

COVID-19 Challenges of International Students in Greater Sudbury

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immigration
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de sudbury

SSHRC  CRSH



Outline

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Geographical Context of Greater Sudbury

Research Questions, Methods and Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

Pre-Covid Challenges

Challenges During the ongoing Pandemic

Examples of Individual/Social Resilience

Recommendations : International Students

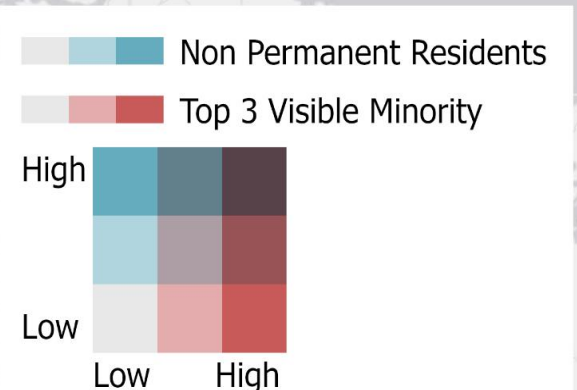
About the Project

Given the paucity and lack of research on international students in *third tier* cities, particularly in Northern Ontario, this study focuses on Greater Sudbury

Cambrian College and College Boreal

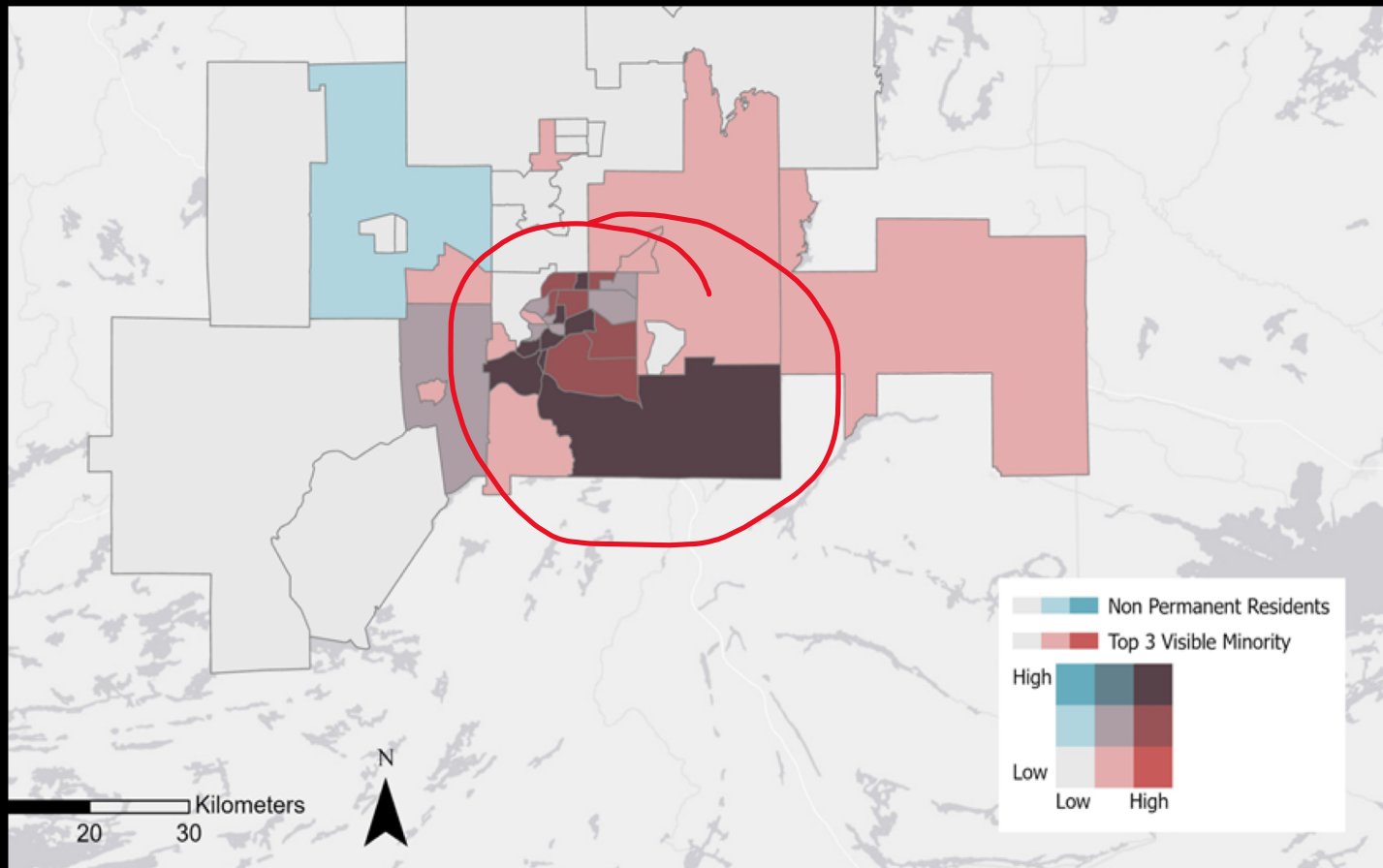
Downtown Sudbury

Laurentian University



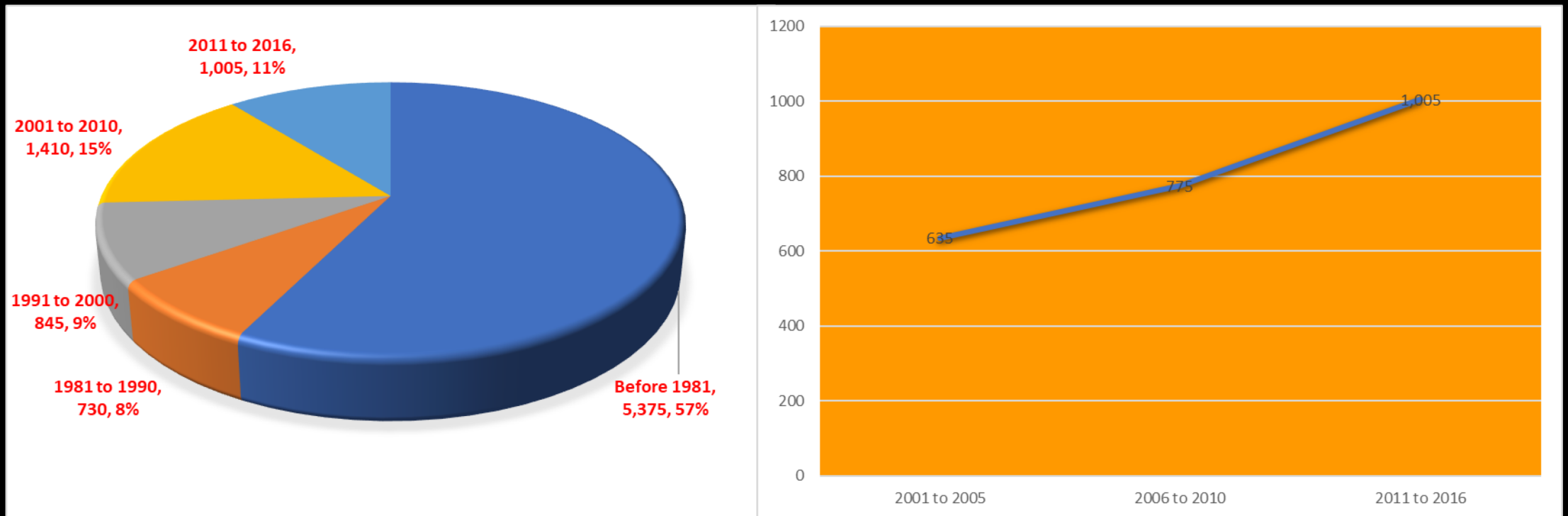
Kilometers

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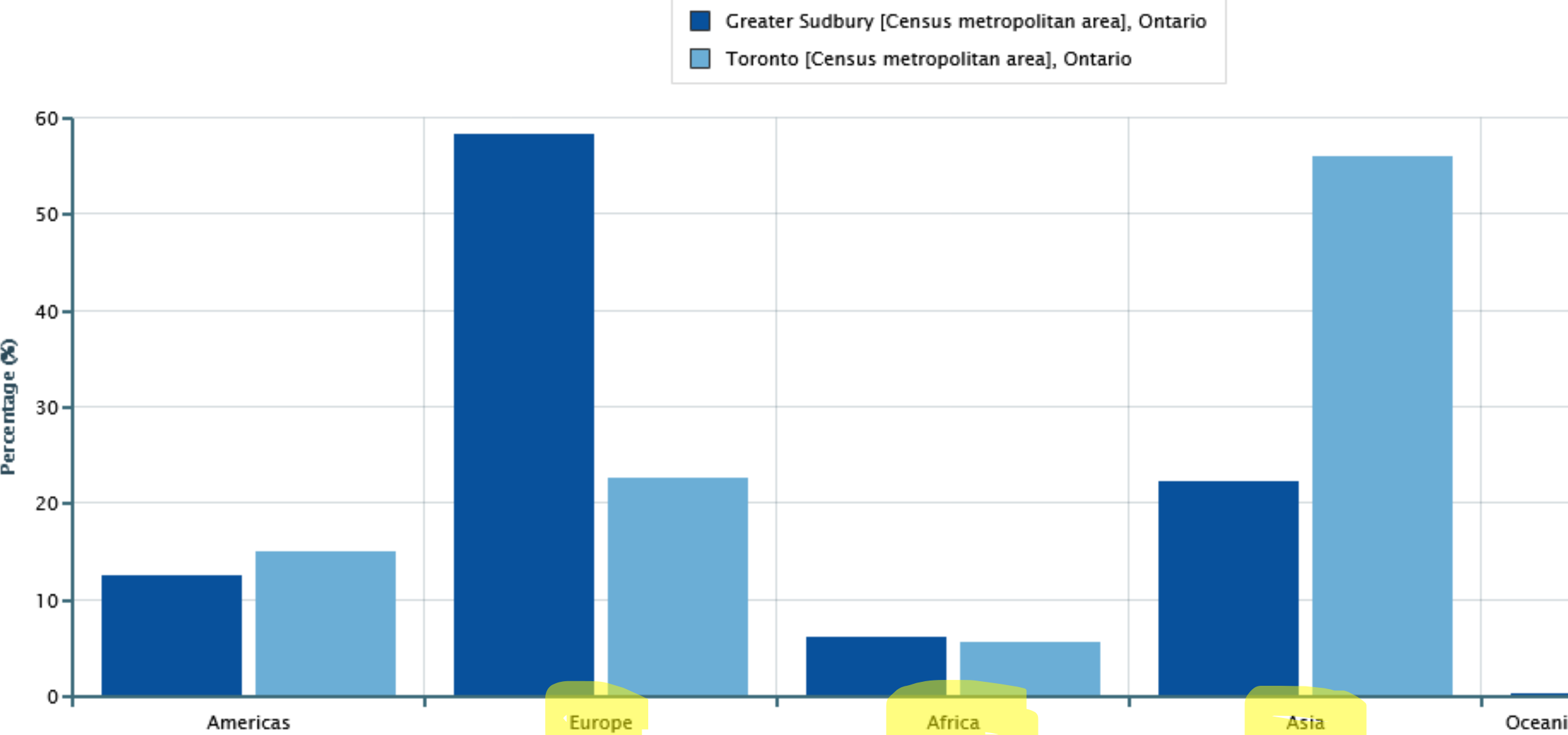
South Asian, Black, and Chinese

Immigration in Greater Sudbury by Period of Migration



Source: Census, 2016

Selected places of birth for the immigrant population in private households – 25% sample



Research Questions and Methods

Questions:

- (1) What were the pre-pandemic challenges of international students and the institutions supporting them
- (2) What were their challenges during the pandemic; and
- (3) What strategies, resources and networks did they use, to adapt to the rapidly evolving crisis and/or prepare for future crises

Methods: 'Mixed'

Statistical Analysis + Field Observations + In-Depth Key Informants Interviews (9)+ In-Depth Interviews with International Students (36) living in Greater Sudbury before the pandemic, during, and at the time of Interview

Socio- Demographic Profile of Respondents

Gender:
19 (M) and 17 (F)

Age:
20 -25 years (69%) 26-
35 (27%)

Language:
English: 27 (75%)
French: 9 (25%)

Place of Birth:
Asia 20 (55%)
Africa: 15 (41%);
Caribbean: 1 (3%)

Top 3 Pre-COVID Challenges of International Students

Academic

- **Internal Characteristics:** Accent Related Stigmatization/Lack of Knowledge regarding the Canadian System
- **Structural (Institutional) Issues:** Lack of Adequate Equipments, Facilities, and Training

Employment

- **Individual Characteristics:** 'Race' and Accent Related Discrimination/Lack of Knowledge regarding the System
- **Structural (Institutional):** Lack of Guidance from University and College

Food Insecurity:

- **Availability:** Lack of Culturally Specific Food
- **Accessibility:** Lack of Funds
- **Utilization:** Inability to cook due to landlord discrimination/lack of facilities/ and time constraints

“.....here we have an optional course that is done online, although I have never had such a thing in my country. It was so difficult because there were deadlines to submit the work and I didn't know it...” (#Sophia: DRC, Francophone, College Boreal)

“...lower than my standard actually. The curriculum is not that challenging. I do not have to put in the effort” (# Karan, India, Anglophone, Laurentian U)

“.....No one helped me find the job Laurentian has international student orientation, but it is not helpful at all (# Darshan, India, Anglophone, Laurentian U)

Challenges During the ongoing Pandemic

- Did the challenges exacerbate or remained the same? Yes and No
 - Academic: Decreased/Remained the same
 - Public Transportation: Increased (no more subsidy)
 - Employment: Increased (linked to public transportation)
 - Food insecurity: Increased
 - Physical: Increased (access to medical care extremely limited)
 - Mental: Increased

Compounded Challenges....

“When the lockdown was declared I saw everyone’s parent is coming to pick them up but I had no one who would help me at all. I had to stay put in the residence as the rent was prepaid.....when it hit mid-March I could not go to my job [downtown] or get any groceries on a regular basis, because our bus passport was already discontinued...to go from the residence to the grocery store [where she found work] was about 45 minutes walk...I did that for some days but then it was too much” (Alex, DRC, Laurentian U)



Social Isolation

" I was in the house all the time moving from my bedroom to my living room. It made me so anxious or I would say nervous because the online classes were from 8 am to 4 pm there was a lot to do and I felt like my head was going to explode. I wanted to go out for a walk but I couldn't, it was forbidden. I was also afraid of COVID and of being exposed" (Sophia, Francophone: Boreal)

Individual/Social Resilience

Most Sought Help from the Academic Institutions/City/YMCA – but none received assistance

Most Moved to GTA/Montreal

Main
Recommendations:
International
Students

Citizens of Greater Sudbury should be more considerate toward the situation of International Students

More support is needed from the municipal government (City) and the academic institutions