1. Summary of Proposed Research

The study of immigrant adaptation has long been of major interest to social scientists. In recent years, considerable debate has been generated by the discrepancies between the reported adaptation patterns of new immigrant groups and the expectations derived from existing theories (Alba and Nee 2003; Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szaton-Blanc 1992; Zhou 1997).

It has been suggested that some of the discrepancy is related to the growing racial and ethnic diversity in urban cities. The growing multi-ethnic diversity of cities has considerable implications for immigrant adaptation. The most important and direct implication is that the immigrant adaptation process itself becomes more complicated (Fong and Shibuya 2005). As cities become more diversified in racial and ethnic composition, the understanding of group relations will have to go beyond this minority-majority focus. Results from the project will help to update and serve as a basis for future study of immigrant adaptation in a multi-ethnic context.

The project will also make an important contribution to the study of neighborhood effects. Our project will extend the existing literature to focus on one specific neighborhood context, namely the effects of a multi-ethnic environment. This focus provides a good opportunity to update the link between neighborhood contexts, particularly racial and ethnic composition, and immigrant adaptation, as most existing studies have focused on co-ethnic concentration. As neighborhoods become more multi-ethnic, these projects are timely and significant.

Our project consists of three parts. First, we will document the extent of multi-ethnic neighborhoods in major Canadian cities. Second, we will explore how socioeconomic and demographic resources are related to residing in multi-ethnic neighborhoods. Finally, we will study the consequences of residing in multi-ethnic neighborhoods. In particular, we will concentrate on the consequences related to social and economic integration.

Altogether, the project is an attempt to map out and provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between multi-ethnic neighborhoods and immigrant adaptation. The analysis will draw from two data sources: 2001 specially requested census tract data, and the 2005 New Economy and Economic Integration Survey funded by SSHRC. The two data sets will be merged by postal code.