

Understanding and Visualising Superdiversity

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VISUALISING AUCKLAND'S SUPERDIVERSITY

Paul Spoonley and Robert Didham (with Steven Vertovec, Daniel Hiebert and Alan Gamlen)

Understanding Superdiversity

In a widely read article published in 2007, Steve Vertovec wrote about the growing superdiversity of gateway cities. He wanted to draw attention to the impacts of post-war migration flows on the demographic diversity of these cities and societies, and the politics and pathways of settlement, inclusion and rejection. But he also wanted to highlight the diversification of diversity—the complex interactions of ethnicity, nationality, migration and legal status, age, gender and ability.

There is some frustration that this signposting of diversity and complexity is often reduced to a simple—and simplistic—rendering of ethnic diversity which is associated with the arrival of migrants. To help restore the focus on the complex pathways, patterns and outcomes, early in 2018, Steve Vertovec and Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity sponsored a project to help understand and characterise the superdiversity of three cities that exemplify the complexity of diversity: Vancouver, Sydney and Auckland.

To help understand the nature of superdiversity, existing statistical data on migration status and ethnicity was mined, and then the possibility provided for looking at the intersections with income (inequality), housing markets and ownership, education credentials and employment.

Visualising Superdiversity

The nature, impacts and outcomes of migration and diversity attract considerable debate in societies around the world but it is often debate that involves misleading and mischievous claims about what occurs—and why. The rise of the populist and exclusionary politics in the last decade has seen claims about the impacts of migration on national solidarity or social cohesion, the consequences of migration on work and wages, and the “undermining” of traditions and values! What we want to do is to provide an evidence base that would inform such debates and provide a fact-based alternative to some of the misleading claims made.

The availability of big data (extensive and complex data sets) provided the evidence base but did not provide answers about how to communicate this in an easily accessible way? Steve Vertovec worked with Stamen Design and the Immersive Visualisation Platform (the latter at Monash University) to translate this big data into a series of visual forms that could “tell a story” about migration and diversity. In this project brief, we discuss the outcome.

It is hoped that offering data in this way would provide certain benefits. Firstly, it allows the data and the visual representation of this data to be manipulated by the user. In providing the data in this way, it is hoped that the material will be intuitive and user-friendly—and to meet the particular interests and needs of those wanting to understand the “visualisation of superdiversity”. Secondly, the visual presentation is designed to be of interest and use to a wide variety of audiences. One of our frustrations is that there is often a considerable gap between academic research and public understanding, so how can we bridge this gap. This way of presenting data might help inform public, political and policy debate. Finally, it is designed for a range of technology platforms so that contemporary (and in some cases, historical) diversity in all its complexity utilizes both the visualisation of big data and the flexibility provided by a range of digital technologies. The hope is that the data offered in this form can be accessed in a variety of ways using the visualisation platform provided here.

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**In conjunction with Robert Didham
and Max Planck Institute
(Steve Vertovec)**

Migration – Diversification and Complexity

Over the last thirty years

global migration flows indicate fluctuating and divergent *combinations* of

- nationality • ethnicity • language
- religion • age • gender • legal status
- skills and human capital

creating conditions of *‘superdiversity’*

➤ concept highlights the fact that, currently, multidimensional migration and diversity patterns significantly combine with and **supersede** earlier ones



Visualizing complexity and superdiversity



- **Challenge:** to help people *'see' complexity, patterns* of contemporary diversity, and *intersections* between types, or layers, of diversity



- **Our project:** gather comprehensive data on Auckland, Sydney, and Vancouver, and build a set of tools that enables people to *interact visually* with the data ...



To understand cities, migration & diversity in new ways

Superdiversity

Today's migration has made cities more diverse than ever—in multiple ways

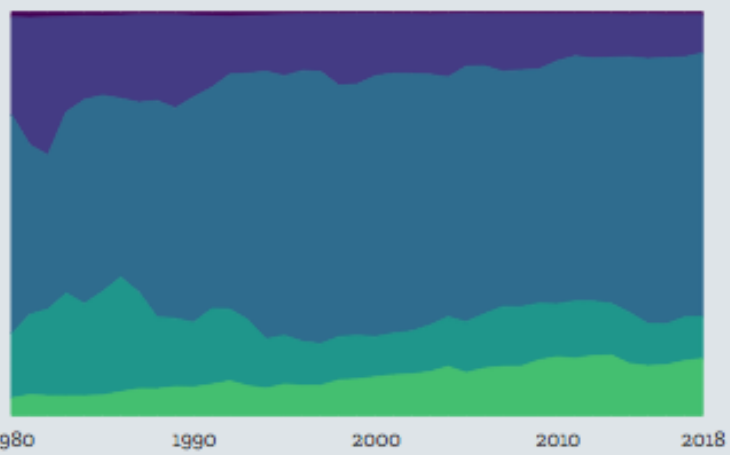
By [Steven Vertovec](#), [Daniel Hiebert](#), [Alan Gamlen](#) and [Paul Spoonlev](#)

Diversification is one of the key social processes that defines our times. Over the past few decades, multiple causes and categories of migration – combined with migrants' new and varying origins – have been transforming urban populations in complex ways, worldwide. The following graphics show us how.

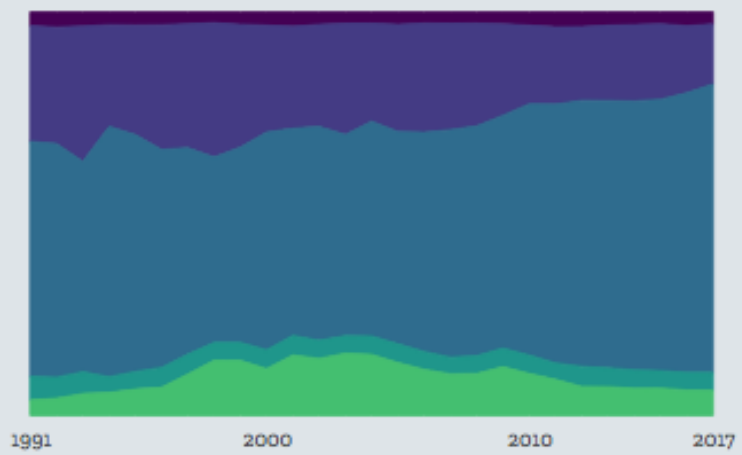
[Read more...](#)

Changing sources of permanent migration

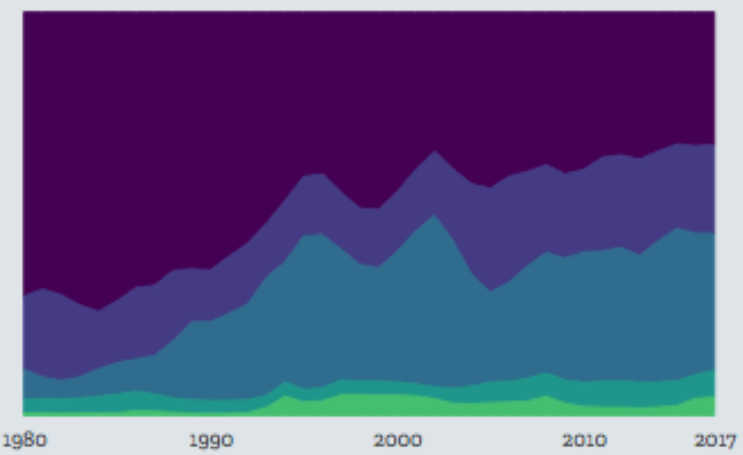
Canada



Australia



New Zealand

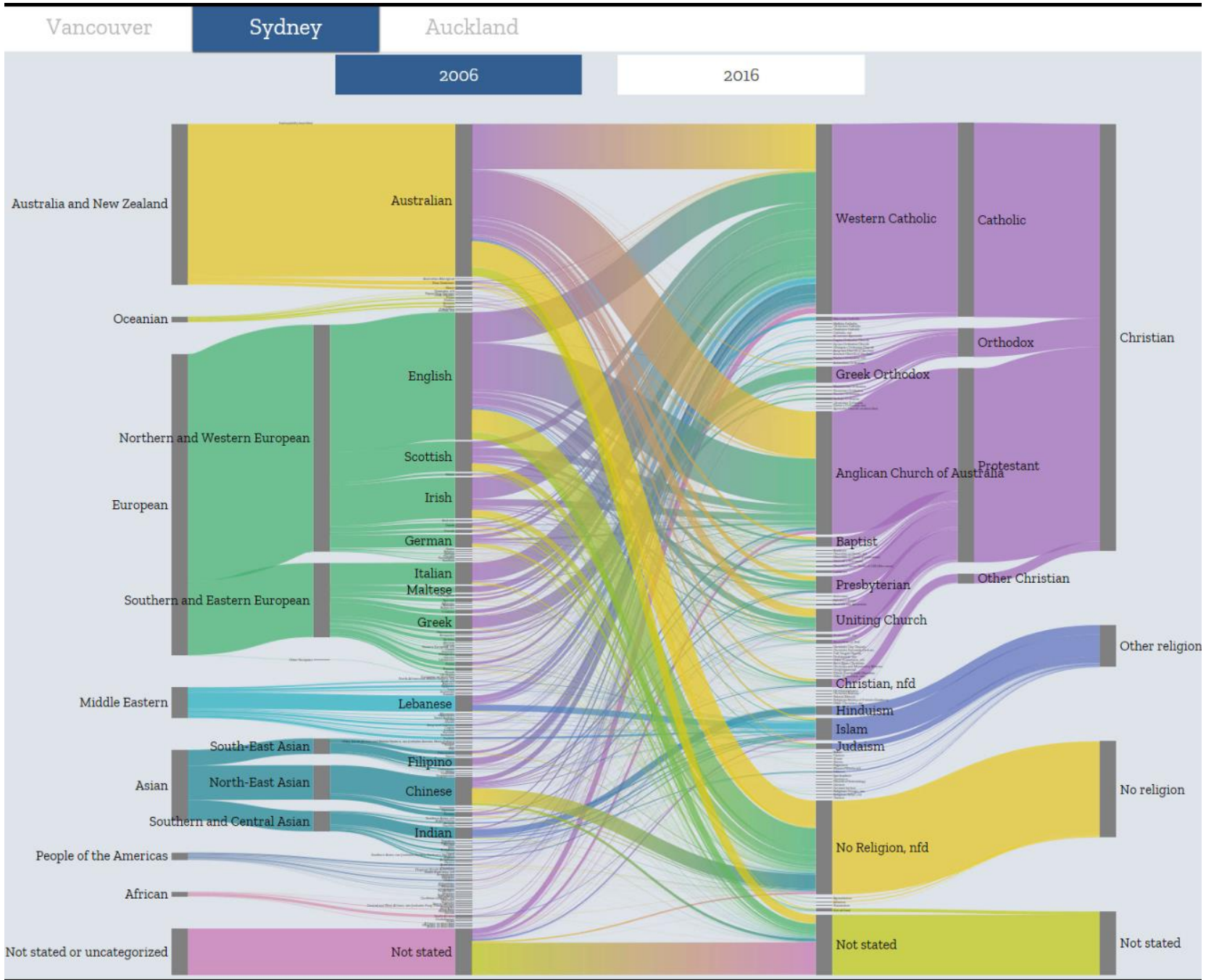


Permanent immigrant arrivals from:

- Oceania
- Europe
- Asia
- Americas
- Africa

Building the website

- Which cities? ... Auckland, Sydney, Vancouver
 - Similar indigenous and colonial histories, similar immigration histories
 - The populations of all three are approximately 40% foreign-born
 - All are coastal cities with increasingly strong Asian connections
 - Australia, Canada, and New Zealand borrow migration policies from one another and collect similar kinds of data
- What kinds of visualizations?
 - Those that emphasize pattern
 - Can accommodate 2+ variables at a time
 - Are easy to comprehend
 - Enable interactivity
 - (hopefully) Look striking



Intersections

Our final illustration invites you to think about the relationship between diversity and opportunity. We encourage you to use the interactive tools at the top of the page to fill in some key characteristics of an imagined person – their sex, age, ethno-cultural background, and whether they are an immigrant (and if so, when they came). As you fill in these characteristics, you will see a set of five indicators that give you an indication of the likely socio-economic situation of that person: whether they have completed a university degree, are employed, own a home, speak a language other than English in their home, and experience low income. In each case, the top of the dial is set to the value of the indicator for the total working-age population. Results to the left of this position are below average, and those to the right of the graphic are above average.

I am **an 18-64 year old** **person** **of any** **descent.**
(Total)

I am likely as average to own a home.



I am likely as average to have a university degree.

I am likely as average to speak English.



I am likely as average to be low income.

I am likely as average to be employed.



Understanding Complex Diversity(ies)

Telling the complex story of diversifying cities using:

- ✓ innovative technology
- ✓ interactive visuals
- ✓ user manipulated

Contributes to:

- Elaborating **theory(ies)** of complex and multidimensional **superdiversity**
- Providing **new methods** to understand and visualise **superdiversity**
- Communicating **big data stories** to a range of audiences – researchers, policy communities, decision-makers, NGOs, various publics

