

EVIDENCE BRIEF

The **Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council** in collaboration with the **Future Skills Centre**

SSHRC's Imagining Canada's Future initiative mobilizes social sciences and humanities research to address emerging economic, societal and knowledge needs for Canada, and help guide decision-making across all sectors toward a better future. This evidence brief addresses the Future Challenge Area of: **Mobility and public transit**

Platform-based mobility and transportation by and for diaspora communities: A systematic literature review

About the project

Many immigrants from various ethnic communities have made Canada "home." Immigrant communities are a vibrant part of the Canadian economy and are dominant users of public transportation while using their own digital mobility. However, there is a lack of knowledge about the immigrant and diaspora communities in Canada and their practices of digital mobility.

In response to this gap, this knowledge synthesis serves as a systematic literature review to understand the impacts and challenges of digital mobility transportation services by and for diaspora communities. Specifically, this research aimed to explore how diaspora communities deal with both the supply and demand sides of digital mobility platforms, in different types, such as ride-sharing; car-sharing; moving and transportation; and food and grocery delivery.

The research consisted of two phases. In the first phase, a qualitative meta-synthesis was conducted on academic literature to explore the field in general. The aim was to identify concepts studied in the literature and understand their relationships and significance. In the second phase, the focus was on immigrant communities across Canada by conducting a grey literature review. In particular, the contents published in newspapers, social media networks and forums for diaspora communities of Chinese and Indian immigrants were explored. These communities constitute the majority of immigrants in Canada and are very present in digital mobility and public transportation services, often even having their native networks and platforms.

Key findings

The key findings are in two phases: the academic literature review and the grey literature review for the Chinese and Indian communities. In terms of academic literature review, the following key themes are found:

- **Impact of digital mobility platforms on immigrants' welfare.** This is a controversial topic in the literature, as some scholars argue that digital mobility platforms are a lifeline for socio-economically vulnerable people. Because these platforms lack education and language barriers, are primarily blind regarding immigration status, and provide a fast-onboarding process for immigrants, they ultimately lead to better work satisfaction.
- **Immigrants' travel behaviour patterns and underlying factors for using digital mobility platforms.** The literature considers socio-economic, spatial and cultural assimilations as critical drivers of immigrants' travel behaviour. In addition, the quality of transport services is a significant factor shaping immigrants' travel behaviour.

- **Immigrants' fitness for participation in social capital-enabled mobility.** Ultimately, the last theme explored in the study articulates the factors for using digital mobility platforms by diasporas. These factors include transport priorities, socio-economic characteristics, technological aspects and, lastly, the built environment attributes.

In terms of grey literature review, the following key topics are found:

- These two communities are very active and present in digital mobility and public transportation services.
- There are numerous Chinese and Indian digital mobility and transportation initiatives in Canada. These initiatives are divided into four categories: transportation, grocery delivery, food delivery and online payment. The summary of all these findings is presented in various tables.

Policy implications

- Digital mobility for diaspora communities is context dependent. There is a need to open this black box by conducting a nation-wide study, province by province, community by community, especially in big metropolitan areas where there is a high concentration of diaspora communities.
- There is an important lack of datasets (both qualitative and quantitative) for the actual impacts of digital mobility on diaspora communities, their welfare and their rights (discrimination and injustice in some cases).
- This research will enable and ease the integration of new immigrants to Canada to the wider Canadian society.

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FURTHER INFORMATION

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The Future Skills Centre (FSC) is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration, dedicated to preparing Canadians for employment success. As a pan-Canadian community, we are collaborating to rigorously identify, test, measure and share innovative approaches to assessing and developing the skills Canadians need to thrive in the days and years ahead.
