

November 4, 2022

2021 Census: Citizenship, Immigration, Ethnic Origin, Visible Minority Groups (Race), Mobility, Migration, Religion

The 2021 Census Day was May 11, 2021. On October 26, 2022, Statistics Canada released its sixth set of data from this Census, on citizenship, immigration, ethnicity, race (visible minority groups), mobility, migration, place of birth, and religion.

KEY POINTS

Citizenship

- According to the Census, 477,230 people who are not Canadian citizens were living in Toronto (17.3 per cent of the Toronto population) in 2021.
- Citizenship in Toronto has fallen from 85.3 per cent in 2016 to 82.7 per cent in 2021. Nationally, this trend has fallen from 94.2 per cent in 2016 to 91.2 in 2021.

Immigration

- In 2021, 47.1 per cent of Toronto residents were born in Canada. According to the Census, there were 1,286,140 immigrants in Toronto, or 46.6 percent of the population. In Canada overall, immigrants made up 23.0 per cent of the population.
- More immigrants in Toronto are Women+. For the non-immigrant population of Toronto, Women+ made up 49.9 percent of the population. In comparison, 53.9 percent of immigrants in the City identify as Women+. This is similar to the rest of the GTHA in which Women+ made up 49.9 per cent and 52.5 per of non-immigrant and immigrant populations, respectively.
- While Toronto is home to 7.6 percent of Canada's population, it has 15.7 percent of Canada's non-permanent residents. This is down from 18.5 percent in 2016.
- In 2021, 17.6 percent of Toronto immigrants arrived with refugee status. This is down slightly from 17.8 percent in 2016. Overall, in Canada this proportion went up from 15.1 percent in 2016 to 15.2 per cent in 2021.

Immigrant Characteristics

- In Toronto, 26.6 percent of the 1,286,140 immigrants currently living here arrived in Canada in the last ten years. In Canada as a whole, this proportion is higher at 29.4 percent. This decade has the highest proportion of newcomers in Toronto and Canada in the last 40 years.
- In Toronto, immigrants that arrived from 2011-2021 make up 12.4 percent of the population. In Canada, this group makes up 6.8 per cent of the total population.
- Toronto is home to 13.9 percent of the immigrant population that arrived in Canada in the last decade.
- The majority of Toronto's immigrant population were 25 years or older when immigrating to Canada (90.9 percent). This is up from 54.7 percent of the immigrant population in Toronto in 2016, meaning more immigrants are coming to Canada as adults than children compared to that time.

This is similar for Canada (88.4 percent from 51.6 percent) and the rest of the GTHA (89.9 percent from 50.9 percent). (See Figure 1: Age at immigration, 2021 and 2016.)

Place of Birth and Generation Status

- Of the 1,286,140 immigrants in Toronto, 55.7 percent were born in Asia, up from 53.5 percent in 2016.
- The three birth countries with the highest proportion of Toronto immigrants were the Philippines (10.3 percent), China (10.1 percent) and India (7.9 percent). All three birth countries have decreased proportions since 2016, which at the time made up 16.8, 12.3 and 10.7 percent of Toronto immigrants, respectively.
- In 2021, 52.9 per cent of the Toronto population was first generation, meaning neither of their parents were known to be born in Canada. This compares to 26.4 per cent of the Canadian population as a whole, 33.7 per cent of Ontario, and 44.9 per cent of the rest of the GTHA. (See Figure 2: Generation status, 2021.)

Ethnic Origin

- The Census asked Canadians about their ethnic and cultural ancestry. Since respondents could provide multiple responses, the number of responses on ethnic origins is greater than the total population.
- In 2021, the top ten ethnicities/cultural origins reported by Torontonians were Chinese (297,725), English (244,995), Irish (226,865), Scottish (211,175), Indian (India)(182,115), Italian (167,460), Canadian (165,640), Filipino (161,495), German (107,475), and French n.o.s. (85,715) (See Glossary for definition of n.o.s.)
- 5,870 people identified as having a solely Indigenous ancestry while 24,150 people identified a combination of mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous ancestries.

Visible Minority Groups (Racial Identity)

- In Toronto, 55.7% or 1,537,285 people identified as belonging to a racialized group (aka visible minority group). This figure is up from 51.5 percent in 2016. (See Figure 7 and Map 2 for details.)
- Peel Region has the highest visible minority group membership in the GTHA at 68.8 percent. York Region is comparable to Toronto at 55 percent, but the GTHA excluding Toronto overall has a rate of 50.2 percent. Across Canada, 26.5 percent of the population identified as belonging to a visible minority group. (See Map 3 for details.)
- The top three visible minority groups in Toronto were: South Asian (14.0 percent of total 2021 Toronto population), Chinese (10.7 percent) and Black (9.6 percent).
- In Toronto, 64,700 people reported belonging to more than one visible minority group. This represents a 35.7 percent increase over 2016, compared to a 2.6 percent increase in the total population since 2016.

Religion

- In 2021, 46.2 percent of those living in Toronto identified as Christian. Of those identifying as Christian, 52.5 percent identified as Catholic.
- 9.6 percent of those living in Toronto identified as Muslim, 6.2 percent identified as Hindu, 3.6 percent as Jewish, 2.3 percent as Buddhist, and 0.8 percent as Sikh. (See Figure 6 for detailed breakdown.)

- In 2021, 30.6 percent identified no religion or secular perspectives as their affiliation, a significant increase from 18.5 percent in 2001. Among all Canadians, 34.6 percent identified no religion or secular perspectives as their affiliation.
- Between 2001 and 2021 the proportion of people who identified as Christian in Toronto decreased from 60.3 percent to 46.2 percent while the proportion of people who identified as Muslim increased from 6.7 percent to 9.6 percent and those identifying as Hindu increased from 4.8 percent to 6.2 percent.
- Between 2001 and 2021 the proportion of those identifying as Jewish declined from 4.2 percent to 3.6 percent; those identifying as Buddhist declined from 2.7 percent to 2.3 percent, and those identifying as Sikh declined from 0.9 percent to 0.8 percent.

Mobility and Migration

- 442,910 people moved into the city of Toronto during the five-year period from 2016 to 2021, or about 16.8% of the population. The net increase in Toronto migrants compared to five years earlier was 41,960 people (400,950 migrants were reported in 2016). More than half (242,185) of the migrants to the city were from outside Canada, while 157,040 migrants were from within Ontario and 43,685 were from other provinces.
- The number of external migrants to the city of Toronto between 2016 and 2021 is 242,185, which is higher than the 216,835 external migrants reported by the 2016 Census for the period 2011-2016 and the 200,580 external migrants reported by the 2011 National Household Survey for the period 2006-2011.
- Despite the initial impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, 40,675 external migrants settled in Toronto in the one-year period to May 2021. This compares to 50,225 in the one year before May 2011 and 59,945 in the year before May 2016.
- Toronto remains an important immigrant reception area: 1 in 7 external migrants or international migrants to Canada moved to Toronto, and almost half of the external migrants to the GTHA settled in Toronto.
- Toronto is an attractive destination in Ontario to people moving from the rest of Canada and the rest of the world: 1 in 7 migrants to Ontario from the rest of Canada and the rest of the world chose Toronto as their home.
- Intra-provincial migration (movement from a different municipality in the same province) to Toronto over the latest five-year period increased by 15,905 residents to 157,040 in 2021 versus 141,135 for the five years up to 2016. This shows that Toronto continues to attract residents from other parts of the province. Every municipality in the GTHA experienced increases to their intra-provincial numbers ranging from 14,545 to 62,455 between 2016 and 2021 compared to five years earlier. Net intra-provincial migration information at the Census Division level is not yet available from Statistics Canada.
- During the five-year period prior to 2021, net interprovincial migration (migration from other provinces) to the city of Toronto increased by 700 residents to 43,685 people.
- Over the past five years, one in five city residents moved within the city: 530,780 or 20.1 percent of the population. In the last year alone, almost 1 in 10 residents or 261,975 people moved within the city.
- The areas in the City of Toronto with the highest proportion of movers (within the five years prior to the 2021 Census) are located within Downtown and Central Waterfront, Liberty Village, Midtown, and North York Centre (see Map 4 for details).

GLOSSARY

Statistics Canada maintains a [Census Dictionary](#) for the Census of Population, 2021. Many more terms associated with the Census can be found there. Statistics Canada also publishes [2021 Census of Population reference products](#) with further information.

Census Division (CD): a group of neighbouring municipalities joined together for the purposes of regional planning and managing common services (such as police or ambulance services). Census Division is the general term for provincially legislated areas (such as county, *municipalité régionale de comté* (MRC) and regional district) or their equivalents.

Census Metropolitan Area (CMA): one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (known as the core). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000, based on data from the current Census of Population Program, of which 50,000 or more must live in the core based on adjusted data from the previous Census of Population Program. To be included in the CMA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the core, as measured by commuting flows derived from data on place of work from the previous Census Program.

Census Tract (CT): a small, geographic area, typically with a population smaller than 10,000 persons. Their geography is relatively stable over time to allow for comparison of changes from Census to Census.

Centre: as seen in several Maps, Centres are defined in the City of Toronto Official Plan. They play an important role in how the City manages growth. The Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke and Yonge-Eglinton Centres are places with excellent transit accessibility where jobs, housing and services will be concentrated in dynamic mixed use settings with different levels of activity and intensity. More information can be found in the [Toronto Official Plan](#).

Downtown: The City of Toronto's definition of Downtown is consistent with the definition of [Downtown](#) used by [Statistics Canada](#) in their reporting on growth in urban centres based on the 2021 Census results. Downtown is bounded by Lake Ontario to the south, Bathurst Street to the west, the mid-town rail corridor and Rosedale Valley Road to the north and the Don River to the east, as defined in Map 41-1 of the Downtown Plan of the City of Toronto Official Plan. Downtown is the largest economic node in the city and the region. Parts of Downtown are expected to see growth, and the Downtown Plan directs how and where within Downtown that growth should occur. More information can be found in the [Toronto Official Plan](#).

Ethnic or Cultural Origin: refers to the ethnic or cultural origins of the person's ancestors. Ancestors may have Indigenous origins, or origins that refer to different countries, or other origins that may not refer to different countries. Because of changes in data collection methodologies this variable is usually not comparable to previous Census periods and may have large fluctuations.

Gender refers to an individual's personal and social identity as a man, woman or non-binary person (a person who is not exclusively a man or a woman). Men+ category refers to males. Statistics Canada states that 'starting in 2021, this category includes men and boys, as well as some non-binary persons'. Women+ category refers to females. Statistics Canada states that 'starting in 2021, this category includes women and girls, as well as some non-binary persons'. For complete definitions of Men+, Women+, men (cisgender and transgender), women (cisgender and transgender), and non-binary persons please refer to Statistics Canada's [Age, Sex at Birth and Gender Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2021](#).

GTHA: refers to the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. This area is comprised of the single-tier municipalities of Toronto and Hamilton, the regional municipalities of York, Durham, Peel, and Halton, and the cities and towns within the GTHA regional municipalities. This is not the same geography as the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area as defined by Statistics Canada.

Indigenous ancestry: refers to whether a person has ancestry associated with the Indigenous peoples of Canada, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis, and/or Inuit. Aboriginal peoples (referred to here as Indigenous peoples) of Canada are defined in the Constitution Act, 1982, Section 35 (2) as including the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada. The term 'Aboriginal' has been replaced by Statistics Canada with the updated term of 'Indigenous' when referring to individuals who identify themselves as First Nations people, Métis and/or Inuit. Ancestry refers to the ethnic or cultural origins of the person's ancestors, an ancestor being usually more distant than a grandparent. A person can have more than one ethnic or cultural origin.

Indigenous group: refers to whether the person is First Nations (North American Indian), Métis and/or Inuk (Inuit). A person may be included in more than one of these three specific groups.

Indigenous identity: refers to whether the person identified with the Indigenous peoples of Canada. This includes those who identify as First Nations (North American Indian), Métis and/or Inuk (Inuit), and/or those who report being Registered or Treaty Indians (that is, registered under the Indian Act of Canada), and/or those who have membership in a First Nation or Indian band.

Mean: Typically often referred to as the average, the mean is a statistic which is calculated by adding up a series of values and then dividing by the total number of values. For example, the mean age for the city of Toronto is calculated by adding together the ages of all the people in Toronto and then dividing that total by the total number of people in Toronto.

Median: A statistic which refers to the mid-point of a distribution. For an age distribution, the median age would be the age for which exactly one half of the population is older and the other half is younger. While included in previous Census profiles, the median age was not reported in this initial data release from Statistics Canada.

Mobility status, five years refers to the status of a person with regard to the place of residence on the reference day in relation to the place of residence on the same date five years earlier.

Mobility status, one year refers to the status of a person with regard to the place of residence on the reference day in relation to the place of residence on the same date one year earlier.

Movers & Non-Movers: The city of Toronto's population is composed of movers and non-movers. Persons who have not moved are referred to as non-movers and persons who have moved from one residence to another (within one year or five years of Census Day) are referred to as movers. Movers include migrants and non-migrants. Non-migrants are people who moved within the same city or town (for example, within the city of Toronto). Migrants are broken down into internal migrants and external migrants. External migrants are people who came from another county to live in Canada. Internal migrants include people who moved to a different province in Canada, known as interprovincial migrants, and people who moved to a different city or town within the same province, who are intra-provincial migrants.

Neighbourhood: The City of Toronto identifies 158 social planning neighbourhoods to help government and community agencies with their local planning. These neighbourhoods allow the provision of socio-economic data at a meaningful geographic area. Not all people define neighbourhoods the same way, but for the purposes of statistical reporting these neighbourhoods were defined based on Statistics Canada Census Tracts. To account for differential population change since 1996, when the original 140 neighbourhoods were designed, the City has split a few large neighbourhoods. As of April 2022 there are 158 neighbourhoods in total. More information about [City of Toronto neighbourhoods](#) can be found on the City's website.

N.O.S. is an abbreviation which means "not otherwise specified". It is used to categorize general responses which are not included in any specific responses. For example, responses to the Mother

Tongue question that indicate 'Chinese' but do not specify any of the unique Chinese dialects such as Hakka, Mandarin, et al., are grouped into the 'Chinese n.o.s.' category.

Undercoverage is a measure of the number of persons excluded by the Census who should have been counted, as determined by Statistics Canada. Although Statistics Canada makes a great effort to count every person, in each Census a notable number of people are left out for a variety of reasons. For example, people may be traveling, some dwellings are hard to find, and some people simply refuse to participate. Overcoverage can also occur, when people are counted more than once or should not have been counted in a given population. Undercoverage is generally more common than overcoverage. The total impact of the coverage errors is the net undercoverage.

Visible Minority: the *Employment Equity Act* defines "visible minorities" as "persons, other than Aboriginal persons, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour". Racialized groups include, among others, South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Arab, Latin American, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese. Note that for data collection, neither the Census question nor the harmonized question on population groups for social surveys include the term "visible minorities." See the Notes section for details.

NOTES

The numbers in this Backgrounder are not adjusted for undercoverage, See the Glossary for an explanation of undercoverage. All figures in this backgrounder are randomly rounded to multiples of 5 by Statistics Canada as a privacy measure.

All data in this backgrounder are based on geographic boundaries available at time of writing. In the event of any future boundary revisions, some data totals may change. This is especially the case for small area units such as Census Tracts.

The information previously collected by the long-form Census questionnaire was collected in 2011 as part of the voluntary National Household Survey. In 2016, Statistics Canada restored the mandatory long-form Census questionnaire in an effort to improve data collection. The numbers reported in this Backgrounder are based on the long forms of the Census for 2001, 2016 and 2021, and can be compared in most cases, except where the collection methodology was dramatically changed, as in the Ethnic or Cultural Origin variables. Please consult the Reference Guides for comparability details.

The Mobility & Migration Reference Guide (Statistics Canada Catalogue: 98-500-X 2021-04-27) notes that the COVID-19 pandemic emerged in Canada in early 2020 and affected all steps of the 2021 Census process, from data collection to dissemination. Please refer to the [Guide to the Census of Population, 2021](#), Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-X for more detailed information on this topic. Further study will be required regarding the components of the city's population change to examine mobility and migration in greater detail.

Regarding the measurement of racialized groups, Statistics Canada has stated that "as part of ongoing efforts to modernize the national statistical system, the "visible minorities" standard is currently under review. Statistics Canada has committed to consulting partners, stakeholders and the general public to establish a suitable terminology and classification to describe the population and to meet data needs. To date, Statistics Canada has received feedback on the sensitivity and use of the term "visible minorities" when disseminating data. A number of alternative terms have been proposed by stakeholders. A commonly-proposed alternative is "racialized groups," with various definitions and classifications." Please visit the [Centre for Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion Statistics hub](#) at Statistics Canada for more details.

Statistics Canada reference guides for the Census of Population 2021 with detailed methodologies, caveats, and definitions and are available for the following topics:

- [Ethnic or Cultural Origin Reference Guide](#)
- [Mobility and Migration Reference Guide](#)
- [Place of Birth, Generation Status, Citizenship and Immigration Reference Guide](#)
- [Religion Reference Guide](#)
- [Visible Minority and Population Group Reference Guide](#)

FUTURE CENSUS RELEASES

The City of Toronto will be releasing more backgrounders coinciding with each Census release, except for the Census of Agriculture. The [2021 Census release schedule](#) is available from Statistics Canada online. The City of Toronto will be preparing backgrounders for the following releases:

- November 30, 2022
 - Education
 - Labour
 - Language of work
 - Commuting
 - Instruction in the official minority language

PAST CENSUS RELEASES

The City of Toronto has released the following Backgrounders to date, to coincide with the 2021 Census release schedule. Older Backgrounders relating to 2016 Census and 2011 Census and National Household Survey topics can also be accessed on the City's website, under item [City of Toronto Census Reports](#).

- [Population and Dwelling Counts](#), February 9, 2022
- [Age, Sex at Birth and Gender, and Type of Dwelling](#), April 27, 2022
- [Families, Households, Marital Status and Income](#), July 13, 2022
- [Language](#), August 17, 2022
- [Housing and Indigenous Peoples](#), Sept 21, 2022

REFERENCES

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CHARTS AND MAPS

Figure 1: Age at Immigration, 2021 and 2016

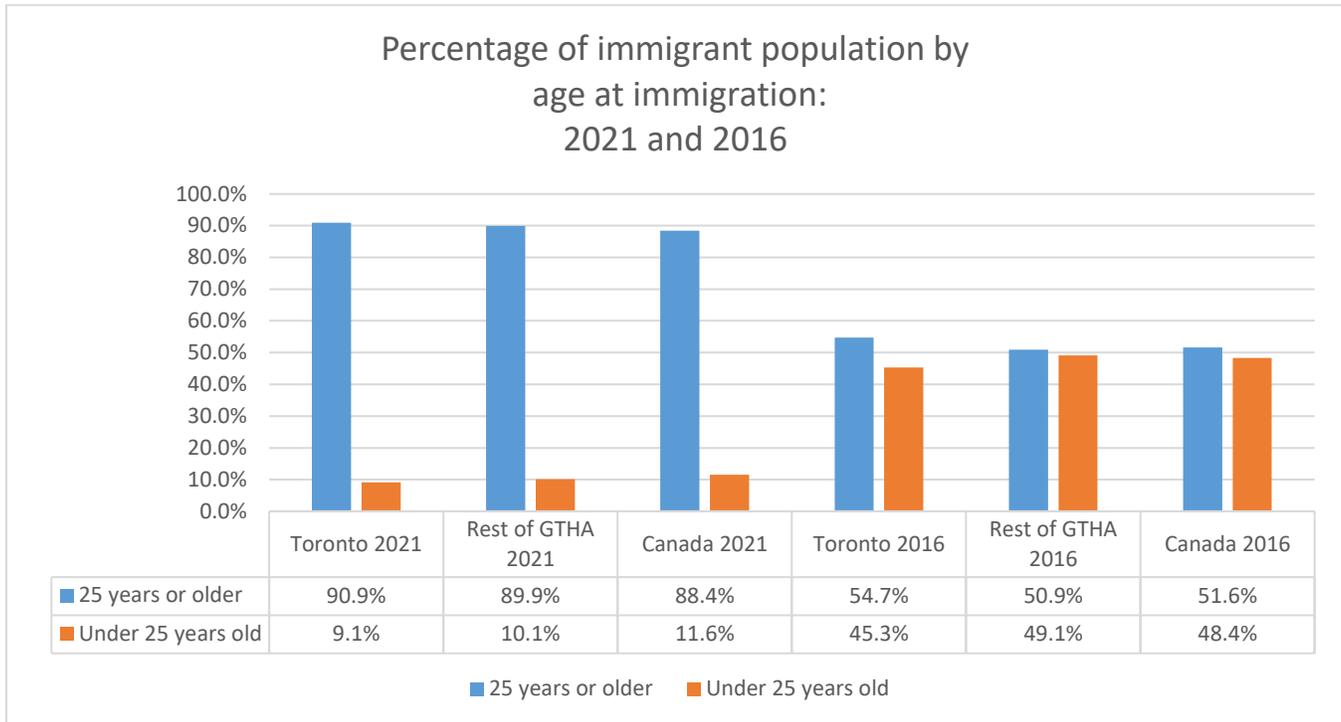


Figure 2: Generation Status, 2021

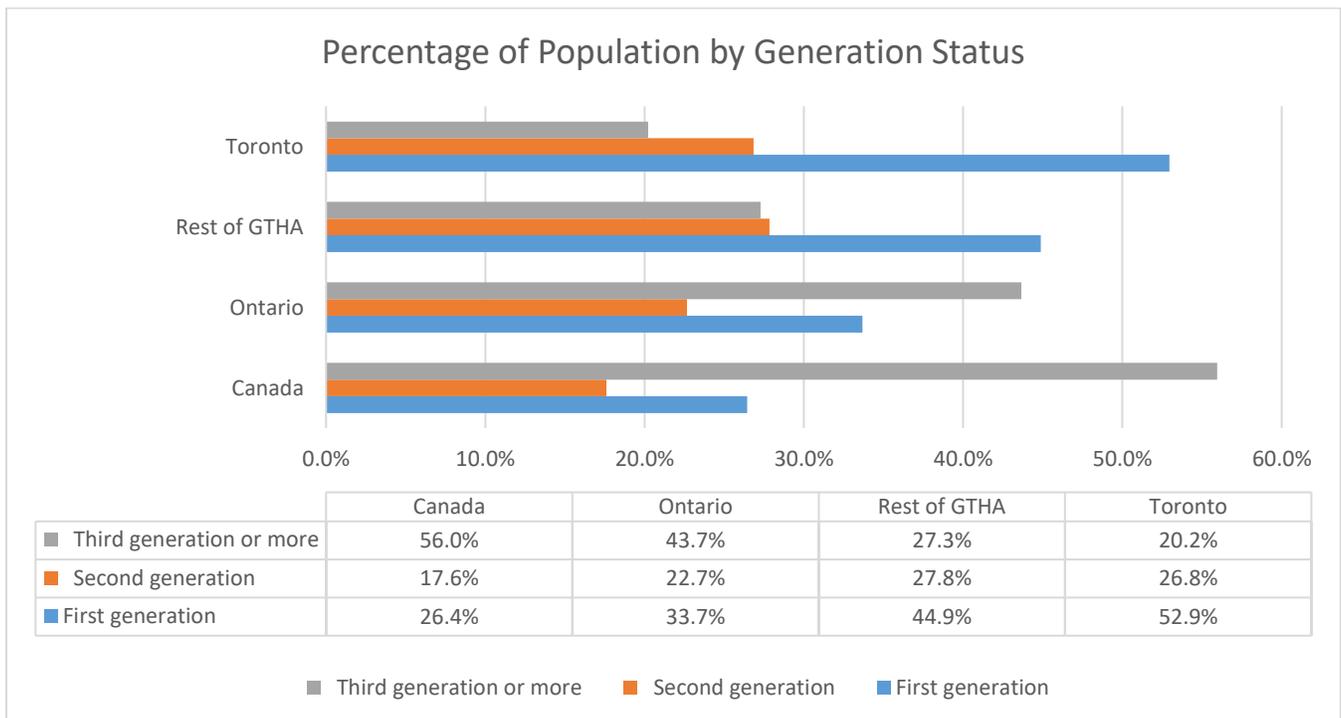


Figure 3: Mobility Status Over the Last Five Years, Toronto, GTHA, Ontario and Canada, 2021

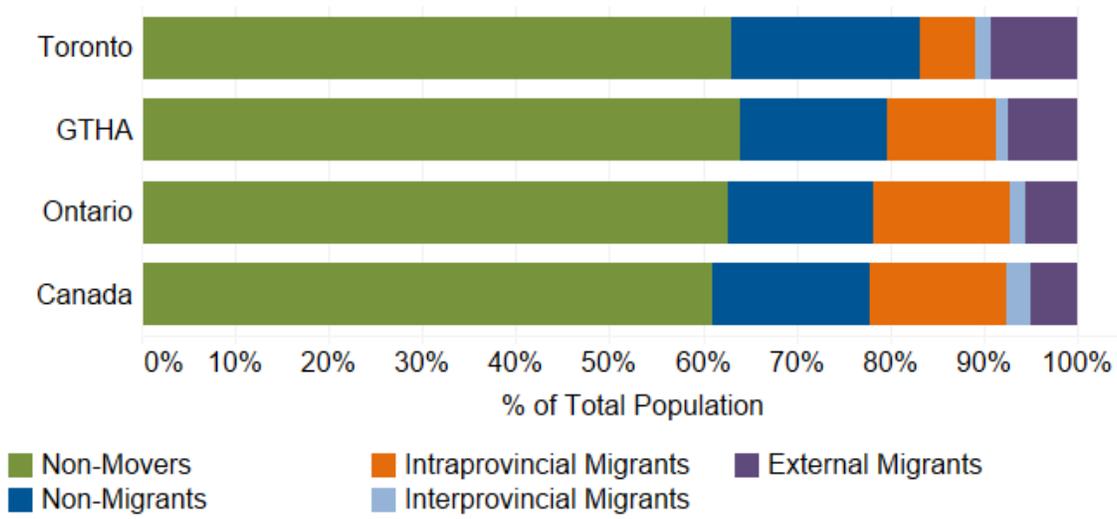


Figure 4: Number of Movers over the last Five Years within the GTHA Municipalities, 2021

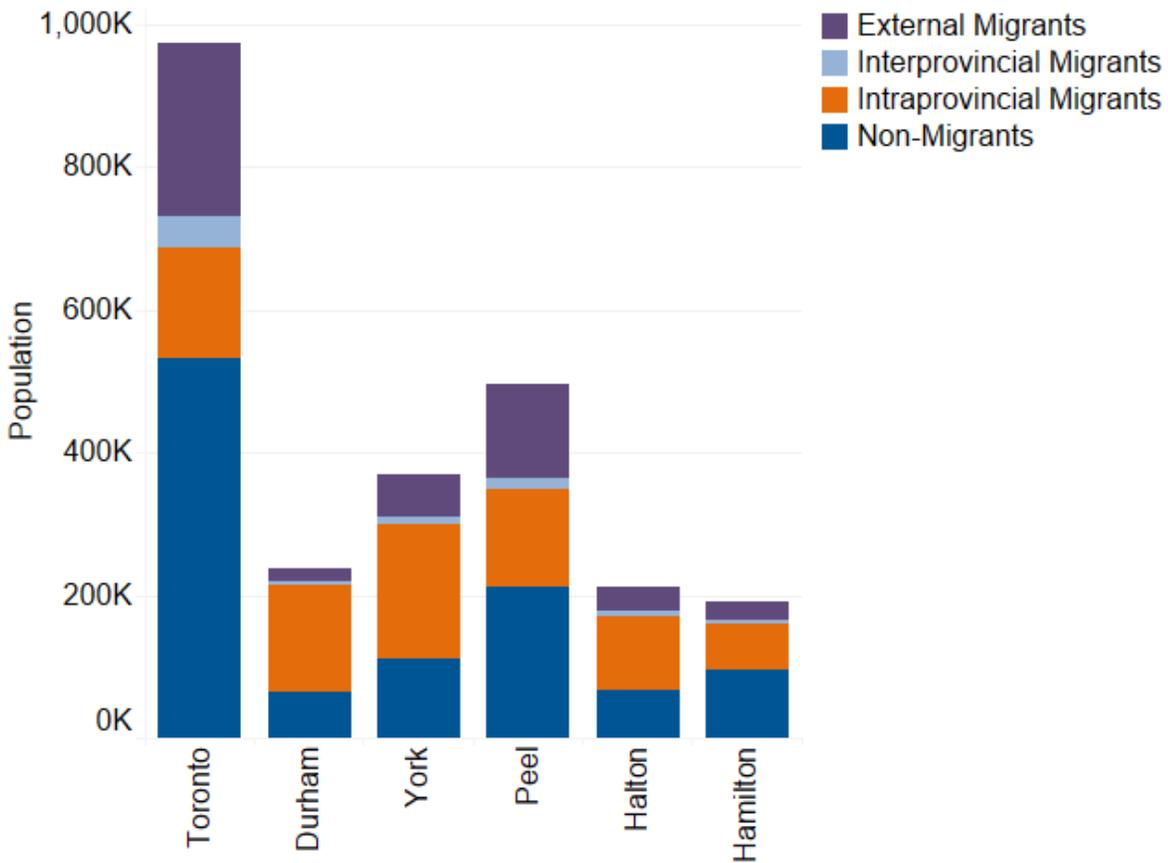


Figure 5: Ethnic or Cultural Origin, Toronto, Rest of GTHA and Ontario, 2021

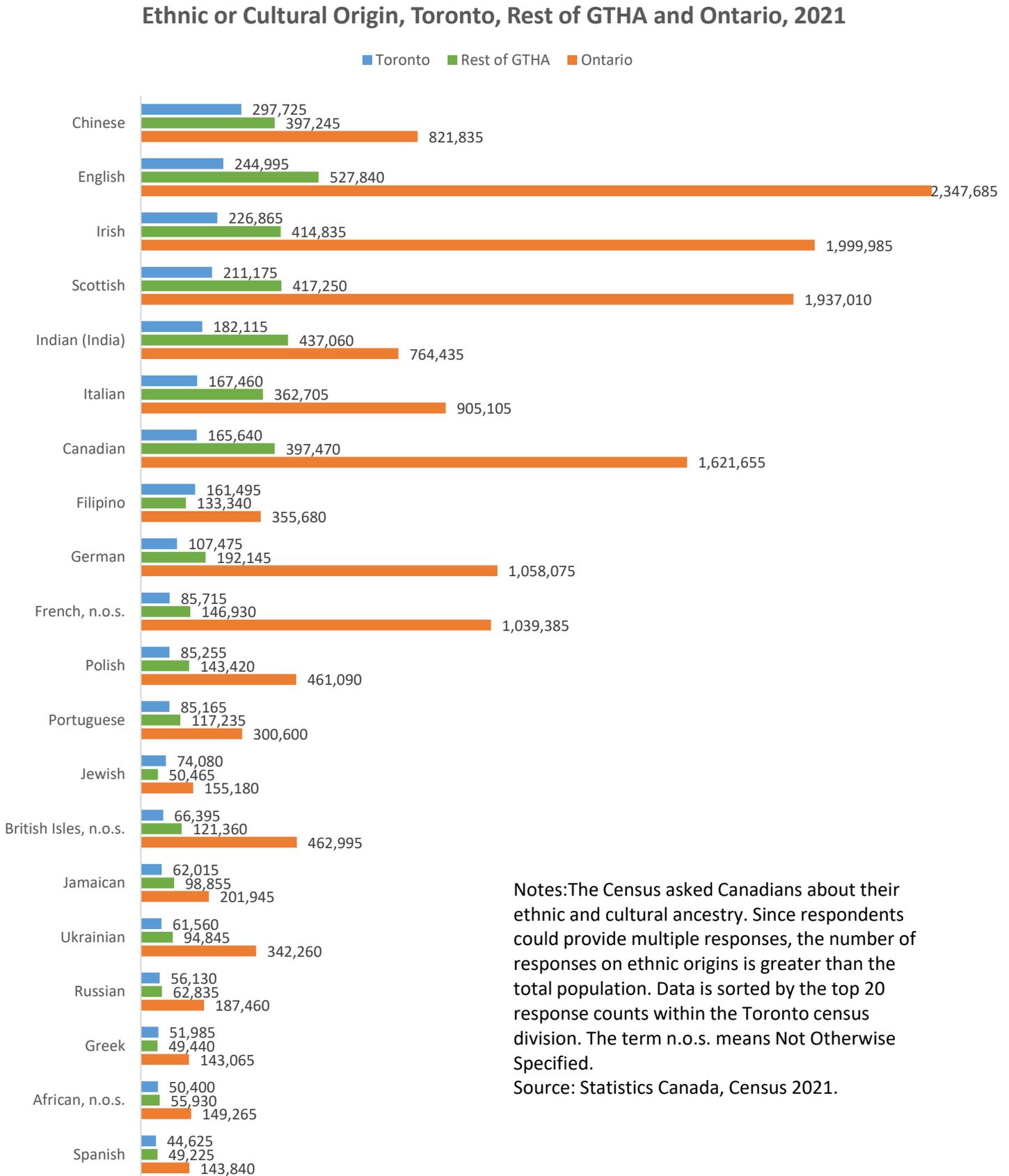


Figure 6: Religious Affiliation, Toronto, 2021

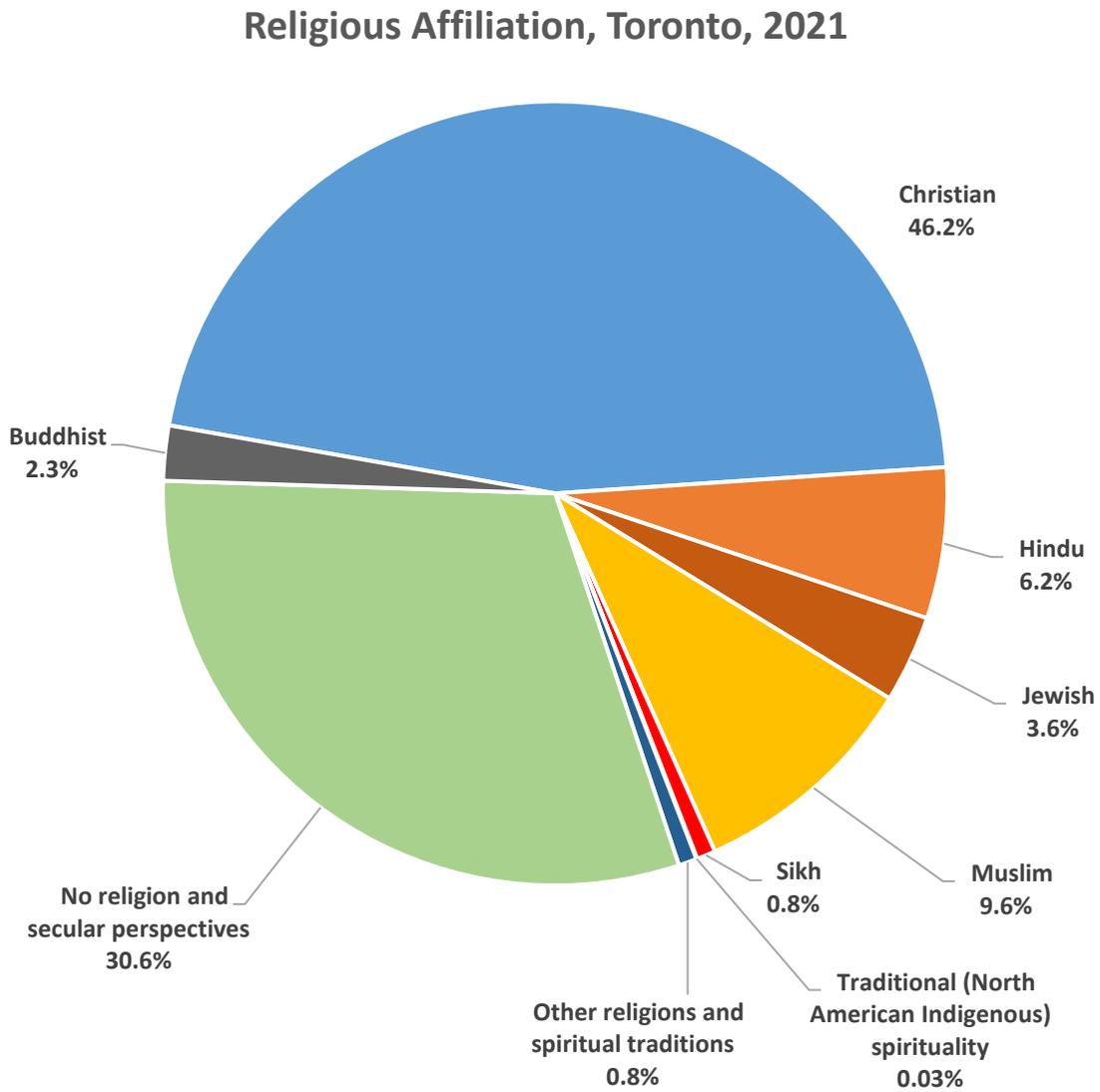
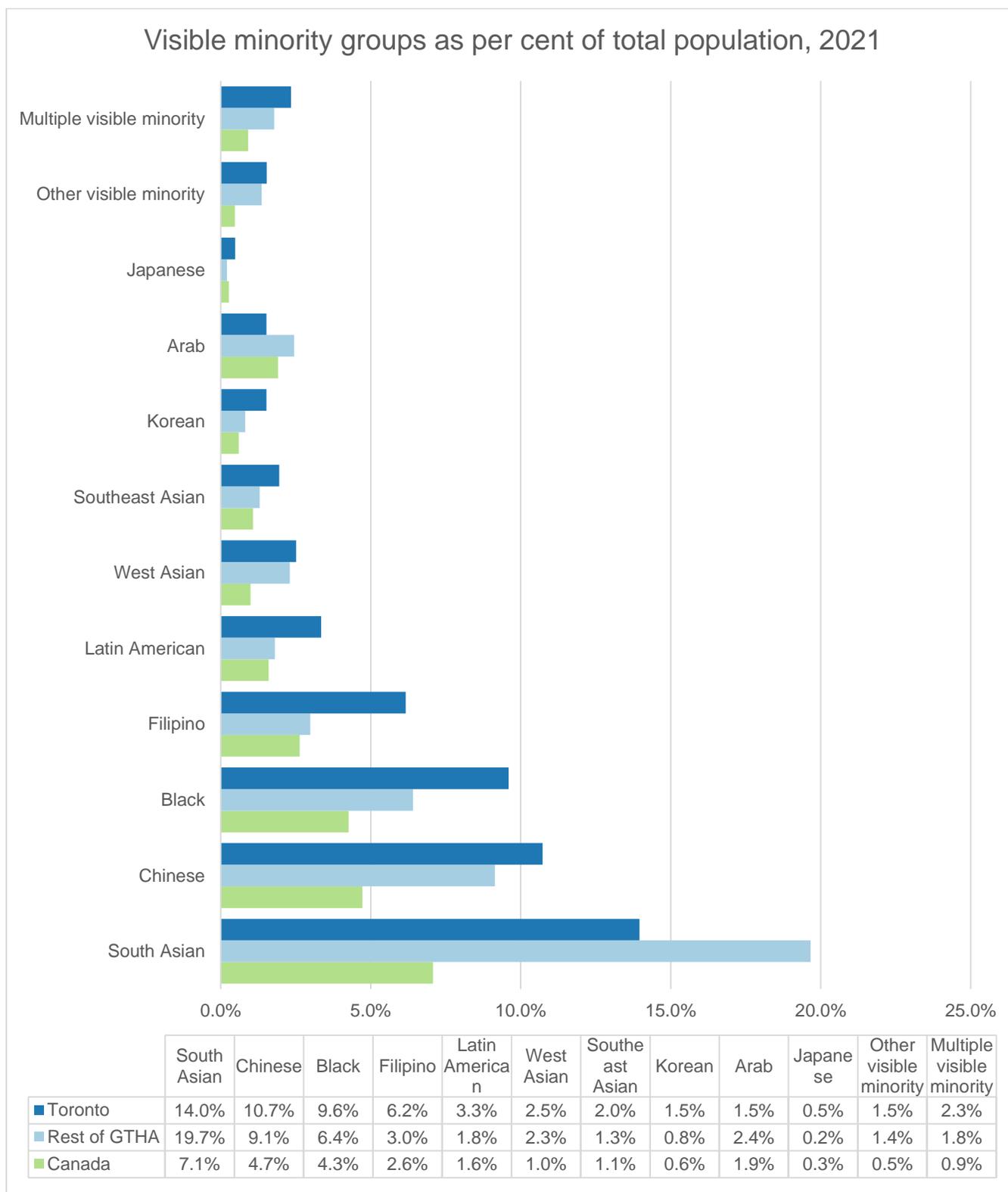
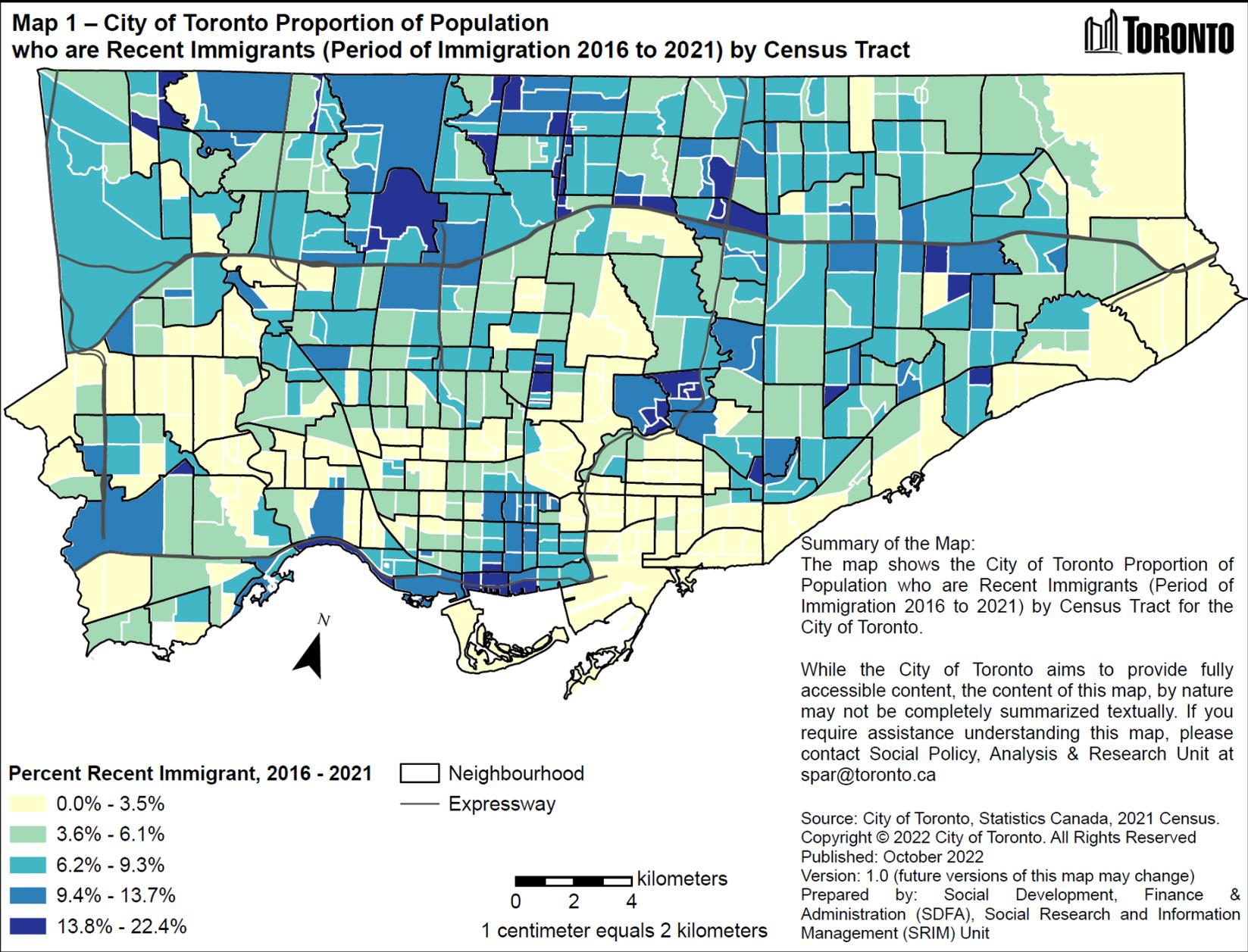


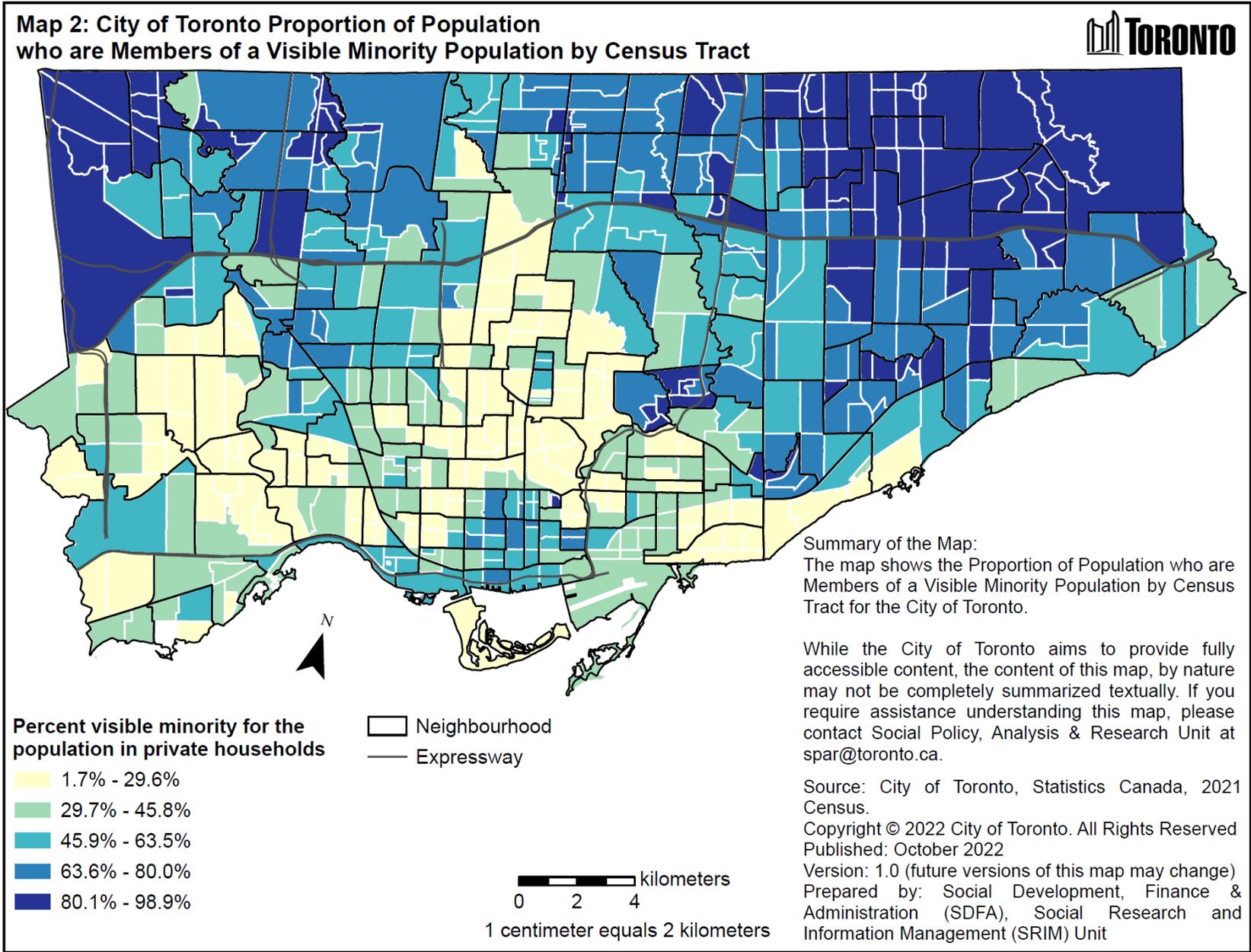
Figure 7: Visible Minority Groups as Percent of Total Population, 2021



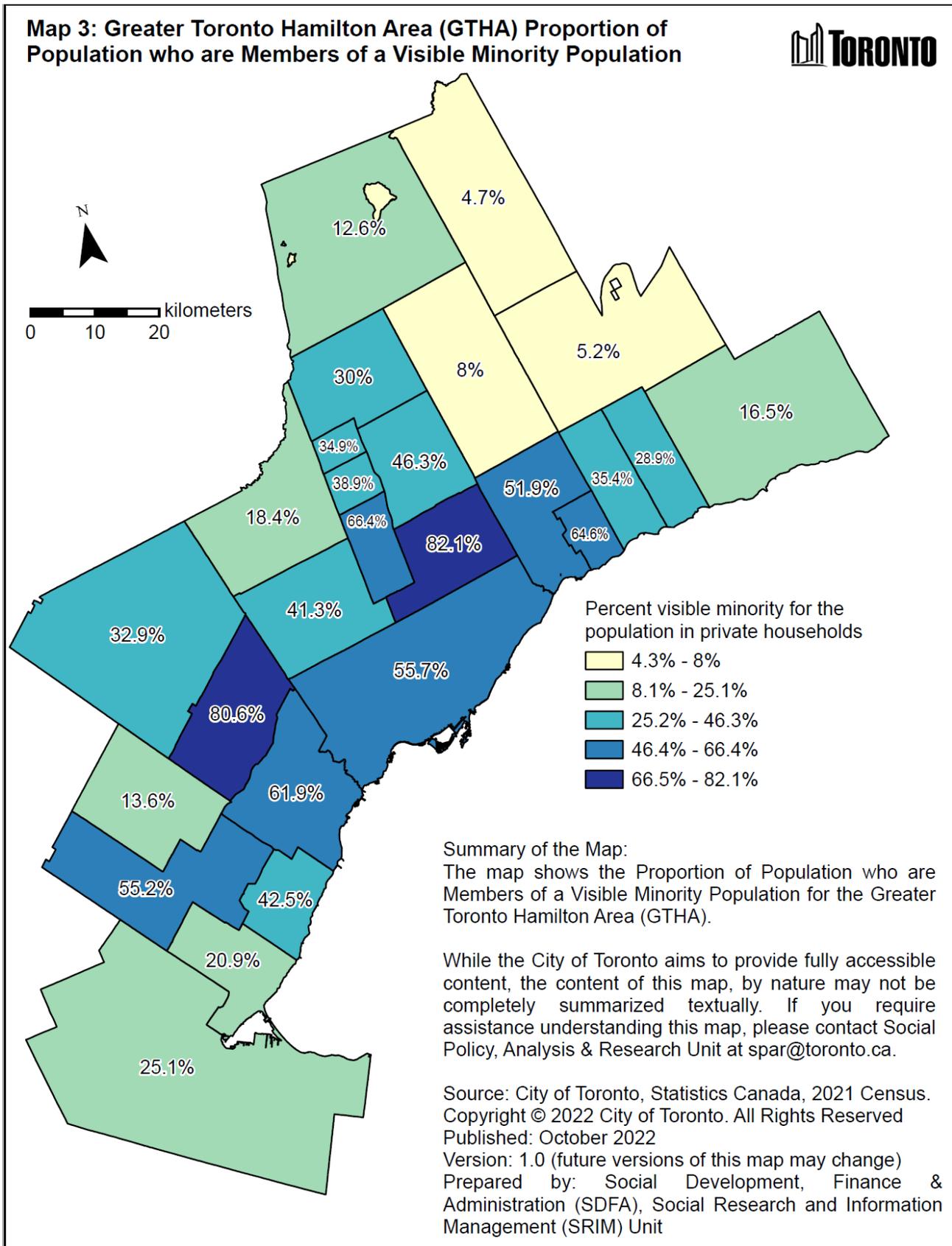
Map 1: City of Toronto Proportion of Population who are Recent Immigrants by Census Tract with Neighbourhoods



Map 2: City of Toronto Proportion of Population who are Members of a Visible Minority Population by Census Tract with Neighbourhoods



Map 3: Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA) Proportion of Population who are Members of a Visible Minority Population, 2021



Map 4: Percentage of the Population that Moved in the Previous 5 Years, 2021

