. Maybe the adult Chinese community should take a long hard look at itself and see what they can do to help as well. When I drive along No.3 Road now I do not feel that I am in Canada anymore and I wonder if in their haste to get the investment dollars our city planners have not thought about what they are doing to the community of people who were born and raised here. If charity begins at home then becoming anti-racist has to begin at home as well.

My parents live in Quebec and are not even able to put up an English sign. I think the freedom that the newcomers have is to be cherished and not abused. If this privilege is taken advantage o'

then laws would have to be made, so a little bit of common sense would go a long way in avoiding problems down the road. If I move to Hungary and open a store guess what language I would use?
**Diane Rindt,
Richmond**

Figure 20

Source: The Richmond Review, date unknown

Racism in reverse at new mall

I refer to the article on the Aberdeen Centre (Richmond Review Dec. 18/93). My husband and I visited once, to let the store holders know we wanted to be part of their community.

Only one storekeeper thanked us for visiting and hoped we would go again. Everyone also stared at us as though we had two heads. Recently, I heard of a lady

(45-year resident) who was patiently waiting for a car to move out of a parking space, only to have another driver shoot in ahead of her.

She was so upset she went over to the driver and explained she

had been waiting for that spot, the driver told her she had no rights there as she wasn't Chinese. This is racism in reverse; the Chinese are welcome to shop anywhere in Richmond, and do so.

We feel this area is now out of bounds to us, and we hope the development is not allowed to extend any further (we voted No to the recent questionnaire) or our beloved city of Richmond will be shrinking for us as it grows for others.

They really must try and blend into the community or their children will have an uneasy future.

Chinese friends of ours who

have been here for over 30 years are embarrassed at the attitude of the newcomers and hope they learn to blend in.

I feel that making certain areas for a particular group of people helps to separate rather than blend.

Coun. Evelina Vaupotic admits that Richmond is a troubled teen and yet is not worried about over development. It is time Coun. Vaupotic, and the rest of Richmond council, washed the dollar bill signs out of their eyes, so that they could see what is happening in their lust for money.
**S. Morgan,
Richmond**

Figure 21

Source: The Richmond Review, January 5, 1994

Sold licences giving rise to more racism

When news erupted that new immigrants were apparently able to purchase driver's licences from the local branch of the Ministry of Transportation, everyone had good reason to be upset.

If the allegations were true, it meant that quite a few Richmond drivers never fully qualified to receive their licence — only their pocketbooks qualified. Ignorance of the law may be an understandable argument, but that is not a plea that holds any legal weight. Let there be no mistakes -- there were some who knew they were paying more than an administrative fee when they paid up to $2,000 for the privilege to drive.

Ever since the licence controversy became known, there have been calls to have those immigrants who purchased licences prosecuted along with the Motor Vehicle Branch officials. Those who paid heavily for their licences were not charged with wrongdoing.

Police only charged those they believe were directly linked to the supposed scam.

Not every new immigrant to cross over our border in the last 10 years cheated the system. Many of those immigrants who did pay extra for their licences were not likely aware they were cheating the system. It's not an excuse, but we do not need a manhunt on our hands.

We cannot paint all new immigrants with one brush. Stereo- typing is a dangerous thing but the driving scam has led to an increase in categorizing every new immigrant as a lawbreaker.

We should feel some sympathy for those recent arrivals who were apparently cheated out of their money, but there seems to be a lack of understanding.

It seems many people are still up in arms over the whole charade.

People have a right to be angry. But the bitterness is misdirected. If there is truth to the allegations, the anger should be vented toward those who took advantage of positions of authority and trust, those who may have coerced immi- grants to bend the rules.

This should not be a racially divisive issue, but one where the lawbreakers receive just punishment. Sadly, the matter has given more fodder for hate to those who seek to turn back the clock and diminish Richmond's multicultural richness.

Driver favors English lessons

To the Editor:

This is a follow up to G. Wilton's opinion regarding our Chinese immigrants wishing to live here and enjoy our driving privi- leges.

I also feel our new immigrants should be required to attend an all- English speaking school to help them understand fully the impor- tance of courtesy and good driving skills.

I have only been a resident of Richmond for three years and al- ready my car has been hit three times by a non-English speaking driver.

In my 30 years in Alberta as a driver I did not once make the "hit list."

Because of my work here in Richmond I spend about seven hours a day driving. By the end of the day I am exhausted trying to second guess the new immigrant driving habits.

And jundging from the tired, frustrated co-workers arriving back to the office at the end of the day, something tells me that our sys- tem is allowing poor quality driv- ers on our very overcrowded streets.

Please learn and obey the laws of our land.

S. Chiasson
Richmond

Figure 22

Source: The Richmond News, March 31, 1993

Figure 23

Canadian dream worth sacrifice

By Martin van den Hemel
Staff Reporter

Seeking a better future for their two young children, Martin and Mariana Hon fled potential political turmoil in Hong Kong - which will be reverting to Chinese Communist rule in 1997 - for the freedom and natural beauty of Canada's shores in 1988.

They gave up financial security of Hong Kong's burgeoning economy when they immigrated here, and encountered many obstacles in their transition to the Canadian way of life. But Martin and Mariana say they would never give up what they now have.

One Family's Story

Contrary to popular belief when it comes to Chinese immigrants in Richmond, the Hons do not live in a $600,000 megahouse or drive a $100,000 Mercedes Benz. Like most other middle class Canadians, they are willing to work for their dream.

Richmond divided?

While the face of Richmond has changed dramatically over the past 10 years, few topics raise more heated debate among locals than the 'Asian-izing' of the city's north.

The high concentration of Asian malls along the northern strip of No. 3 Road has led many lifetime Richmondites into questioning why Asians seem to be secluding themselves from the rest of the community.

"I think that to some extent they are right," says Martin Hon. "Chinese do stick together."

New immigrants need time to overcome feelings of insecurity, and need time to become familiar with foreign surroundings before they venture into interacting more with the community at large, Martin say.

"When we came to Canada, we lost a sense of security," he adds. "If we have any feelings we want to share, (we feel that) if we were to talk to someone born here, he wouldn't understand."

But it's just a matter of time before he and his family reaches out and into the community.

Mariana feels that locals might be misinterpreting the reasons why Asians surround themselves with their kinsmen.

"It isn't that we want to set up our own world or set up a wall."

The fact that many of Richmond's Asian residents live close to one another and build their malls in the same area, is understandable, says T.N. Foo, program director of the United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society.

"To me it is natural, particularly for new immigrants, to cling to their own kinsmen to start with," Foo says.

Many locals have accused the Chinese of 'ghetto-izing' themselves, but Foo says he doesn't believe that is true.

As soon as Asians learn the customs, the language and the culture here in Canada, they will readily merge with the rest of the community, he says.

And the concentration of Asian malls in the north part of No. 3 Road is just as understandable, Foo says; sound business strategy has dictated their positioning.

"It is a good market strategy to keep ethnic malls close together. The more they concentrate them, the more they can attract people to the area."

Asians from throughout the Lower Mainland have been drawn to Richmond because of the appeal of 'one-stop Asian shopping,' Foo says.

'They're all rich'

The skyrocketing housing prices in Richmond - blamed by some on the influx of Asian money into the Lower Mainland - has prompted locals to stereotype Hong Kong immigrants as extremely wealthy.

But this is not true, Martin says.

Within his circle of associates and friends at the North Richmond Alliance Church, Martin estimates that only five per cent of the congregation can be classified as rich while the remaining majority enjoy the same standard of living as the average Richmond citizen.

See Page 3

The Hons face obstacles like discrimination and economic uncertainty with the faith that they made the right move - to Richmond.

Figure 24

Source: The Richmond Review, January 21, 1995

'Monster homes' have been an issue in Richmond over the past few years. On the letters-to-the-editor pages of the *Richmond Review* and the *Richmond News*, the monster home issue has kindled passions like little else. The homes, and the destruction of trees and gardens which often accompany these 'monstrosities', are often blamed on what has become known as the 'Asian invasion'. Stanbury and Todd (1989:13) report that "many long-time residents see the city as a 'garden city' with plenty of open space devoted to lawns, shrubs, gardens, and trees around the houses. This ideal figures importantly in the protests against mega or monster homes". Last fall at a neighbourhood meeting to discuss monster homes, one long time resident was reduced to tears as he described how his once quiet and leafy street of modest 2,000 square foot split-level homes was being transformed by the "3,000 square foot behemoths that are sprouting in Richmond like geometric toadstools" (Dolphin, 1994:37).

The addition of these three large houses on one block has dramatically changed the look of the neighbourhood, which was originally characterized by medium sized houses on large, well landscaped lots (see following page).

Figure 25

Large, well landscaped lots with medium sized homes which traditionally existed in many areas of Richmond

Figure 26

Stanbury and Todd suggest that the extremely hostile responses to the large new homes that have emerged in this city are not brought about by aesthetics or by the fact that such houses can overshadow or overlook adjacent smaller homes. Instead, they believe that the concerns about monster homes may, in actuality be a 'red herring' for other fears that cannot be expressed in a more direct fashion. For example, the fear of wealthy 'yacht people' from Hong Kong (as opposed to the less threatening poor 'boat people') taking over the city. Donald Gutstein (1988:114) expands on this notion and writes

> The concern about the growing Hong Kong presence is probably based not on the race of the immigrants, but on a sense that our city is changing and we have little control over what is happening. We are losing our identity as a unique city. Hong Kong style investment is the latest and most visible example.

Education is important in understanding issues which affect people's quality of life. Richmondites must realize that it is neither fair nor useful to blame Asian immigration for the changing face of the city. Communication, patience and tolerance between developers, City officials, long-time residents, and new immigrants is of upmost importance if all are to cohabit peacefully in this changing environment. The initiation of community urban design panels, and the scheduling of regular meetings between representatives of community groups, neighbourhood associations, City officials, developers, architects, new immigrants, and long-time residents would enable all to gain a better understanding of each other, and work collectively as partners in planning for a healthy and sustainable community.

A further example of racial tension that exists in Richmond is what has become known as the 'Christmas light' situation. Last Christmas many residents were angry that the colored lights, traditionally hung in a Christmas tree design on top of City Hall, were missing. The well-meaning mayor's decision to remove the Christmas ornaments and allow different cultural groups to display their seasonal decorations in a nearby park, was adopted to better reflect the city's cultural diversity. Many longtime residents saw this as a Canadian tradition being

sacrificed for the wants of cultural minority groups. A similar cry came after traditional local

school Christmas concerts were replaced by generic 'Winterfests'.

Tolerance a two-way street

The Christmas tree is not the symbol of a religion; it is one symbol of Christmas which is a Christian holiday. There is a difference.

One can only guess as to which other religious groups requested the display of their religious symbols (on the roof of city hall), but hopefully they realize Christmas and all its attendant symbology like the tree, Santa Claus, reindeer, and elves are a North American tradition!

I assume city hall eliminated the traditional lighted "tree" as some ill-conceived attempt at political correctness.

Canadians old, new, Christian and non-Christian must realize the importance of tradition, and respect it.

Religious, racial and cultural tolerance is a two-way street.

Tony Milbradt,
Richmond

First turbans, now this

I recently read a letter in the paper directing that advertisers stop referring to the "Christmas Season" in their ads and in future use the term "holiday season".

The reason stated for this was the tremendous number of new immigrants in this country that don't believe in Christ.

The next obvious step will be our Christmas carols – sorry, I mean our Holiday Season carols.

"I'm dreaming of a white Holiday Season..."

First it was turbans, now Christmas. What is next on the racist agenda?

R.R. Smith,
Richmond

Editor's note: The letter you are referring to was an editorial in the Dec. 4th issue noting that advertisers, among others, are becoming sensitive to the fact that not only Christians celebrate at this time of year.

Figure 27

Source: The Richmond Review, December 22, 1993

Beliefs of others taking over here

I am a born and raised Canadian and am having trouble with the stance that our various levels of government have taken towards the rights and beliefs of the vast number of immigrants to this country.

A good example is the lead story on the front page of the Wednesday Dec. 15 issue of The Review where our mayor had chosen not to have the normal "Christmas tree" atop city hall this year. Yes, Mr. Halsey-Brandt, I realize it was just "a pole with wires strung from it bearing colored lights that looked like a tree." It's not the actual article but the appearance that counts.

After all, Christmas has always been a time for kids. Would a kid know the difference between these colored lights strung from a pole and a real tree? Or, more to the point, could he or she care? Christmas has always been a part of Canadian (as well as many other countries) traditions. Mr. Halsey-Brandt's decision only further shows how local governments are influenced by the comments of other ethnic communities. Ask any elementary school child what Christmas is, and the answer will invariably be the same, "That's when Santa Claus comes." If children view Christmas this way, what is wrong with the parents?

If I were a new immigrant to another country I would hope that I would be willing to accept the ways and traditions of this new country without trying to force my beliefs and traditions on the population.

As a further example of the pressures of these various ethnic communities, have you tried to read the signs on the stores around the area of Cambie and No. 3 Road? I thought that the languages of this "bilingual country" were English and French, but I guess I was mistaken. I find this hard to accept.

Why is it that "we" (traditional Canadians) are becoming a minority,? Just walk into Richmond Centre and have a look around or, better yet, try walking into a school classroom and checking how many "ESL" students there are.

One more question I have is: whatever happened to the traditional "Christmas concert" at our local elementary schools? When did this "We Are The World" concept ever have anything to do with a traditional Christmas? I don't mind if the schools want to have a multicultural concert - after all we are all part of this country regardless of our heritage - I just don't believe it should interfere with a traditional Christmas concert. Why not a "We Are The World" concert in the spring or fall? Why interfere with the one special time kids have left?

Ray Boulton,
Richmond

Figure 28

Source: The Richmond Review, December 22, 1993

'Tolerance' putting damper on Christmas

First it was the turbans, then the monster houses. Now we have to change Christmas concerts to winter festivals?

I have had it up to here - the one time of year we are kinder to each other, everyone is full of good fellowship we spend too much, we rush madly around, the one time of year that mankind is of one heart - now we have to bend even further backwards as not to offend these new arrivals?

We celebrate Christ's birthday and try to be better and do better next year - is that wrong?

I love Christmas. Every year of my 63, Christmas has been the best time of most of our lives.

I remember snow in Saskatchewan, Christmas Eve mass, sleigh rides, ice skating on the Souris River, the tree lighting at city hall, church concerts, my brown paper bag with an orange and a few nuts and candies - cocoa made with hot water - these treasures we have grown up with and I want my children and grandchildren to continue having the same warm memories I hold dear.

Tolerance only goes so far. If some people do not want to join in our celebration of Christmas, tell them to close their ears to the carols and shut their eyes to the decorations and lights and leave us to celebrate this joyous season.

A Merry Christmas to all who love the season.

Helen Flynn, Richmond

Put the Christmas lights back on

As a 36 year resident of Richmond (born and raised), I am appalled to think that the mayor, council or any Richmond resident could support the idea of disallowing a Christmas tree and the lights from display at city hall and city works yard.

I grew up with that tradition and culture in place as part of my community. I feel it's loss will only widen any split between any new cultures moving into this city. The resentment factor alone as an issue must not have been taken into consideration.

There is not one person that I have talked to who supports this decision. To many, the tree and lights represent the spirit that the season is supposed to convey, not any religious view.

What about my culture? My children's culture? We seem quick to show we are willing to help preserve the cultures of peoples moving here. Yet also quick to insult the traditions of the very people who made this city what it is.

In the spirit of Christmas please put the lights back and let them represent what they are supposed to, "Peace on earth and goodwill to men."

David Richards, Richmond

Figure 29

Source: The Richmond Review, December 18, 1993

Don't blame immigrants

I was really disturbed after reading Mr. Boulton's letter to the editor appearing on your Dec. 22 issue regarding the decision of Richmond city council not to put up a Christmas tree (design made of lights) at the city hall this year.

I truly believe Mr. Boulton is putting all the blame on the new immigrants to Richmond, specifically the Chinese. I found this too unfortunate as they were made scapegoats in this whole issue. Maybe Mr. Boulton does not realize that Hong Kong is an international city and most of the people, including myself, who were born and raised there are very westernized. For me, I celebrate Christmas whether I am in Hong Kong or in Canada.

I agree entirely with Mr. Boulton's comments: "If I were a new immigrant to another country I would hope that I would be willing to accept the ways and traditions of this new country without trying to force my beliefs and traditions on the population." However, I do not think that the current decision has been influenced by lobbying efforts from any ethnic group. As far as I know, none of my immigrant friends ever said anything against the Christmas tree at city hall.

If Mr. Boulton visited Parker Place and Aberdeen Centre, with the big Christmas tree in front of the mall, the snowman inside and all the Christmas decorations put up by the shops, I am sure he would agree that they are celebrating Christmas in a traditional way like the rest of the Canadians.

It is sad to note that Mr. Boulton feels uncomfortable with the growing Asian population in Richmond by saying that he becomes a minority. Does it mean that he feels more comfortable with immigrants coming from the traditional European source? Overall, I think Mr. Boulton is taking a too biased a view of the new immigrants which can only create tension in our community instead of harmony we all hope for.

In order to eliminate this misunderstanding, I would appreciate if our mayor, Mr. Halsey-Brandt, can clarify if the city council's decision of not putting up a Christmas tree this year is influenced by comments from ethnic communities here.

Georgiana Lee,
Richmond

Figure 30

Source: The Richmond Review, January 5, 1994

Chinese getting the rap

I have been reading the Review for a long time. I am really sick and tired of the anti-immigrant attitude of some people. They grabbed every chance they got to step on the immigrants or more precisely the 'Asian' immigrants or in fact, to be exact, the 'Chinese' immigrants.

First it was the chopping down of trees in backyards, then the megahouse issue, then the fathers working overseas leaving the families behind. I wonder whether it is only the new Chinese immigrants who are doing all that. Are no Canadians or Caucasians doing the above things? Or did one person do something bad and his whole race got condemned?

And now the Christmas tree thing! Although no one is actually pointing fingers at the new 'Chinese' immigrants, people reading the newspaper know clearly who those who bring up this issue are referring to. Why don't we ask the mayor which group of people was opposed to the putting up the Christmas tree (lights) on top of city hall. I surely don't think that any Chinese person would do such a dumb thing.

We are not the bossy, manipulating sort of people some of you might think. A lot of us are well educated and know how to respect others. We know very well that we are coming to 'your' country and we are prepared to accept and follow your customs. It is just the normal and decent thing to do. We won't ask you to change your life for us newcomers, surely not the way you did to the natives.

We enjoy family gatherings, maybe even more than some of you. We like holidays and we celebrate Christmas like you do. Go to Hong Kong and have a look. The holiday spirit there is much higher than here. In fact, I was quite surprised the first year I arrived to Canada to find that the Christmas was so quiet and silent. I hate the fact that some people actually go so far as to oppose to people celebrating their festivals.

If Canada continues like this with high expenditures and low productivity, one day it might really be 'taken over'. It surely won't be by the new immigrants, but more likely by its strong neighbors.

Loretta Wong,
Richmond

Figure 31

Source: The Richmond Review, January 5, 1994

Christmas lights and Christmas concerts are not 'Canadian' traditions. They are symbols depicting a religious holiday which many residents do not celebrate. The multicultural policy which the city has adopted recognizes the ethnocultural diversity of Richmond as something to celebrate. It is a policy of inclusion. Therefore all cultures and ethnic groups should be given the opportunity to display ornaments depicting their culture's holiday, without the exclusion or monopolization of any one group. The fact that some residents do not appreciate this concept is indicative of the fact that they do not understand, or cannot accept the multiculturalism policy that the City has adopted. It is therefore necessary that a means be found to educate all residents about what it means to live in a city that has adopted a policy of multiculturalism. Until this occurs, Richmond cannot truly be considered a multicultural society. What it is, is a society that espouses all the right things about living together, but which practises subtle forms of segregation.

Concerns have been directed toward shop signs printed in other than the official languages. Many people feel that by allowing shop signs to be printed in Chinese, the government is standing in the way of cultural integration. Some people would like to see laws in place that disallow signs to be printed in anything but French and English, because they feel this will break down the language barriers that exist in Richmond and elsewhere in Canada (Choi, 1994). These beliefs seem to indicate that perhaps Richmond's multiculturalism policy is not familiar to all residents, or is confusing. The policy was designed to preserve and enhance the cultural heritage of all Canadians. However, this policy has failed to promote intercultural understanding and accommodation. Perhaps one reason for this is that the policy is quite vague. Just when is it acceptable to preserve and enhance one's own cultural heritage, and what elements of a culture is it acceptable to preserve? If there is an answer to this question, it has not been clearly articulated. As a result, Richmond's multicultural policy has produced social fragmentation, social tensions, and community resentment.

Very few political leaders have talked frankly and openly about the realities of tensions arising when people from disparate cultures come into contact. To even raise the issue is to very likely lay oneself open to an allegation of being a racist - or of at least failing to support the official federal ideal of a multicultural society (Stanbury and Todd, 1990). It is unrealistic to expect that tensions will not occur, especially when the dominant culture feels threatened by a large influx of immigrants with a different culture and an apparent profusion of wealth. Immigration is a highly sensitive issue. We must stop labelling people's concerns as racist if we want people to talk about these concerns in a positive manner, especially since these concerns are being faced by many cities in Canada.

2.5 Richmond Does Not Stand Alone - The Story of Peel, Ontario

In a reversal of traditional settlement patterns, new immigrants to Canada are not moving to downtown city cores but, as in Richmond, are following the middle class to the suburbs. A series of recent articles in *The Globe and Mail* (December 28-30, 1994) which discuss how some of Canada's regional municipalities have become laboratories for government policies on immigration and multiculturalism, establish that Richmond's situation is not unique - other large metropolitan Canadian city suburbs are experiencing similar intercultural and social transitions and challenges.

The Globe and Mail articles discuss the municipality of Peel, Ontario, a suburb just west of Toronto. The growth and urbanization of Peel mirrors that of Richmond. Peel is just a few kilometres away from Pearson International Airport. Vancouver International Airport is located in Richmond. According to the 1991 Census, about 36% of Peel's population was not born in Canada. One in three Richmond residents were born outside of Canada during this same Census year. In less than two decades, the apple orchards and dairy farms have been paved over and most of the Peel region has become an urban, multicultural, and multiracial society. Two decades ago, Richmond was primarily a farming and fishing community. Today, it is an urban city. The astonishing ethnic immigration and diversity of Peel has taken place at a

rapid rate. "Suddenly, school boards, the police, and social service agencies are scrambling as they realize they cannot even communicate with large segments of the community" (Sarick, 1994:6). Richmond has experienced similar social problems. One in five residents now come from a non-English speaking background, and in 1993, only 55% of all immigrant landings to Richmond could speak English.

> The influx of immigrants, the engine driving Peel's phenomenal growth, is also placing new demands on the region. Schools, police and municipal services are being asked to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse community while budgets are capped. Not only has the community grown dramatically, the issues have switched from being rural to suburban to urban. [Peel] now has downtown cores and all of the challenges any city has (Sarick, 1994:6).

Again, the same can be said about Richmond. Richmond's recent growth has been attributed in part to immigration from other countries. New immigrants have contributed to the economic activity of Richmond in many ways, resulting in the expansion of the tax base. Immigrant investment has also created exciting and diverse manufacturing, retail, and other business services. The City faces some of the adverse aspects of growth as well - increased crime rate, heavy traffic, and what some feel is helter-skelter development.

> At its heart [Peel] is still a conservative community, resisting change thrust upon it...For established residents and newcomers, Peel's transition from a white suburb to a an urban, multicultural society has sometimes been difficult...Unlike older Canadian cities that have always had substantial immigrant communities, Peel first experienced the surge of newcomers about a decade ago, shortly before all levels of government began to feel the pinch of economic restraint.

> At a time when Peel needed to build more schools, hire more teachers and add more social services, the federal and provincial governments began to cut back.

> The result is that strains are starting to show in the region's social fabric. Representation in the police force, school board and municipal government has not kept pace with changes in the make-up of the community. Immigrant

students receive less English instruction than they did a few years ago and classes are larger. In high schools with large numbers of minority students, fights and tensions between racial groups are not infrequent (Sarick, 1994:6).

Once again, Richmond is experiencing similar tensions.

As has been forecast for Richmond, the forecast for Peel is more of the same - more people, more traffic, more portable classrooms, and more immigrants. Although the federal government has slightly lowered immigration levels, Peel, Richmond, and many other suburban communities will continue to attract a substantial number of newcomers who are drawn to the well-established ethnic communities. The increase in ethnocultural plurality experienced by Peel, Richmond, and other communities emphasizes the need for community harmony. In order to achieve community harmony and social success, one must interact, communicate, and accommodate people from all ethnocultural backgrounds.

CHAPTER THREE

Richmond's Response to Multiculturalism:

A Review and Critique of Current Approaches, and An Examination of Means Which Encourage

Intercultural Relations

As previously stated, among the goals of the multiculturalism policy that Richmond City Council has adopted is the desire to increase the acceptance of cultural diversity. For some time now, intercultural specialists have examined the role of effectiveness in attempting to understand the importance of intercultural encounters (Dodd, 1987). Obviously, the more effective one can be, the greater the advantages that accrue. "Among these are the ability to form better interpersonal relationships, to develop broader economic bases for business, to create more penetrating friendships, to stabilize ethnic identity, and generally to conclude intercultural tasks more effectively" (Dodd and Montalvo, 1978:3).

> The Canadian Multicultural Act recognizes the diversity of Canadians as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society. However, the Multicultural policy, which was designed to preserve and enhance the cultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve equality of all citizens, has failed to promote relationships, understanding, and accommodation between and among ethnocultural groups. In fact, it has resulted in cultural isolation, social fragmentation, social tensions, and community resentment.

> Linguistic, cultural, religious, spiritual, social, economic, and environmental issues are complex and highly interrelated. Therefore, it is only through continuous processes of two-way communication, consciousness raising, learning, anticipating problems and designing policies and programs to promote good citizenship, and acknowledging problems and addressing community issues and concerns, that we will best achieve Richmond's vision of a harmonious community of communities (Awan et al, 1994:3).

This chapter will examine and critique Richmond's response to multiculturalism; will explore barriers to constructive intercultural interaction in Richmond; and will examine means by which intercultural relations can be encouraged. This chapter will be organized in the following manner: Part One will consist of a general discussion about the structure of the cultural, multicultural, civic and social service organizations in Richmond; Part Two will examine and critique some of the initiatives that have been taken in Richmond to promote intercultural communication, understanding, and harmony; Part Three will examine what more can be done to further these initiatives; Part Four will discuss some of the greatest barriers to constructive interaction between ethnocultural groups in Richmond; and Part Five will discuss steps which can be taken to counteract these barriers and encourage harmonious relationships between ethnocultural groups.

To carry out this study, interviews were conducted with the heads of the following cultural organizations, multicultural organizations, and civic service departments in Richmond: S.U.C.C.E.S.S., Richmond Chinese Community Society, India Cultural Centre of Canada, Beth Tikvah Synagogue, The Coordinating Committee on Ethnic Relations (now called The Intercultural Advisory Council), Richmond Multicultural Concerns Society, Richmond Planning Department, The Richmond Hospital, and the Richmond School Board. In total, 10 people were interviewed; two from the Richmond Planning Department, and one from each of the other organizations/departments. Information for this study was also gathered from attending a debate by five Richmond Secondary School students on the pros and cons of ESL programs.

3.1 The Structure of the Social and Civic Service Organizations in Richmond

The social service organizations in Richmond all have affinities with each other, and with the Richmond Hospital, the R.C.M.P., Richmond School Board, Richmond City Council, Richmond Chamber of Commerce, Kwantlen College, and the Richmond Public Library. They are connected through representation on the Working Committee of the Coordinating Committee on Ethnic Relations (see section 3.2.1). By networking with each other, all

organizations and civic service departments are able to coordinate their services. The Richmond Planning Department is not actively involved with this Committee although some Committee representatives liaise with the Planning Department. Some cultural groups are represented on the Coordinating Committee. However, there are leaders of other cultural groups who are unaware of its existence. This will be discussed in more detail in Section 3.2.1. The multicultural involvement of the social service organizations and civic service departments interviewed for this thesis is briefly described below.

S.U.C.C.E.S.S. - This is a non-profit organization involved in community work, social services, settlement services and research in the Chinese community. S.U.C.C.E.S.S. provides information; counselling; interpretation; referral services; ESL classes; material on Canadian culture, customs, and values; family life education workshops; and group activities for senior citizens, women, youth, and new immigrants in the Chinese community. S.U.C.C.E.S.S. is affiliated with the Canadian Airport Newcomers Network, which offers "what you need to know to survive in Richmond" briefings in a variety of languages to all categories of new immigrants arriving at the Vancouver International Airport. Services are offered in English, French, Cantonese, Mandarin, Fukienese, Korean, Taiwanese, Filipino, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, and Persian.

Richmond Chinese Community Society - The objectives of this organization are to promote a better understanding between the Chinese community and other communities in Richmond, and to provide a variety of services to the Chinese community.

India Cultural Centre of Canada - This Society acts predominantly in a religious nature as a Sikh temple; however, efforts are made to invite all interested members of the Richmond community to the Centre where Sikh culture and customs are explained.

Beth Tikvah Synagogue - This is a conservative synagogue which acts primarily in a religious nature. Annual interethnic forums are sponsored by the synagogue, and the Rabbi lectures on Judaism at UBC, and at Richmond schools.

The Coordinating Committee on Ethnic Relations - The objectives of this Committee are outlined in detail in section 3.2.1.

Richmond Multicultural Concerns Society - This organization serves Richmond's growing ethnocultural community as a central resource for referrals, information, and diversity training workshops. The Society initiates actions to improve services to ethnocultural groups, and acts as a mediating body between ethnocultural groups, service agencies, the community, and the City. The Society works to promote the integration and participation of ethnocultural groups in Richmond through public information, multicultural events, and advocacy. It also provides translation, interpretation and settlement services.

Richmond Planning Department - The City Planning Department promotes multiculturalism in Richmond by implementing policies which support the City's broad multiculturalism policy. The City also sponsors an annual Community Conference.

The Richmond Hospital - The City's hospital has a broad policy that supports multiculturalism, and has a multicultural committee that identifies and implements programs to serve the needs of the hospital's staff, patients, and visitors.

The Richmond School Board - As well as providing ESL instruction, the School Board has developed a number of extra-curricular programs to help promote intercultural relations and understanding among Richmond's teachers, students, and parents. The School Board has also established an anti-racism policy, which states clearly the consequences of racist actions in elementary and secondary schools.

The following paragraphs will detail Richmond's response to multiculturalism through the information attained from key informant interviews. It is important to note that all interviewees are employed by the various organizations which they represent. As no citizens from the community at large were interviewed for this study, the author would like to point out that individual community members may have differences in opinion as to how well the different organizations are fulfilling their mandates, and how important it is to promote intercultural understanding. Although all interviewees felt it imperative that constructive interaction occur between cultural groups in Richmond, and that it is the responsibility of every individual in the community to promote intercultural interaction, not every community citizen feels this way. At one time or another, each organization has received negative and discriminatory feedback from individual community members about immigrants and about the way tax payer's money is spent on multicultural and immigrant services. Obviously, not all citizens feel it is necessary to promote intercultural relations. These differences in opinion do not nullify this thesis topic. Rather they lend support to the fact that in order to eliminate stereotypes and reduce prejudice, discrimination, and negative attitudes towards people of different cultures and ethnic groups, intercultural education opportunities must be present.

3.2 An Examination and Critique of the Initiatives Undertaken in Richmond to Promote Intercultural Harmony

3.2.1 The Coordinating Committee on Ethnic Relations

Perhaps the most important organization which exists in Richmond is what has been known as the Coordinating Committee on Ethnic Relations, and its sub-committee, The Working Committee on Ethnic Relations. The Coordinating Committee was to be made up of policy makers, while the Working Committee was to be made up of two citizens at large, representatives from public and non-profit sector agencies, and a number of city staff. The original mandate of the Coordinating Committee was "to promote and coordinate the development and implementation of policies that encourage better understanding, sensitivity,

and acceptance among the Richmond community towards people of diverse ethnic origins" (Awan et al, 1994:25). The original mandate of the Working Committee was "to ensure the provision of public services and non-profit services which are responsive to the needs of ethnocultural groups" (Awan et al, 1994:25).

The public and non-profit sector agencies involved in the Working Committee also belong to Richmond Community Services Advisory Council's (RCSAC) Inter-Agency Committee. The RCSAC is made up of over 50 non-profit, public and private agencies and organizations. It consists of three committees: The Policy Advisory Committee, which advises Richmond City Council on community services and policy matters; the Inter-Agency Committee, which meets to share information and improve the co-ordination and delivery of programs and community services; and the Coordinating Committee, which meets monthly in advance of the Inter-Agency Committee's meetings and is the administrative point of contact for the RCSAC. The mandate of the RCSAC is broad and encompasses all policies, programs and services that may have an impact on community life in Richmond.

For a number of reasons, including the predominance of service providers at both the policy level and working levels, the Coordinating Committee on Ethnic Relations and it's Working Committee have focused their work on the provision of services rather than intercultural issues. The Coordinating Committee appears to have had difficulty in dealing with community issues, and has not broadly used the public's willingness, interest, and expertise to deal with ethnic relations (Awan et al, 1994). As a result of these shortcomings, a new framework has been developed by a group of Richmond consultants (Awen et al.), and a new committee has been proposed.

This new Committee is called The Intercultural Advisory Council (ICAC), and it's mandate is to promote intercultural understanding and deal with racial/cultural incidents (Awen et al,

1994). The ICAC will consist of a council with a strong link to City Council, the School Board,

the service provision agencies, and the general public.
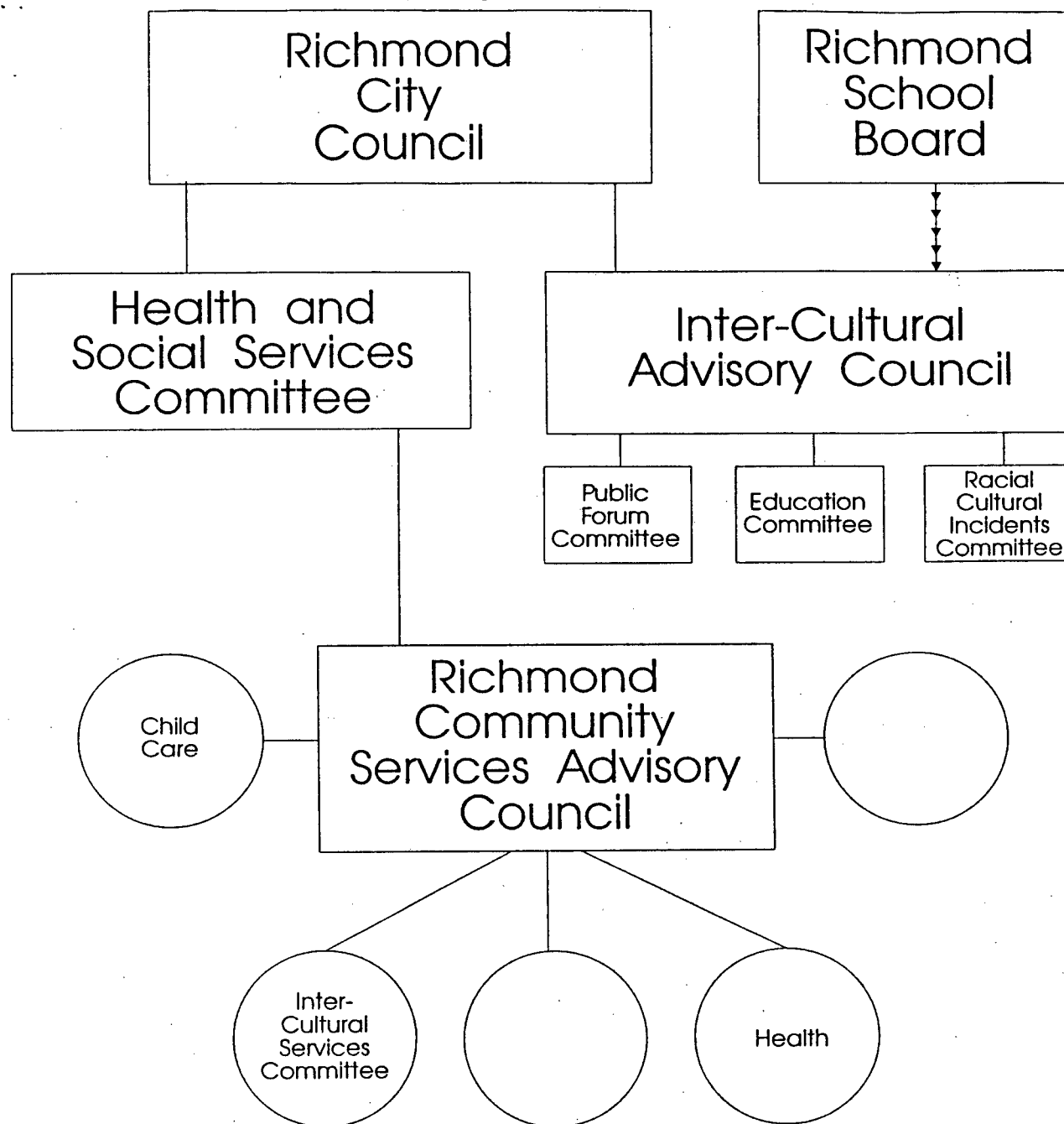
Framework for Inter-cultural Harmony

Figure 32

Source: Awan et al. 1994

The ICAC must be a free conduit through which the concerns of the community can be heard, addressed and forwarded to the appropriate authorities, should need be. The ICAC needs to be able to encourage dialogue between the various cultural groups that comprise the 'general public' of Richmond. It must be pro-active in developing educational materials on cultural harmony and living in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society. The ICAC must also encourage growth in understanding of citizenship, both as a privilege and as a responsibility...The work of the ICAC should be done in the open with the maximum participation of citizens and yet must be in constant contact with City Council... We believe that through constituting ICAC in such a way as to be open to public input and work in close co-operation with City Council, the issue of community living in a multi-ethnic society can be readily achieved in tolerance, harmony, and understanding (Awan et al, 1994:25).

The ICAC is to be comprised of seventeen members: a member of City Council; one individual from the Richmond Community Services Advisory Council; a chair or designate from the Richmond School Board; one individual from the Richmond Chamber of Commerce; three individuals from service provision agencies (cultural associations, ethno-specific associations, sports groups, etc); and ten individuals representing the general public. (See following diagram).

1

1

ICAC Membership

Figure 33

Source: Awan et al. 1994

It has been proposed that the Working Committee on Ethnic Relations be re-named 'The Intercultural Services Committee'. The mandate of this Committee will organize around two streams: settlement services and general community services. Membership in the Intercultural Services Committee will be open to all public and non-profit agencies with programs in Richmond. Similar to the Working Committee on Ethnic Relations, the Intercultural Services Committee will report to the Richmond Community Services Advisory Council (RCSAC) through the Inter-Agency Committee, and will also report to the Health and Social Services Committee of Council.

Rather than offering programs to the public, the ICAC and the Intercultural Services Committee will work together in a pro-active manner to fill social service voids in the community through already existing organizations. Regular meetings will eliminate duplication of services and ensure a fiscally responsible model that effectively deals with the needs of Richmond citizens. The ICAC will provide a medium to bring service providers and community representatives together to share information with one another. This will promote intercultural interaction, understanding, and harmony among committee members, and subsequently among the organizations which they represent.

One shortcoming of the Coordinating Committee on Ethnic Relations is that not all cultural organizations and community citizens are aware of its existence. The proposed Intercultural Advisory Council is to perform a paramount role in promoting intercultural interaction, understanding, and harmony in Richmond. If it is to successfully fulfill this mandate, then it must receive input from, and be known to all cultural and multicultural organizations in Richmond, as well as the community at large.

The proposed Intercultural Advisory Council is to be comprised of seventeen individuals, three of which are to be from service provision agencies including cultural associations, ethno-specific associations, sports groups etc. Having so few individuals from this sub-group does not allow for

one representative from each significant cultural group in Richmond to join the Council. Although its working group, the Intercultural Services Committee, is to be open to all public and non-profit agencies with programs in Richmond, this committee is to deal strictly with settlement and general community services, and is not mandated to promote intercultural understanding and harmony. Therefore, without adequate cultural and multicultural organization representation on the Intercultural Advisory Council, it is unclear how the Council will be able to successfully fulfill its mandate.

3.2.2 The City of Richmond/Richmond Planning Department

The City of Richmond hosts a two day Community Conference each February, where the entire community can partake in discussions and workshops aimed at planning for change. There is usually a multicultural component to this conference. The conference is well attended by the general public, and by representatives from social service providing agencies and civic service departments. Information discussed at the conference and individual workshops is compiled into a book of reports and recommendations, and is made available to all participants. This year's Community Conference offers a number of two hour workshops on a variety of topics dealing with cultural diversity (Cultural Diversity in the Community; Who Are We?: Shared Values In a Changing Community; ESL: Some Student's Perspectives; and Stranger In a Strange Land: The Immigration Experience). While these workshops are important ways of discussing and developing solutions that affect the quality of life in Richmond, and while they present an excellent opportunity for interested parties to come together and discuss commonalities, opportunities, and challenges, this conference does not provide a forum for promoting the type of intercultural education deemed necessary to promote intercultural harmony. Furthermore, it is unclear how or if the City adopts or utilizes participant's recommendations.

The Working Committees of the 1994 Steering Committee proposed a number of recommendations for the 1995 conference, which were devised from participants feedback of the February 1994 conference. These suggestions, which were forwarded to appropriate bodies for

information and consideration, included: a single issue topic; a one day time frame; a change of venue to Kwantlen College which has good accommodation for catering, parking, access, discussion areas, and plenary sessions for over 250 delegates; and more than one conference per year. Interestingly, not one of these recommendations was adopted for the 1995 conference.

If the City is going to take the initiative to sponsor an annual Community Conference, then it should be responsible for not only publishing a summary of conference reports and recommendations, but also publishing information at a later date which will enable conference participants to determine if their recommendations are being adopted, and how they are being employed by politicians, social service providers, and city staff. If community citizens are going to make the effort to contribute to the planning process and develop solutions for change, then the City must make an effort to inform the community how their recommendations are being utilized.

3.2.3 The Richmond School Board

The Richmond School Board has taken measures to promote intercultural interaction through extra-curricular activities at both the elementary and secondary school levels. One important event which they sponsor is called the "Friendship Club". There are Friendship Clubs in 22 elementary schools in the Lower Mainland. Each club consists of 20 members; 10 ESL students, and 10 mainstream students. The purpose of these clubs is to promote cross-cultural friendships and understanding.

The School Board has developed a "Multicultural Leadership Program" for Secondary School students. The purpose of this program is to break down the barriers between newcomers and mainstream Secondary School students, to encourage mixing of racial groups, and to create an awareness of cultures. This year 62 Secondary School students spent four days at a multicultural camp and discussed ways of breaking down barriers. All Richmond Secondary Schools now

have at least seven students in their schools working on ideas for improving intercultural interaction amongst the student body.

The School Board has also initiated programs for parents of school aged children. Parent language exchange programs have been developed, where English speaking parents teach non-English speaking parents English, and non-English speaking parents teach English speaking parents some words from their native language. Programs like this help parents form friendships and learn from one another on an individual level.

The efforts that the Richmond School Board has made to promote intercultural sensitivity are centered around extra-curricular activities, rather than being part of the school curriculum. It is the opinion of the author that mandatory intercultural education and diversity training courses become part of the school curriculum at all grade levels. If intercultural acceptance is a mandated part of Canada's and Richmond's culture, then it should become a mandated part of the school curriculum. Currently, it is mandatory that students take a second language in high school. Surely, it is just as important for students to learn how to become culturally relativistic. The problem is, very few teachers are familiar with, or are qualified to teach intercultural education. Perhaps intercultural education training methods should be introduced in the Education Faculty of Canadian universities. The social fabric of Canada is changing rapidly. Being able to communicate effectively will play a vital role in determining the social and economic success of younger generations. If we wish to supply our children with tools which will prepare them for effective future endeavours, we must adapt our education systems accordingly.

3.2.4 The Richmond Hospital

The Richmond Hospital has also been involved in promoting intercultural sensitivity. The Hospital has a multicultural committee that identifies needs and implements programs in the areas of interpretation, communication (signage, pamphlets) and education for employees.

The Hospital offers diversity training as part of the orientation program for new staff. More in-depth diversity training workshops are offered at the management level. Other workshops are offered that are geared towards creating awareness of cultural customs - for example, a workshop on Chinese spiritual healing.

The Hospital has signage in the three languages most commonly spoken in Richmond - English, Chinese, and Punjabi. The Hospital is connected to AT&T's interpretation services which allows it to contact an interpreter for any language in one minute. In order to provide Chinese patients with food to which they are accustomed, the Hospital offers a Chinese food item at every meal. Patients are made aware of special cultural holidays through meal tray mats, which identify and explain the special day.

3.2.5 Richmond Multicultural Concerns Society

There are a few cross-cultural understanding and diversity training workshops that are offered in Richmond through Richmond Multicultural Concerns Society. Most, but not all of these workshops are aimed at front-line staff of service providing organizations. Due to a lack of funding, Richmond Multicultural Concerns Society may no longer be able to offer these programs after February 1995. This is unfortunate, because these workshops are not offered to the general public through any other medium in Richmond, and they represent an important method of reducing intercultural conflict, prejudice and discrimination.

In a 1991 Economic Council of Canada (ECC) study, it was recommended that the multiculturalism method of managing diversity be reinforced by a major increase in efforts to combat prejudice. The ECC stated that the strategy be devised and implemented jointly by federal, provincial, and municipal authorities, along with the private sector. Elements of the strategy they recommended include: expansion in funding of the existing programs that fight prejudice at all levels, with the necessary money to be found by a combination of further diversion of funds from support of ethnic activities and a reordering of priorities from other

government programs; increased business, union, community, educational, and media involvement to extend existing efforts to combat prejudice and promote integration; more obligation on the part of immigrants to learn English or French since research shows that this decreases hostility towards them; information to defuse hosts' fears of unemployment and competition from immigrants - fears that research shows to be unfounded; the avoidance of sharp increases in immigrant inflow; and training of immigrants regarding cultural traditions that are inappropriate in Canada, especially with respect to gender equality and attitudes to authority figures such as police, social workers, and public officials.

The ideas expressed in the above statement have been voiced before. The problem is not in the formulation of recommendations, but rather in the implementation of these ideals. All too often the government has stated the need for expanded educational and informational programs to encourage intercultural harmony. The problem, however, is that the funding for these procedures does not increase proportionally with rising immigration levels. In fact, during the past few years, federal multicultural funding has been reduced, immigration has increased, and important programs, such as the diversity training courses offered by Richmond Multicultural Concerns Society, have been abolished. Unless care is taken by both the public and private sectors to provide funding for intercultural education programs, Canadians will be rightly accused of saying all the right things about multiculturalism in Canada, but practising something very different. The real challenge, therefore, comes from finding the necessary resources to educate the population about the social, political, and economic effects of immigration, and perhaps more importantly, about the values, beliefs, and cultures of our neighbours.

3.2.6 Richmond Cultural Organizations

The different cultural organizations in Richmond are all involved to some degree in promoting an understanding of the culture which they represent. Some invite Elementary School students to their cultural institutions and explain their dress, symbols, etc.. Others are involved in

interethnic forums where people from different ethnic and cultural groups meet to discuss human interest topics. Still others demonstrate their culture through displays of ethnic dancing, food festivals, and monthly cultural displays, often held at the Richmond Cultural Centre and Library complex.

The most well attended events are the cultural food festivals and ethnic dance demonstrations. Although these events are certainly a way of providing entertainment and limited education to people from a variety of cultures, these initiatives have typically failed to go beyond superficiality in explaining us to each other. As Neil Bissoondath (1994:83) explains in his book *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*, to understand a culture is to be exposed to much more than simplified folk displays and food festivals.

> The public face of Canadian Multiculturalism is flashy and attractive; it emerges with verve and gaiety from the bland stereotype of traditional Canada at "ethnic" festivals around the country. Implicit in this approach is the peculiar notion of culture as commodity: a thing that can be displayed, performed, admired, bought, sold or forgotten. It represents a devaluation of culture, its reduction to bauble and kitsch. A traditional dance performed on stage is not a people's cultural life but an aspect of it removed from context, shaped and packaged to give a voyeuristic pleasure. It is not without value, but value on par with the reproduced treasures of Tutankhamun sold in every sad store on the continent.

> To attend an ethnic cultural festival, then, is to expose yourself not to culture but to theatre, not to history, but to fantasy; enjoyable, no doubt, but of questionable significance. You come away having learnt nothing of the language and literature of these places, little of their past and their present - and what you have seen is usually shaped with blatant political ends in mind. You have acquired no sense of the everyday lives - the culture - of the people in these places, but there is no doubt that they are, each and every one, open, sincere, and fun-loving.

> Such displays, dependent as they are on superficialities, reduce cultures hundreds, sometimes thousands of years old to easily digested stereotypes.

One's sense of Ukrainian culture is restricted to perogies and Cossack dancing;
Greeks, we learn, are all jolly Zorbas, and Spaniards dance flamenco between
shouts of "Viva España!" Germans gulp beer, sauerkraut and sausages while
belting out Bavarian drinking songs; Italians make good ice cream, great coffee,
and all have connections to shady godfathers. And the Chinese continue to be a
people who form conga lines under dragon costumes and serve good, cheap food
in slightly dingy restaurants.

There are a number of events which take place in Richmond, hosted by specific cultural groups
which bring people from all cultures together on a social basis. The Richmond Chinese
Community Society sponsors ballroom and line dancing at one of the community centres in
Richmond. This is a social event where people bring food to share after dancing. While people
do not learn about one another's culture at an event such as this, they learn to celebrate the
commonality shared by people, regardless of cultural or ethnic heritage. Events like this are
important prerequisites to changing stereotypes, as they allow people to get to know one
another as individuals, rather than as homogeneous members of specific cultural groups.

The India Cultural Centre of Canada hosts an annual soccer tournament which involves teams
from all over Richmond. This is an informal gathering which helps friendships evolve, and
again, emphasizes the commonalities, rather than the differences between cultures.

3.3 What Can Be Done To Further Existing Initiatives?

All interviewees were asked the question *"What more could your department/organization be
doing to promote intercultural interaction and understanding?"* Each interviewee responded
that with the current resources available, the organization is doing all that it can possibly do
to promote intercultural interaction, understanding, and community harmony. Each interviewee
expressed the need for increased government multicultural funding. People responded that if
more resources were available they would like to "do more of what we are already doing";
"provide more educational services and workshops to promote intercultural awareness"; "have
more services that could lead to positive intercultural interaction like gatherings of newcomers

where people could socialize, and share food and culture in an informal, casual setting"; "expose more people to specific cultural groups in Richmond by bringing them into places of worship and explaining culture and traditions"; "instigate a means to inform people of the structure of the social organizations in the City"; and "provide sensitivity training in schools, and expand existing student resources and youth services".

The common theme which runs through most of these responses is the perceived need for community members to acquire an increased awareness and understanding of ethnocultural groups in Richmond, through both structured and informal encounters. However, limited funding means that existing services will need to be dropped or restructured for new programming to take place. This presents a dilemma, because the services currently offered are vital to the populations which they serve.

3.4 What Are The Greatest Barriers To Constructive Interaction Between Cultural Groups In Richmond?

Cultural and language differences, and the media were cited as the greatest barriers to constructive interaction between cultural groups in Richmond, with cultural differences being cited as the primary barrier to adults, and language differences being cited as the primary barrier to Elementary and Secondary School students.

3.4.1 Cultural Differences

Typically, people are aware that there are cultural differences toward issues such as education, parental involvement, and mixing of cultures, and more generally in the way people think, feel, and behave. Our natural tendency to be ethnocentric and view our groups' values and ways of doing things as superior, combined with a mistaken assumption of homogeneity in other cultures, hinders our understanding of other cultures and the patterns of their communication, leading us to misinterpret messages we receive from people who are different. This lack of understanding can translate into feelings of incompetence and cause us to fear

negative consequences when interacting with strangers from another culture. Worse, it can translate into the formation of negative attitudes and stereotypes towards people of 'other' groups.

3.4.2 Language Differences

In the Richmond Elementary and Secondary Schools where approximately 40% of the student population is enrolled in the ESL program, language is seen as the greatest barrier to constructive intercultural interaction. In Richmond Secondary Schools, the stigma of being an ESL student is seen as a secondary barrier.

Natural spontaneous interaction does not take place between the English speaking students and the ESL students. ESL students feel mainstream students do not want to associate with them because they may not be able to understand their English; and they feel uncomfortable communicating with mainstream students until they are secure in their English language abilities. Mainstream students make little attempt to form friendships with new students, especially those that are not fluent in English. If they do, they are called "traitors" by their friends, and become isolated. One mainstream student commented that "I know most of my friends would like to form friendships with some ESL students, but they are afraid to take the first step" (Personal conversation, February, 1995). When the ESL students "graduate" from the program and become part of the regular class on a full-time basis, they do form friendships with mainstream students.

Many ESL students find that the stigma of being "an ESL student" interferes with intercultural friendship formation with mainstream students, and causes a loss of self-confidence. Many mainstream students feel new immigrants should learn English before they come to Canada, and they do not appreciate the extra time that teachers must allocate to these students. Furthermore, many mainstream students assume that any new Chinese student must be an ESL student with poor English language abilities, and little effort is made to form friendships.

Many ESL students with intermediate English language abilities feel that the ESL program actually holds them back and slows down the rate at which they could learn English. Students that arrived in Richmond prior to 1987 feel that the ESL program was very beneficial. However, Chinese students arriving in the last five years find that the large number of Chinese speaking ESL students inhibits their learning, because they tend to speak Chinese, even in regular classes. They feel that if they were placed in regular classes soon after their arrival, they would be forced to learn English quickly. The fact that non-Chinese ESL students learn English much quicker than Chinese ESL students, lends support to this theory. Furthermore, many ESL students feel that Canada's multiculturalism policy conflicts with the expectations of the ESL programs. Students are confused about why they are "not allowed" to speak Chinese in the classroom, when Canada's multiculturalism policy clearly states that all Canadians have the right to retain their home language.

Many ESL students feel the ESL program and the education system prohibit the learning of Canadian culture. The reasons for this are that the ESL program isolates new immigrants from mainstream students; and current event courses are not taught. Once the new immigrants join the regular classes, they are taught about European history, as opposed to Canadian history. The new students are forced to learn about Canadian history and culture on their own, and this inhibits their security about forming friendships with mainstream students.

3.4.3 The Media

The media is another commonly cited barrier to constructive intercultural interaction in Richmond. The media are often the only link people have with the outside world, and people are greatly influenced by what they hear and what they read. In the following paragraph, Samuel Betances (1987:115) writes of the dangers of the media.

> The media often presents a homogeneous value system in a heterogeneous
> reality. The media have joined important agencies of socialization, of
> civilizing people into adulthood, as have the family, the church, and the

education system. More than the church and the school combined, the media enters the minds and the spirits of young people through cartoons, entertainment, films, sports events and music. We must understand clearly that the media shapes individuals in ways that the individuals are not really aware that they have been shaped...The media can create striking changes in a people, just as the media can create a self-image of those same people in the first place. Through symbols and imagery we are shaped. Let us be informed and aware of the hold of the media in multicultural societies.

The primary purpose of gathering and distributing news and opinion is to serve the general welfare by informing people and enabling them to make judgements on the issues of the time. Many professionals in Richmond feel that the media is divisive, they care little about cause and effect, and they are detrimental to establishing good intercultural relations as they publicize only "5% of the good news and at least 95% of the bad news". Research has shown that news is generally 40% bad, 30% good, and 30% neutral (Pippert, 1989). In his book, *An Ethics of News*, Wesley Pippert (1989:4) states that

> It is understandable why news is often bad. For the news is a tornado, an air crash, the death of a famous person. It may not be news that 999 of one thousand students showed up for class today, but it definitely would be news that one student was absent because he was found to be suffering from AIDS.

Pippert remarks further that mass media often do not adequately put events into context historically, socially, and economically.

> Journalists, especially newspaper and broadcast journalists are handicapped by the demands of the frequent deadlines. So we report whatever is the most immediate development. We often rely on only one source and write superficially. We pay more attention to controversy than context. Perhaps most serious of all, we often miss what is truly important because we are bound to traditional methods of reporting. We tend to look at people and events through political, institutional, Western, white, middle-class lenses; we seem less comfortable and competent in dealing with people and events that fall outside that grid (1989:29).

As a result, people are often unknowingly mislead by what they read. At least three people interviewed for this study reported that the media readily report anything that has to do with intercultural antagonism in Richmond, while they have to solicit the media to cover positive initiatives that have been taken to promote intercultural harmony. When the media do cover these events, coordinators are often asked questions loaded with negative connotations. Reporters have admitted to at least one interviewee that they look to report controversy, because this is what sells.

To look for controversy is to focus attention on the differences, disagreements, and conflicts between different community groups. The substance of the discussion is often eclipsed by the existence of discord, and the fundamental issues are ignored. This does not help promote intercultural understanding and harmony in the community, and the media are actually doing a disservice to the public. An example of the media ignoring the fundamental issues and misleading the public can be found in the following article and letter to the editor of the Richmond Review.

Clash of values

To keep their ever-rambunctious four-year-old busy, the Hons decided to enroll Grace in a nursery school program at the West Richmond community centre.

While the program has been fun for Grace, Mariana hasn't been so fortunate.

Mariana was upset and confused when a teacher told Grace she wasn't allowed to eat a rice cracker during the program.

"(The instructor) told my kid this is not good for her health," she said. despite the fact that the teacher did not know the ingredients in the food.

This was confusing for Mariana who felt the food was nutritious enough.

"Just because it is Chinese food doesn't mean that type of food is not good," Mariana said. "I'm concerned about her nutrition, too."

She is particularly upset about the mixed messages Grace has been receiving.

At one point, Grace told Mariana: "Mommy, don't get me in trouble. Don't give me food I can't eat."

The situation came to a climax during a nursery school field trip, when the instructor said Mariana should stop giving Grace food that was not allowed in the program.

"She shouted at me in front of the whole class," said Mariana who was left upset and embarrassed by the incident.

Figure 34

Source: The Richmond Review, January 14, 1995

Reporter missed our side of story

We take offense to Martin van den Hemel's Jan. 14th feature, One Family's Story, especially the "Clash of values" segment in which a totally non-racial issue was twisted to sound racial.

As co-chairs of the parent group for the West Richmond community centre nursery school program, our function is to provide a liaison between the parents and the instructors regarding any and all program concerns. Mrs. Hon (whose daughter was in the program) never once approached either of us about anything.

All children attending the nursery school are encouraged to bring healthy snacks and Grace is by no means the only child who has been discouraged from doing otherwise. If your reporter had taken the time to check the facts, he would have discovered that the food in question was in fact Fruit Loops and Corn Pops, hardly Chinese food (as Mrs. Hon contends).

We have attended every field trip and never has an instructor shouted at any parent. All the parents would have been disturbed by this.

The nursery school instructors are very supportive of multiculturalism, as are the parents. Our Christmas party has become a "winter carnival" to include a variety of ethnic backgrounds. In fact, we had to fight to "save" Santa this year. Our field trips include a visit to the Buddhist Temple on Steveston Highway and we celebrate Chinese New Year as we do all special events.

The reporter did not bother to interview anyone else (including the instructor involved) to get another perspective, although he was asked to by West Richmond community centre staff before publication. Mr. van den Hemel certainly did not appear interested in finding out both sides of this story, in fairness to everyone.

Lori Williams, Jan Brady, co-chairs, Nursery program parent group West Richmond community centre

Figure 35

Source : The Richmond Review, January 25, 1995

3.5 What Can Be Done To Counteract The Barriers To Intercultural Harmony in Richmond?

The results of this research have indicated that the greatest barriers to constructive interaction between cultural groups in Richmond are a lack of intercultural understanding, language differences, and media sensationalism and misrepresentation. Therefore, the remainder of this chapter will focus on what can be done to counteract these barriers and further existing initiatives. It must be noted that the initiatives listed below can only be implemented with the help of government and private funding. Government cutbacks have reduced multicultural funding. However, as the reported economic gains of immigration are somewhat inconclusive, (Economic Council of Canada, 1991; Fraser Institute, 1992) the public and private sectors must both be prepared to meet the many social challenges which ensue from the mix of cultures, traditions, and values in a society once predominantly British. This establishes the need for increased funding to allow for the expansion of intercultural educational and informational programming.

3.5.1 A Lack of Intercultural Understanding

Most people interviewed feel that the best ways to overcome the barriers to constructive intercultural interaction are through community workshops and forums geared at providing intercultural education and diversity training. Intercultural education may be defined as

> a structured process designed to foster understanding, acceptance, and
> constructive relations among people of many different cultures. It is not just a set
> of ethnic or other area study programs, but an effort to demonstrate the
> significance of similarities and differences among cultural groups and between
> individuals within those group. Intercultural education fosters an
> understanding of the nature of culture, which helps the student develop skills
> in intercultural communication and which aids the student to view the world
> from perspectives other than one's own (Dodd and Montalvo, 1987:124).

It was advised that well organized, well structured bi-monthly workshops and forums, facilitated by individuals extremely competent at putting people at ease, could be one way of

providing the entire community with an ongoing opportunity to engage in intercultural education. Ongoing interaction with individuals or groups of diverse cultural backgrounds presents an opportunity for personal development, as well as an opportunity to share those skills necessary for balancing intercultural interaction. Through recognition of personal similarities and differences, and individual and group relationships, we can begin to build needed skills and to effect successful relationships (Dodd and Montalvo, 1987).

Many people fail to recognize the pervasive "interculturalness" of their domestic realities. Instead they try to deal with many intercultural encounters in a manner shaped by their own culture - in an ethnocentric manner - even though the challenges they face demand an intercultural orientation. Gudykunst (1984) suggests that in order to have successful intercultural encounters, individuals must strive towards the ideal state of becoming an 'intercultural person'. The intercultural person represents one whose cognitive, affective, and behavioural characteristics are not limited but are open to growth beyond the psychological parameters of any one culture.

The process of psychic growth from monocultural to intercultural is a process of change in which individuals continually must integrate new elements of life with a clear understanding of cultural conditioning. This process necessitates openness to the dynamics of change and possession of attitudes that are less criticizing, less prejudging, less selecting, and less rejecting of other peoples and cultures (Gudykunst, 1984).

> The process of becoming intercultural presents stresses and strains principally
> due to the environmental pressures to conform. Thus, to the extent that the
> concept of the intercultural person is desirable for the future of humanity, we
> need to design ways to minimize the social pressure by promoting the concept of
> interculturalness as an important human and social value. One of the most
> powerful means for promoting the value of interculturalness is education
> (Gudykunst, 1984:233).

The educational system must face the staggering task of helping to promote intercultural environments by giving up outdated national, racial, ethnic, and territorial perspectives and replacing them with ways of thinking that are more adaptive to the closely-knit international realities.

> The educational system of the United States has developed such specialized programs as bilingual-bicultural (or multi-lingual-multicultural) programs, ethnic studies, and intercultural communication studies. These programs, although used for enlarging appreciation of diverse cultures and nations, are not aimed at cultivating fundamental character formation, psychic maturity, and a clear direction for change in human development...If appreciation for the intercultural person is a valid educational goal...there must be undertaken an extensive search for ways to articulate and implement intercultural human development...Further, the selling of the goal must go beyond the educational process directly to the political processes and the mass media. Media, in particular can play a pivotal role in the spread of interculturalness as a human social value and thus produce a gradual change in the normative thinking of the general public (Gudykunst, 1984:233).

Unfortunately, Gudykunst does not suggest ways to implement intercultural human development, rather he suggests that we must search for ways to articulate and implement it. Clearly, this is an important research topic.

Following are some suggestions that, although not aimed at cultivating fundamental character formation and psychic maturity as Gudykunst suggests, are aimed at providing people with an understanding of the values of other cultures. The underlying assumption of these suggestions is that once people attain a basic understanding and acceptance of ethnocultural differences, they will become less ethnocentric, criticizing, selecting, and rejecting of other peoples and cultures, and will become more culturally relativistic. This will enable people to develop effective intercultural communication and interaction skills, and it will promote positive intergroup dynamics.

Brislin et al (1986) suggest that there are five basic types of programs that are used in cross-cultural training: cognitive training, behaviour modification, experiential training, cultural self-awareness, and attribution training. Cognitive training emphasizes facts about other countries and presents information about what a typical visitor experiences. Typical methods include lectures, group discussions, and question-answer sessions with "old-hand" sojourners who have been in the host country for several years. Behaviour modification looks at the role of rewards and punishments. Typical methods involve asking people to visualize what is rewarding and what is punishing for them in their own culture. People would be asked to learn about another culture in terms of obtaining the rewards and avoiding (or at least mitigating) the punishments. Experiential training puts an emphasis on activities in which trainees participate. Typical methods include role playing potentially problematic situations, such as negotiations between a boss from one culture and a subordinate from another. Cultural self-awareness teaches trainees about the importance of culture by examining common experiences people have in their own countries. A typical example would be a group discussion in which Americans might discuss the roots of the value placed on individualism, and Asians might discuss the value placed on the collectivity. These discussions often stimulate an expansion of people's thinking. Attribution training teaches trainees about how people make judgements concerning the causes of behaviour. The assumption behind this type of training is that much misunderstanding stems from differing perceptions or attributions of the same event. Cross-cultural learning is facilitated when trainees learn how and why others make attributions about a wide variety of events, and when trainees learn to make the same attributions. Given the incredibly wide range of situations in which cross-cultural encounters occur, typical types of cross-cultural training cannot give enough information so that correct attributions can be made whenever a potential misunderstanding arises. Therefore, attribution training deals with the how, why, and when of attributions, so that trainees will understand some general principles that lie behind the thousands of specific behaviours that they will observe. Many researchers believe that attribution training is the single best way for preparing people for cross-cultural encounters.

The typical method of attribution training is by way of cultural assimilators. Cultural assimilators are perhaps the most popular, the most successful, and the most researched types of cross-cultural training programs. The cultural assimilator model has received much research attention for a number of reasons. First, it is explicitly based on a number of theoretical traditions; second, it provides an easily scored measure of success; third, it originated within a university psychology department that has a strong tradition of cross-cultural research; and finally, the technique is simple and portable (Shizuru, Landis, and Brislin, 1983).

The cultural assimilator model involves reading short case studies called *critical incidents*, that involve cross-cultural interaction and potential misunderstandings among people. Trainees choose alternative explanations of the incident, each explanation representing a different attribution concerning the causes of behaviour. The assumption of this technique is that if people examine and analyze 100 critical incidents, all drawn from actual experiences of others who have moved across cultures, they will be better prepared for their own actual intercultural encounters. Following is an example of a critical incident developed by Brislin, Kushner, Cherrie, and Yong (1986:63,68,69)).

> Mr. Yung has come to the United States from Korea about seven years ago. Being hard working and adaptable, he had found work and was able to bring the rest of his family over about four years ago. Despite their language difficulties, members of his family were able to get along fairly well in the community. The Yungs made a number of new friends who gladly helped them to adjust to various aspects of their new culture. In addition, the Yungs enjoyed their company, accepted and reciprocated invitations to dinner or to such festivals as birthday celebrations. The Yungs also discovered many other Korean immigrants and joined a few of their organizations. However, the family still did not feel comfortable in this new society. They felt that in general people were always so busy and had no time for one another. They missed their old friends in Korea who would often casually stop by to chat and stay for hours. Although they had new friends here, everyone seemed so business-oriented and not really like friends at all. When Mr. Yung mentioned this to a neighbour "friend" he responded by an invitation to dinner "next

week". Mr. Yung replied, "that's exactly what I mean." Although he accepted the invitation, his expression showed his disappointment. The neighbour was totally bewildered and frustrated about what to do.

How would you intervene and help explain? Don't be satisfied with overly general explanations.

1. Mr. Yung and his family expect too much from their friends.

2. Mr. Yung and his family are used to a much more socially oriented society where people do not have to make formal plans to spend time with friends.

3. Mr. Yung and his family are experiencing culture shock and adjustment problems.

4. Mr. Yung was upset at the vagueness of the reference to "next week". He wanted a specific date and time to be set.

Rationales for the alternative explanations

1. Although this may seem true, Mr. Yung and family are well-liked in the community and are not demanding of their friends in any way. There is more going on in the situation than this. Please choose again.

2. Mr. Yung and family seem fairly adjusted into the society except for this one aspect. Many people in the United States work hard to accomplish goals they set for themselves. Although Americans may also be interested in leisure and enjoyment, even time with friends is often carefully scheduled. Mr. Yung and his family are used to a more socially oriented society where it is more important to be together with other people. Mr. Yung is used to a society where people drop in on a friend without calling ahead. This occurs even to the extent of dropping in at dinner and joining the meal with the family. This is the best answer.

3. Although there may be some culture shock operating here, and our validation sample found this possible, this is too broad a generalization to explain this specific situation adequately as Mr. Yung and family seem fairly well adjusted in other areas. Please choose again.

4. The lack of an exact date and time is not the problem. In fact, such a formal approach to scheduling social interaction is what Mr. Yung dislikes. Please choose again.

The cross-cultural encounters depicted in critical incidents are typical to those faced by people living in other cultures, and they summarize common emotional experiences, communication difficulties, and challenges to pre-existing knowledge. The cultural assimilator approach can be used in a number of ways. People can read and react to the incidents on their own, since the materials form a self-contained learning package that is easy to use, or the materials can be used in group training programs. By learning the reasons for the behaviours depicted in the incidents, with special attention to the attributions about the behaviours from the specific culture's point of view, Brislin (1986:24) states that trainees accrue a number of benefits that will help them acquire effective intercultural relationship skills:

1. Greater understanding of the specific cultures, as judged by people from that culture;

2. A decrease in the use of negative stereotypes on the part of trainees;

3. The development of complex thinking about the target culture, which replaces the oversimplified, facile thinking to which people in the target culture react negatively;

4. Greater enjoyment among trainees who interact with members of the target culture, a feeling reciprocated by people from the target culture;

5. Better adjustment to the everyday stresses of life in other cultures; and

6. Better job performance in cases where performance is influenced by specific cultural practices that can be covered in training materials.

An interesting motivator in this technique is that people seem to be curious enough to want to explore what is proper and improper in each incident, and to discuss underlying reasons for the different interpretations.

Large amounts of training materials in the cultural assimilator format have been developed, however they tend to be based on the assumption that both the target audience and the target culture should be specified and that the materials should be designed for each combination of audience and target culture. After reviewing literature depicting people's experiences in different countries, Brislin (1981) declares that it is feasible to focus on the commonalities of cross-cultural interaction, and states that, *in certain situations*, it is possible to obtain the same benefits from *general* cultural assimilators as are obtained from cultural assimilators developed for specific audiences and cultures.

Brislin believes that the commonalities of cross-cultural experiences can be organized according to nine broad categories (the historical myths people bring with them to another culture; people's attitudes, traits, and skills; their thoughts and attribution processes; the groups they join; the range of situations in which they have to interact; their management of cross-cultural conflict; the tasks they want to accomplish; the organizations of which they are a part, and, given an understanding of the above, the processes of short and long-term adjustment) which he integrates into eighteen general critical incident themes: anxiety; disconfirmed expectancies; ambiguity; confrontation with one's prejudices; work; time and space; language; roles; importance of the group and importance of the individual; belonging; rituals and superstitions; hierarchies: class and status; values; categorization; differentiation; in-group out-group distinction; learning styles; and attribution.

The critical incident model has several advantages: it exposes individuals to a wide range of situations and behaviours, and thus can teach many different aspects of culture; it does so in a relatively short time period, hence it is cost effective; it can be broad or focused in its coverage

of material; it has flexibility as a teaching device - it can be administered individually, or in groups; it is very easy to use; it can be used repeatedly by the same person; it can be easily combined with other intercultural training approaches; and it has been shown by numerous studies to be effective for providing cultural information and for affecting the attributions made by its users (Albert, 1983). This model has been used in various workshops, including one in Vancouver. Post-workshop questionnaires show participants' enthusiasm for the materials and perceived relevance to trainees' own cross-cultural assignments and interests.

General cultural assimilators are valuable as a way of encouraging the development of a global, multicultural perspective for those who work or live with people from a variety of cultures, and as a way of involving students in intercultural education courses. This model therefore presents one technique that could be used in Richmond with small groups, in schools, or at community forums. Brislin does note that at times specific assimilators would prove more valuable than a general assimilator, for example, to prepare someone moving to a foreign country.

Another type of cross-cultural education method is 'Learning with Foreign Students' (Mestenhauser, 1976). The major assumption of this method is that foreign students can play significant roles in teaching host society members about other languages and cultures. Learning with Foreign Student programs offer an opportunity for foreign students to find an intellectual atmosphere in which to describe their experiences in their home countries, and at the same time to expose themselves to questions about themselves as well as about their experiences in their new home. These programs have typically been used in university settings. Research has shown that Learning with Foreign Students programs help mainstream students identify with the history, geography, economic activities, and basic political, social, educational, and cultural institutions of other countries, and also help encourage friendships. Although this type of learning does not seem to help develop the "intercultural person", personal knowledge of members of other cultures is an important conceptual variable in developing a cross-cultural

perspective (Hanvey, 1976). Learning with Foreign Student programs could perhaps successfully be employed in Richmond Elementary and Secondary schools with a dual purpose of providing intercultural education; and dissolving the barriers which exists between ESL and mainstream students.

Baxter (1983:13) proposes a model of intercultural training which is in an integrated aspect of ESL programs. Baxter asserts that although language is an important dimension for understanding and functioning in a culture (and vice versa), ESL programs and intercultural training have historically been isolated from one another. He therefore proposes a new model, 'English for Intercultural Communication', which demonstrates "how culture-general, culture-specific and language-specific training can be combined in a model of intercultural communicative competence".

Baxter believes that it is important to teach language and cultural training together, because when a teacher teaches English, he or she is implicitly teaching culture. Evidence of this can be found in the fact that many teaching materials are culturally biased. Therefore, intercultural communication training should incorporate cultural aspects such as verbal patterns, non-verbal communication, personal relationships, family values, educational attitudes, work values, time and space patterns, cultural conflict, and cultural adjustment.

English for Intercultural Communication would be beneficial to ESL Secondary School students in Richmond who have expressed the need for Canadian cultural education programs to be integrated into existing ESL programs. This type of training would enable ESL students to acquire an understanding of Canadian culture before they graduated from the ESL program, and they would therefore be able to integrate more quickly and more confidently with mainstream students. This type of training program, as with the other training programs discussed, would help students develop effective intercultural communication and interaction skills - skills

which are important to acquire if Richmond residents are to merely pay more than lip service to the policy adopted by the City in which they live.

3.5.2 Language Barriers in Richmond Schools

Language seems to be more of a barrier to school-aged children than does culture. One possible explanation for this is that the ESL and mainstream students do not interact enough for cultural differences to have a profuse effect.

As previously stated, all Richmond Secondary Schools have at least seven students working on ideas for improving intercultural interaction amongst the student body. However, student comments in a *Vancouver Sun* article (February 18, 1989) indicate that cultural misunderstandings are a common occurrence, and many students do not have a desire to interact with kids from 'the other' culture: "Some of my friends hate the Chinese kids because they're pushy...Some of them are okay though, but they don't seem to socialize that much. They don't have much of a personality"; "What puts me off is that they don't speak the language. Some of them even speak Chinese in English class"; It's so annoying. You never know if they're talking about you"; "I have no problems at school, but my friends and I tend to socialize with other Chinese speaking students because the white kids just ignore us".

Suggestions as to what can be done to counteract the language barrier are difficult to come by. Richmond Secondary School students have suggested that ESL policy changes and school curriculum changes are necessary to help counteract these barriers. Suggested changes include: changes in the material taught in each ESL level to ensure that significant differences exist between levels; the addition of current events and Canadian cultural courses in ESL programs; the opportunity for students with middle level English language abilities to attend regular classes, if they so choose; additional vocabulary and written communication skills instruction; the integration of alternative teaching methods in ESL programs, such as learning vocabulary through poetry and music; the addition of bicultural ESL teachers; the opportunity for ESL

students to sit in on regular English classes in order to acquire an understanding of the material taught to mainstream students; and the development of mandatory intercultural education classes for all students to help break down cultural barriers. Many Richmond Secondary School students (both ESL and mainstream) feel very strongly about this last point. They believe that students are not going to make an effort to learn about other cultures unless they are forced to do so. As one student said, "Many students are apathetic to intercultural issues. If we are forced to learn about other people's experiences then we can begin to understand them. If it is a mandated part of Canada's and Richmond's culture, it should be a mandated part of the school curriculum" (Personal conversation, February, 1995).

This last point is very important, because even if cultural differences are not currently the primary barrier separating ESL and mainstream students, as higher levels of English proficiency are reached, it is possible that cultural differences will become more apparent, and students will continue to keep 'to their own'. This stresses the necessity for intercultural training programs, such as the ones previously described, to be integrated into the school curriculum at every grade level.

3.5.3 Media Sensationalism and Misrepresentation

Commercial radio, television, and newspapers have the potential for enlightening the public to the multicultural reality of life in Canada, and to end the divisiveness that they create out of ignorance and misinformation. Without at least some common understanding of the main issues, it is impossible to have useful discussions of the value of community events, political issues, and government proposals, policies, and programs. The sole purpose of men and women in the news business should be to serve the basic ethic of journalism: to inform the public as honestly and as fully as possible about events in the community and the world. They must not use their role to serve some other purpose or interest. "If the images presented to us are faulty or distorted, so are our judgements. It is media organizations, and those who work for them, who

select, package, and ultimately create these images. How well they do their job affects us all" (Comber and Mayne, 1986:165).

It is the responsibility of every organization and civic department in Richmond to give the media as much information to report as is possible. However, if the media insists on reporting only 'what sells', then it is the responsibility of every department and organization to find a means for reporting the facts. One such means is buying advertising space in the papers and writing and reporting stories from a self-interest basis. This technique is commonly employed by Richmond City Council. Although this strategy costs money, it is an effective vehicle for reporting what might not otherwise be reported. Letters to the editor represent a similar avenue of allowing news to reach people in an undistorted fashion.

One of Richmond's community newspapers, *The Richmond News*, has made attempts to bridge cultural barriers in Richmond through its cultural journalist, Gobinder Gill. Gill writes about a variety of topics. However, he does not report on the City's current events, and it is these events that are often erroneously reported.

The media could greatly improve the quality and usefulness of news services in a number of ways: media could distinguish carefully between the neutral presentations of news facts and the interpretation of those facts; media that serve ethnic minority groups could inform their audience about events taking place in the community at large, and not only about news from their countries of origin or simply their own local events; and the multicultural TV channel could include English subtitles to enable the community at large some insight into minority cultures.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Summary

The enormous influx of visible minority immigrants to Richmond is seen by many host society

members as a handicap - as a difficulty to be solved. However, new immigrants have

contributed to Richmond's physical, economic and social environment in several important

ways. The development of shopping plazas, public markets, subdivisions, housing stock, roads,

bridges, community centres and recreational facilities, schools and parks have all been made

possible by the expansion of Richmond's tax base, and by Asian investment. Other cultural

groups have contributed to Richmond's prosperity as well - much of the farmland in Richmond

is owned and operated by Indo-Canadian entrepreneurs. Immigrants have also contributed to

Richmond's environs in many important social ways. Residents can learn the art of *feng shui*, be

introduced to Chinese spiritual healing and alternative medicinal procedures, eat in any

number of growing ethnic restaurants, shop in speciality food stores for exotic and interesting

items, and attend cultural food festivals and ethnic dance demonstrations.

Many longtime residents of Richmond do not welcome the changes occurring in Richmond. Two

decades ago, Richmond was primarily a fishing and farming community. Today it is an urban

city. Much of Richmond's farmland has been converted to medium and high density residential

subdivisions; housing prices have skyrocketed; property taxes have increased; much of

Richmond has lost its "garden city image"; traffic congestion is becoming the norm; crime has

increased; tax payer's money is being spent on settlement services and ESL programs - on the

very people that many blame for the adverse changes occurring in Richmond; Richmond's

population has grown from one predominantly comprised of European descent to one which is

almost 35% Chinese ethnic origin; racial tensions have increased; and Richmond's forecast is

for more of the same - more development, more immigrants, more traffic, and higher taxes.

Social service providers and civic service workers in Richmond have had little time to prepare for the City's dramatic growth and change in its cultural composition. The multicultural organizations, cultural organizations, and civic service departments in Richmond have all had made great efforts over the past seven years, and most are now well integrated establishments which work together proactively. Although these organizations are doing the best they can considering a lack of resources, existing efforts are not sufficient to produce the desirable social changes and fulfill the spirit and the aspirations of Richmond's multiculturalism policy - the achievement of community harmony and social success. In order to achieve community harmony and social success, residents must interact, communicate, and accommodate people from all ethnocultural backgrounds, and develop culturally sensitive interaction skills. The development of intercultural training programs can help individuals achieve these skills.

As the world becomes increasingly internationalized and people of many different cultures become more aware of each other, the need to develop culturally sensitive skills becomes increasingly apparent. For successful contact to occur, people must be able to interpret the behaviours of others correctly. When individuals act in unexpected ways, people must be able to react analytically, to discover new ways of interpreting their behaviour. The more that is known about the norms, roles, and values of other cultures, and the more that is known about the language and the meaning of key concepts of members of a culture, the greater is the chance that individuals will improve their interpretations of other's behaviour. To become more effective in this changing world, individuals need to make a conscious decision concerning basic attitudes toward themselves and toward their relationships to others and the world at large. If individuals are to become more effective in their intercultural environment, it is crucial that they work at becoming less ethnocentric.

Unfortunately, the majority of Canadians seem to be ethnocentric. Canadians cherish the ideal of multiculturalism, yet they expect immigrants to blend in. Canadians expect immigrants to be as sociable as they are, yet they fail to realize that such openness of character has to be

cultivated, especially at school. Canadians feel at ease talking to strangers because they are brought up in a democratic society where the sense of community is strong. They are educated in schools to reach out to communicate with others. This is not true for people who come from totalitarian regimes where trust and sincerity can be dangerous. When these people settle in a new country like Canada, it takes a long time for them to adjust to a very different mentality, one which encourages cooperation and mutual trust. Canadians think it is easy to say hello to a neighbour, whereas many immigrants, because of a less open cultural background, find it hard to see the point of doing so. Canadians underestimate the effect the language barrier has on immigrants. If the immigrant masters only a small English vocabulary, he or she may not feel at ease taking the initiative to socialize with a neighbour. Most immigrants are aware they should respect the customs of this land, but customs take time to learn (Lo, 1993). Canadians must learn to accept this, and realize that ethnocentric interpretations have little use in a society which is evolving as quickly as ours.

> For better or for worse, humans not only have evolved but are continually evolving. We must recognize that the world evolves and that we evolve with it. The world has become, and is becoming, intercultural. We must recognize this fact and attempt to increase our fitness with our increasingly intercultural environment by becoming intercultural in our cognition, affection, and behaviour...Strangers who have already experienced the long and difficult journey from being unfamiliar to becoming familiar with a new culture show us that becoming intercultural is not an impossible fiction but a viable goal toward which we may strive. Individually and collectively, we may start this process of change and growth, which is an important unifying force in this diverse and yet so intricately interdependent world (Gudykunst and Young Yun, 1984:234).

4.2 Review of Thesis Assertions

Two assertions were articulated at the outset of this paper. The following section will review these assertions with reference to the data collected.

The first assertion was that constructive intercultural interaction is a necessary precursor to a) Richmond fulfilling the goals of the multiculturalism policy which it has chosen to adopt, and b) Richmond planners successfully planning for growth and change. Throughout this study, the analysis and data collected support this theory.

The multiculturalism policy which Richmond has adopted underscores the importance of nondiscriminatory contact between members of diverse ethnocultural groups. This research has shown that to accomplish this end, people of different ethnocultural groups need to understand one another's cultures and patterns of communication. This type of understanding rarely comes about by chance. Through the process of enculturation, we are programmed to think, feel, and behave in an ethnocentric way, as though anyone whose behaviour is not predictable or is peculiar is strange, improper, irresponsible, or inferior. In order to have successful intercultural encounters, we must strive towards the ideal state of becoming an intercultural person, and be open to the dynamics of change and of attitudes that are less criticizing, less prejudging, less selecting, and less rejecting of other peoples and cultures. Richmond is no longer a predominantly homogeneous society, and there is a need to appreciate the diversity between Canadian and foreign cultures.

Constructive intercultural interaction is a necessary precursor for Richmond planners to successfully plan for growth and change. Planners have traditionally had little experience in planning for growth in a community of changing ethnic origins, values, attitudes, and perspectives. Participatory planning is an important device used in Richmond to plan for and manage growth, and it is imperative that planners be able to effectively communicate cross-culturally. It is always difficult to achieve consensus on issues which affect people's livelihood, such as safety, education, community development, and urban design, and the inability to understand one another's cultures and patterns of communication, combined with the fact that people remain largely unconscious of the misunderstandings that result from intercultural encounters only makes reaching consensus more difficult. Richmond planners must

look beyond the technical approach traditionally used in planning, and acquire skills which will enable them to embark in the successful intercultural liaisons necessary to generate positive planning outcomes. That is, planners need to receive intercultural education and mediation training, so that they may develop constructive intercultural communication skills, as well as skills necessary for generating and supporting positive community planning developments.

Effective intercultural communication skills are especially important for enabling both planners and new immigrants to understand the difficulties and discrepancies that they may face when North American planning ideals are being implemented in a city where many people have different expectations as to what those ideals should be. Richmond is becoming more and more cosmopolitan, and harmonious race relations are essential if peace, prosperity, and security are to be attained.

Intercultural education is also important for preparing planners for the difficulties they may experience in implementing North American ideals in foreign countries. In foreign countries, planners professional skills and technical competence are not judged solely in terms of how they perform specific tasks, complete a specific contract, or deliver their expertise to specific clients. Their work and performance are subjected to a complex set of judgements and evaluations based on behavioural criteria and bureaucratic norms that are often unfamiliar to them. Projects relating to health services, education, population control, and community development, all of which planners are involved in, and all of which have strong value entailments, are therefore hard to plan and execute from strictly a technical knowledge. A planners knowledge of cultural protocol, of political and ethnic issues, and of changing social relations among international and subnational entities, is as important as doing the job (Landis and Brislin, 1983).

The secondary assertion of this study is that intercultural training initiatives are an important element in helping Richmond residents develop constructive intercultural interaction skills,

because intercultural sensitivity is not "natural" to any single culture, and the development of this ability demands new awareness and attitudes. Intercultural training techniques are the key to the development of a vibrant social, political, and economic society, because intercultural sensitivity will not occur by chance. This assumption is also supported by the data collected throughout this study.

Cultural barriers were cited as the greatest barrier to constructive interaction between adult ethnocultural groups in Richmond. This research has shown that perhaps the best way to overcome cultural barriers is through community workshops and forums geared at providing intercultural education and diversity training. The use of cultural assimilators is one type of education method which has been shown to effectively provide a greater understanding of specific cultures, a decrease in the use of negative stereotypes, the development of complex thinking about other cultures, greater enjoyment among people who interact with members of another culture, better adjustment to the everyday stresses of life in other cultures, and better job performance in cases where performance is influenced by specific cultural practises that can be covered in training materials. "Learning with Foreign Students" is another type of training method which helps students form friendships, develop cross-cultural perspectives, and develop important intercultural comprehension skills.

Although language is the primary barrier to constructive intercultural interaction among Richmond students, cultural unfamiliarity is also a restraint. ESL policy and school curriculum changes may help immigrant students gain a quicker grasp of the English language and of Canadian culture. This research has shown that "English for Intercultural Communication" is a training technique which could be successfully integrated into existing ESL programs to provide a more comprehensive training model which incorporates both English language training and cultural training aspects such as verbal patterns, non-verbal communication, personal relationships, family values, educational attitudes, work values, time and space patterns, cultural conflict, and cultural adjustment. This type of training method may help dissolve the

barriers which currently exist between ESL and mainstream students, by presenting students with the opportunity to learn about a second culture as well as a second language.

4.3 Recommendations For Future Research

A number of recommendations can be suggested from the data collected:

1. All key informants interviewed for this study were heads of various multicultural and cultural organizations, and civic service departments. No interviews were conducted with citizens at large, and it is important to determine their views on multiculturalism in general, and on intercultural interaction and community harmony in particular. Elementary and Secondary school teachers and Secondary School students should be interviewed to gain a better understanding of how they feel intercultural interaction and community harmony should best be promoted, both in the schools and in the community. To plan community forums and school curriculum without first gathering this information would be taking a top-down approach to planning, and may result in the development of workshops and training techniques that are not of paramount interest to the community.

2. This study has discussed many intercultural training techniques. It is important that studies be undertaken to determine the feasibility of offering at least some of these training techniques in Richmond, through community forums or small workshops.

3. This study has ascertained that many ESL students feel the ESL program needs to be revised to ensure that maximum benefits accrue. The possibility of integrating English For Intercultural Communication techniques with existing ESL programs should be carefully considered, since some ESL Secondary School students in Richmond have expressed the need for Canadian cultural education programs to be integrated into existing ESL programs.

4. The development of mandatory intercultural education classes for all students is an issue which needs to be carefully considered. Many Richmond Secondary School students (both ESL and mainstream) feel very strongly that students are not going to make an effort to learn about other cultures unless they are forced to do so. If Canada's and Richmond's multiculturalism policy mandates that cultural diversity be valued, then intercultural education courses should become mandated parts of the school curriculum.

5. This study has revealed that Richmond's situation is not unique - other large Canadian metropolitan city suburbs are experiencing similar intercultural and social transitions and challenges. It would be interesting to study these cities to determine how they have been planning for growth and change. Perhaps Richmond could learn from other Canadian cities, and other cities, especially those that are just beginning to experience large influxes of new immigrants, could learn from the many successful planning initiatives which the City of Richmond has employed. If all cities and municipalities begin to plan for change in the pro-active manner which they have traditionally used to plan for growth, then they will be well on the way of accomplishing the Canadian dream of living happily ever after in harmonious communities of communities.

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APPENDIX A

City of Richmond
MULTICULTURAL POLICY

On March 25, 1991 the Richmond City Council approved the following Multicultural Policy:

Richmond City Council:

1. Values both cultural diversity and a multicultural community as a source of enrichment and strength.

2. Supports the right of all persons to freedom from cultural/racial discrimination.

3. Supports the rights of all persons to equal opportunity and participation in community affairs.

4. Is committed to ensuring that municipal bylaws, policies and programs, service delivery, and employment practices address these principles.

5. Is committed to implementing this policy and directs municipal staff, boards, commissions, and committees to meet these principles in carrying out their duties.

6. Encourages all community groups to adopt similar policies for their organizations.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire For Multicultural Organizations and Civic Service Departments

1. How important is it for your organization/department to see constructive interaction occur between culturally diverse groups in Richmond?

2a. Whose responsibility does your organization/department feel it should be to promote intercultural interaction in Richmond?

b. What could be done to encourage this?

3a. What is your organization/department doing to promote interaction between cultural groups? (If the organization/department is not promoting intercultural interaction, proceed to question 5).

b. Have these initiatives been successful? How?

c. How is the community informed about these initiatives?

d. How has the community responded to these initiatives?

e. What more could your organization/department be doing to promote intercultural interaction and understanding?

4a. What are some of the problems your organization/department has experienced in trying to promote intercultural interaction?

b. In your view, what can be done to solve these problems?

5a. What do you see as the greatest barriers to constructive interaction between cultural groups in Richmond?

b. What can be done to overcome these barriers?

6a. What kind of relationship would you like to see exist between the different cultural groups in Richmond?

b. What changes will have to take place for this relationship to occur?

Questionnaire For Cultural Organizations

1. How important is it for your community to interact constructively with other cultural groups in Richmond?

2a. As a community leader, are you doing anything, or would you like to do anything, to provide the people of Richmond with a better understanding of your culture and its traditions? (If the response is 'no', proceed to question 4).

b. What would you like to do/ what are you doing?

c. Have these initiatives been successful?

d. How are the people of Richmond informed of these initiatives?

e. How have people responded to these initiatives?

3a. Is your community interested in learning about the culture and traditions of other cultural groups in Richmond?

b. How could this learning take place?

4a. What do you see as the greatest barriers to constructive interaction between your culture and other cultural groups in Richmond?

b. What can be done to counteract these barriers?

5a. What kind of relationship would you like to see exist between your cultural group and others in Richmond?

b. What changes will have to take place to enable this relationship to occur?