Contribution to the Debate on Level of Immigration, Canada

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Objectives

- To highlight the importance of developing well informed policies on immigration levels for Canada
- To remind the Canadian government to proactively get involved in developing policies on the levels of immigration to address the demographic and economic realities, rather than react to the labour force shortages of the time
- To demonstrate the demographic impact of immigration to Canada with special reference to Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver

Historical Background

- Long history of immigration policies in Canada
- Before 1967 – explicit racial discriminatory policies to restrict the access to Canada for non-European immigrants:
  - Chinese head tax
  - Prohibiting access for those who arrive in Canada without continuous journey from the country of origin
  - Prohibiting access for persons with peculiar customs, habits, or modes of living
- After 1967 – new progressive immigration regulations, emphasizing education, training, and skills as the main considerations of admissibility regardless of the country of origin

Consequence of the New Immigration Policies

- Change in the racial characteristics of immigrants:
- Until 1960 - all the top ten source countries were from Europe and the US
- By 1973 - Europe and the US represented only five countries of the top ten source countries
- In less than twenty years - only two countries (Poland and Britain) were of European origin and not even the US was part of the top ten countries

Data and Methods

- Monte Carlo method
- Base population - 2001 Census

Scenario	Immigration	Fertility	Mortality	Internal migration
A) Low growth	Characteristics: 67% visible minority Level: 180,000	T.F.R. of 1.3	e0M=80 e0F=84	2000-2001
B) Reference scenario	Characteristics: 1996-2001 Level: 225,000	T.F.R. of 1.5	e0M=80 e0F=84	2000-2001
C) Internal migration 1996	Characteristics: 1996-2001 Level: 225,000	T.F.R. of 1.5	e0M=80 e0F=84	1995-1996
D) High growth	Characteristics: 80% visible minority Level: 270,000	T.F.R. of 1.8	e0M=80 e0F=84	2000-2001
S) Scenario 1%	Characteristics: 1996-2001 Level: 1% of total population (365,000 in 2017)	T.F.R. of 1.5	e0M=80 e0F=84	2000-2001

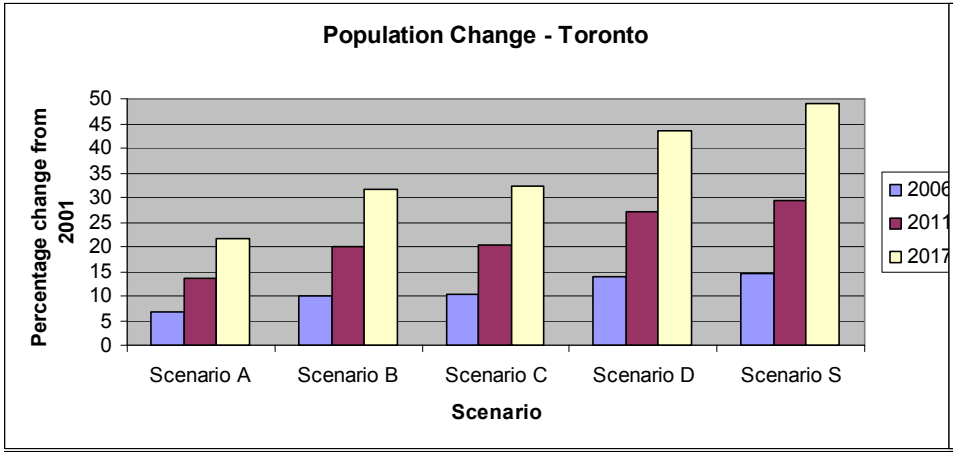
Premises

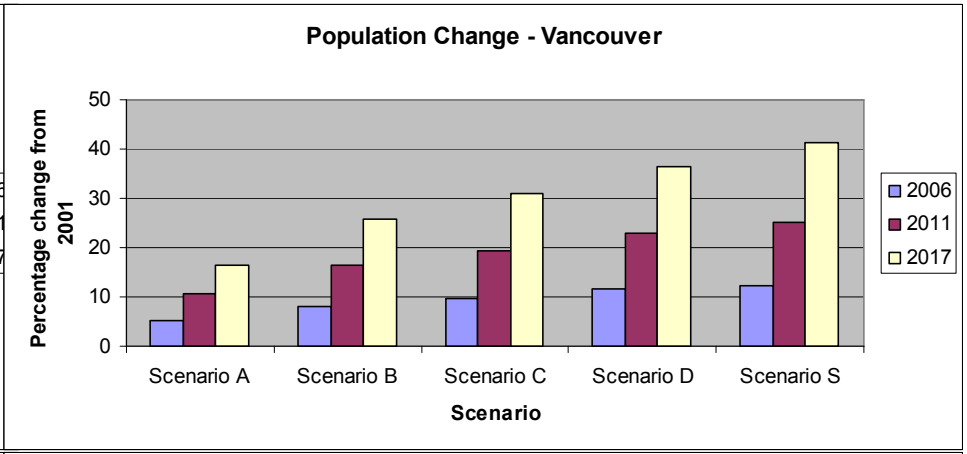
- The new demographic reality - low fertility rate, aging population, and 'baby boomers' leaving the workforce
- The government tends to address the problem of labour shortage by adopting 'stop-gap' measures: recruiting temporary foreign workers to meet the labour force demand, and postponing the age of retirement
- In time, the international competition for young highly skilled immigrants will increase
- Canada must establish itself as a popular immigrant destination in order to enjoy future stability and economic growth

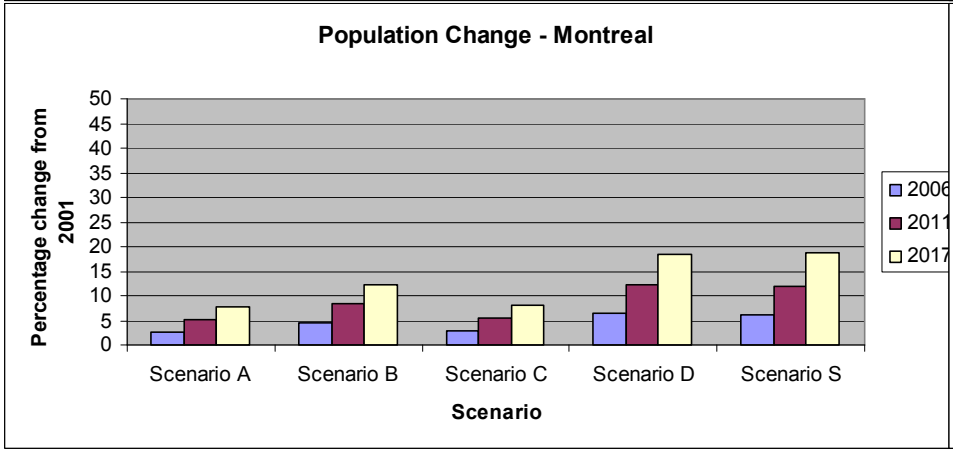
Results and Discussion

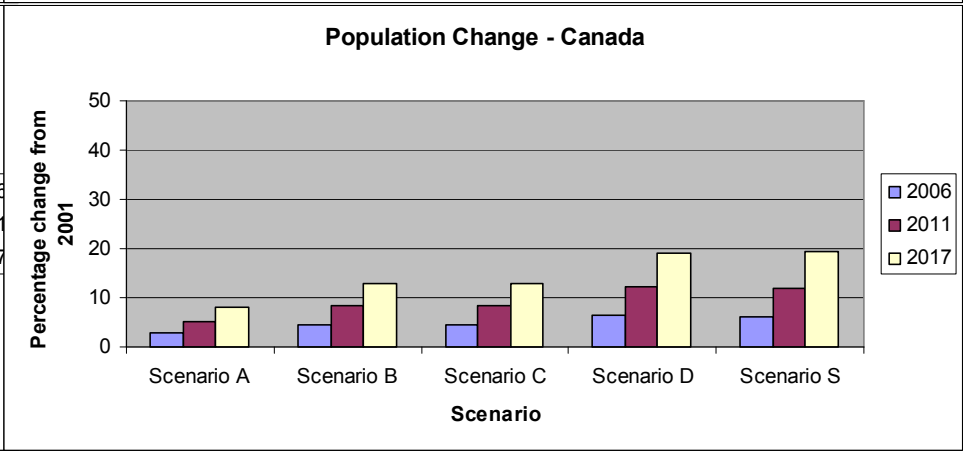
- Lack of policies on immigration levels in Canada
- In the past immigration has been linked to economic considerations; now there is a need to link it with demographic considerations (a long-term approach)
- Demographic impact of immigration levels on the population of Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, and Canada:
  - Sustains population growth
  - Compensates the increase in the median age
  - Compensates the decrease in the dependency ratio
  - Increases visible minority population growth

Population Growth

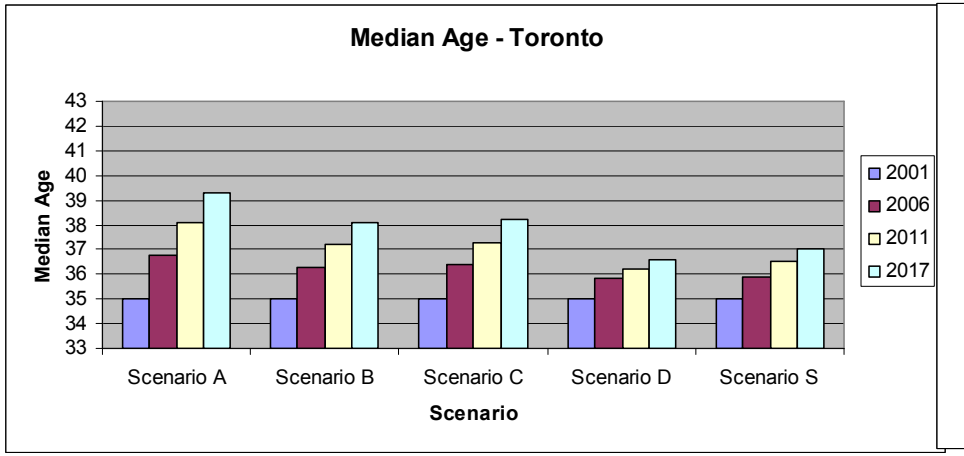








Median Age


Median Age - Toronto
Median Age
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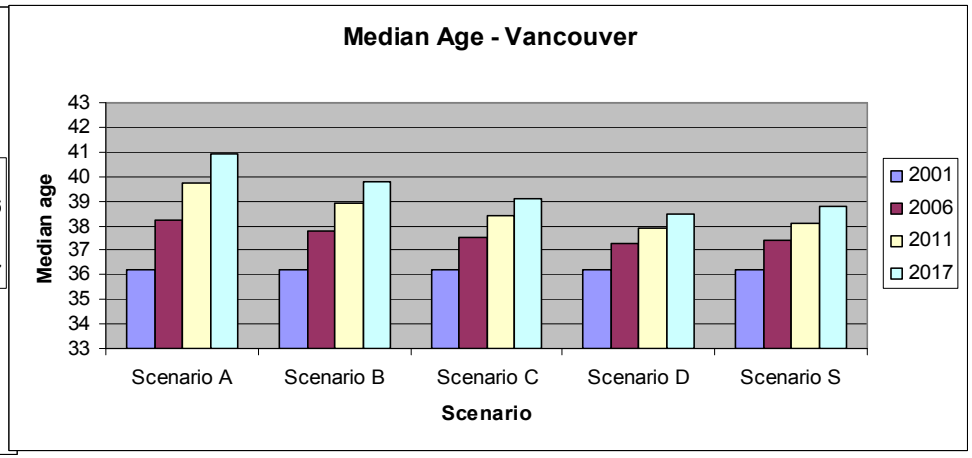
Scenario A
Scenario B
Scenario C
Scenario D
Scenario S
Scenario
2001
2006
2011
2017


Median Age - Vancouver
Median age
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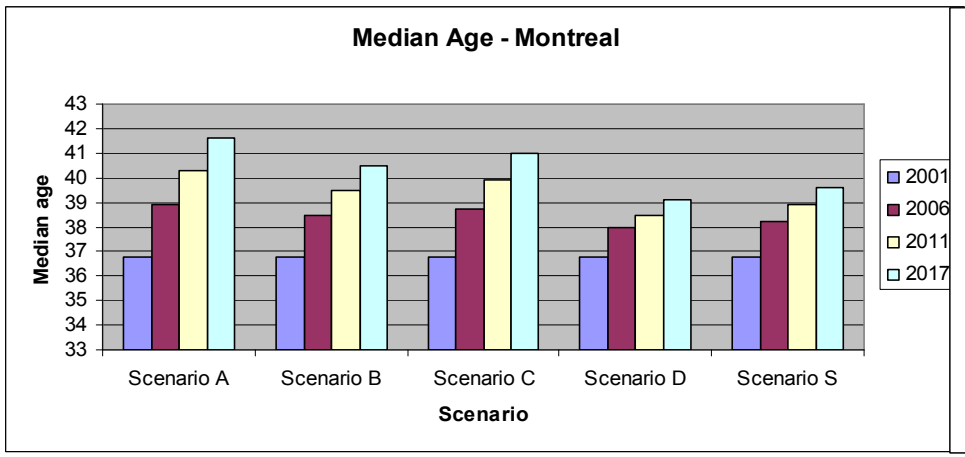
Median Age - Montreal
Median age
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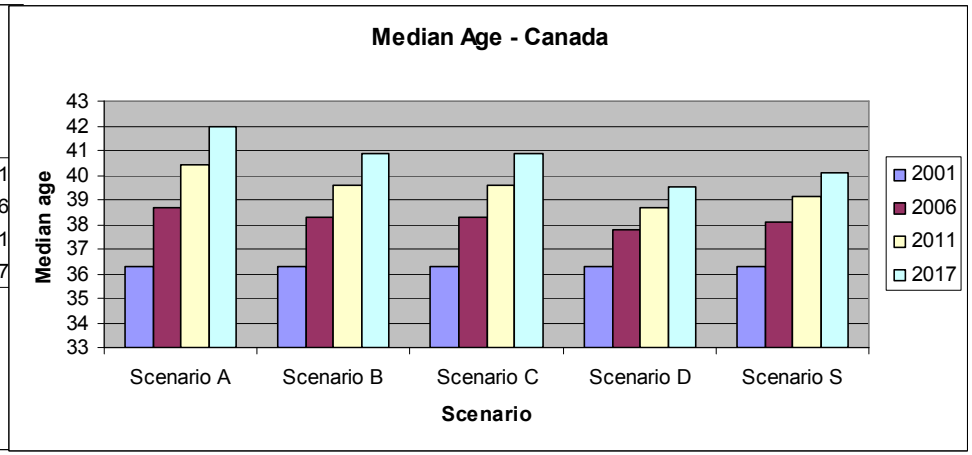
Median Age - Canada
Median age
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Scenario A
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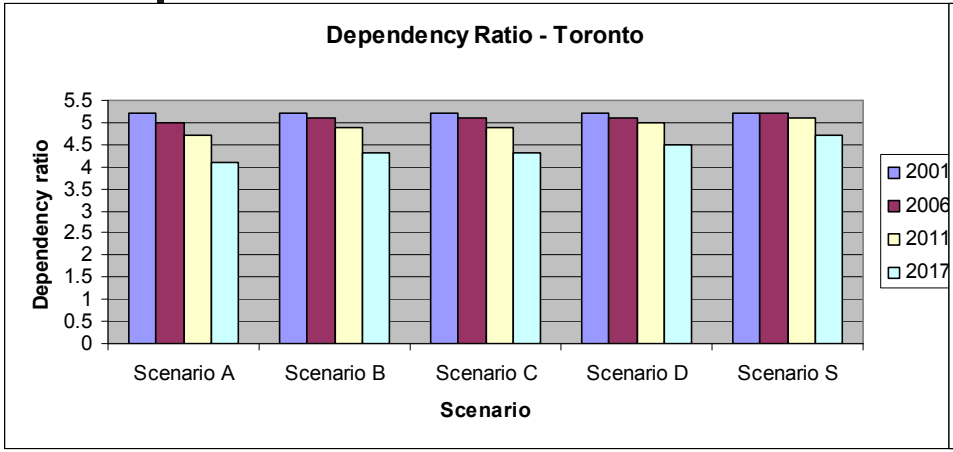
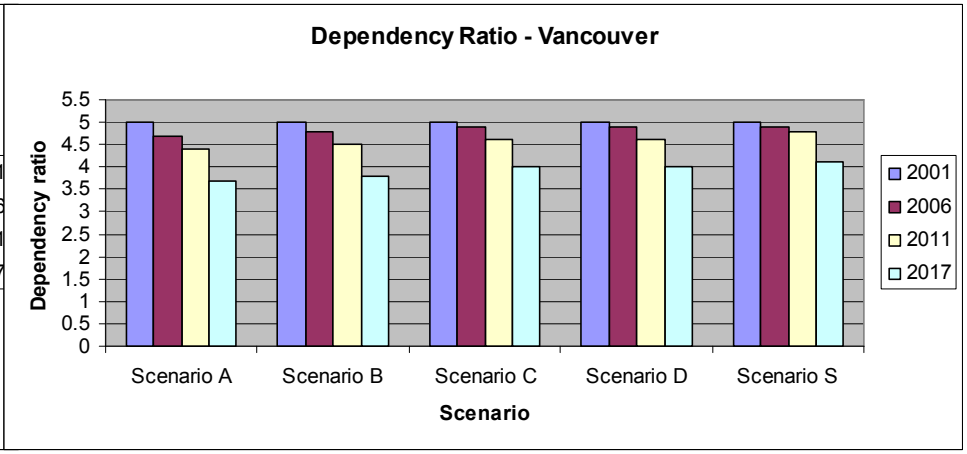
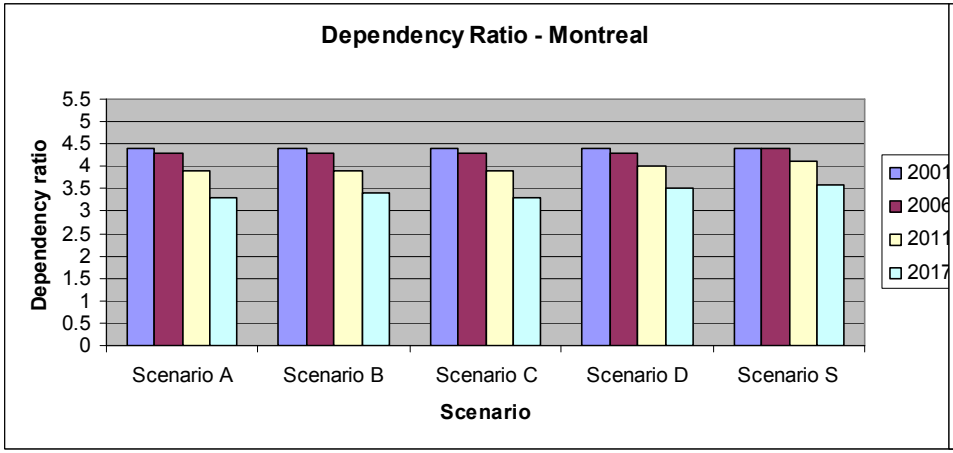
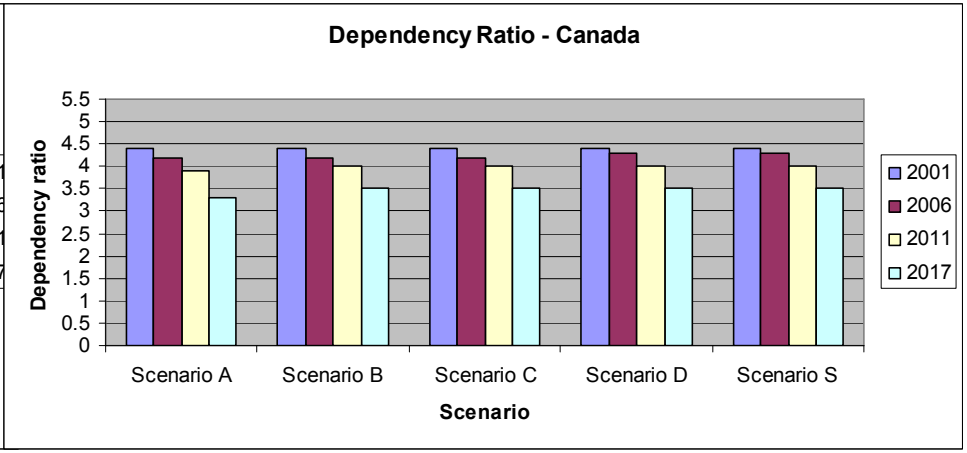
Scenario C
Scenario D
Scenario S
Scenario
2001
2006
2011
2017

Dependency Ratio

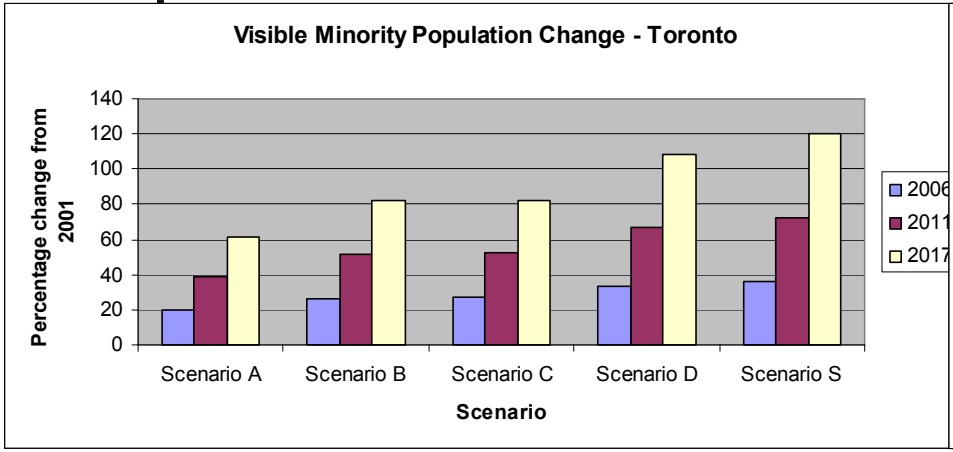


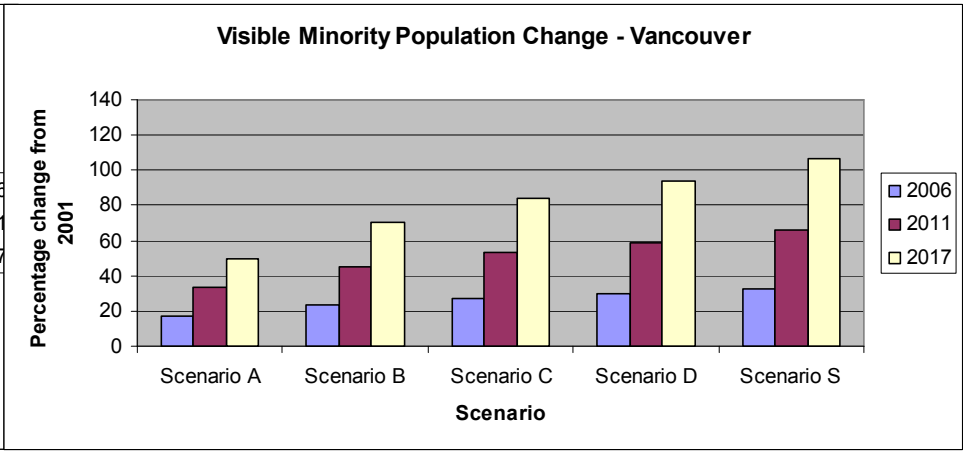


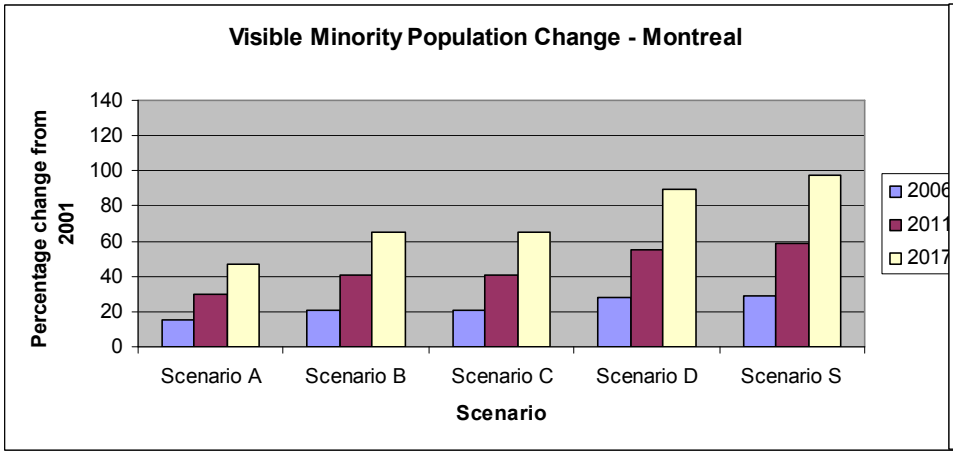


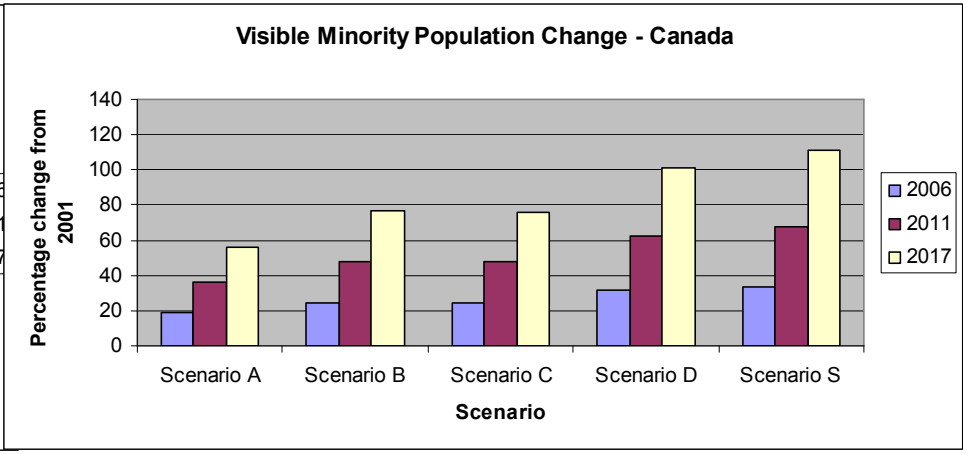


Visible Minority Population Growth









Results and Discussion (cont.)

The government hesitates to publicly discuss and debate the immigration levels, because of the following consequences of increasing immigration levels:

- Nearly 80% of new immigrants move to Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal
- Nearly 80% of new immigrants are visible minorities
- High immigration is associated with high population growth and increase of visible minority population in Toronto and Vancouver
- A few visible minority groups may dominate demographically in certain areas: Vancouver - 47% of the visible minority population will be Chinese; Toronto - 32% of the visible minority population will be South Asian
- Concerns over the social cohesiveness of the population in cities such as Toronto and Vancouver
- Negative perception of immigrants

Conclusions

The immigrant problem in the city has much to do with the social construction of immigrants and the lack of social management of immigrants and visible minorities:

- Develop programs and strategies to integrate immigrants into the Canadian society and to sensitize Canadians to the benefits of a multicultural society
- Help immigrants to utilize their academic credentials, professional experience, and technical skills

Implications

- The level of immigration to Canada has to be increased substantially for demographic and economic considerations
- Canadian policymakers need to develop a comprehensive policy on the required level of immigration to Canada for a long-term solution

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