Immigrants in Toronto’s Inner Suburban High Rise Apartments: Analysis of the United Way of Toronto’s Vertical Poverty Data

Presentation to the Collaborative Graduate Program in Migration & Ethnic Relations
Thursday, April 5, 2012

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PhD Candidate at The University of Western Ontario
Outline

- Introduction
- Immigration & Housing Overview
- Results of 5 Themes (will focus on bolded)
  1. Sample Characteristics
  2. Current Spatial Patterns & Neighbourhoods
  3. Previous Housing Experiences
  4. Housing Satisfaction & Future Plans
  5. Social Cohesion & Neighbouring
- Recommendations & Discussion
- Conclusion & Future Steps
Introduction

- CPNet, (S)HSC, & United Way of Toronto

- Vertical Poverty Report

- Novel empirical study
  - High-Rise apartments
  - Inner suburbs
Immigration Trends & Theory

- **Immigration to Canada – “settler society”**
  - ~ 250,000 / year
  - High visible minority component
  - Asia / Pacific ~ ½
  - Africa / Middle East ~ ¼
  - MTV concentration
  - Toronto share down over past decade – smaller centres growing

- **Traditional theory:**
  - Concentration & then dispersal (“up & out” model)
  - Rent then buy part of assim lit. too

- **Now various challenges to model:**
  - Some going direct to suburbs &/or buying homes initially
  - Continual ethnic concentration
  - Highly variable by ethnic group, resources, etc.
  - Transnationalism?
Immigration & Housing Literature

- Housing trajectories concept:
  - Growing awareness in the literature of 3 classes of ‘housed’ immigrant:
    1. relatively easy HO,
    2. struggle HO
    3. ‘stuck in rental’ – ‘urban underclass’ discourse

- Again, my focus for the report:
  - High rise, Inner suburbs, & Private renters
Methodology

- High-rise / Inner suburbs & Private rental tenure
  - ~ 2,100 interviews (out of ~2,900)

- Secondary data analysis
  - Descriptive
  - Sets the stage for future statistical analysis

- Immigrant focus – 75% of the sample
  - 4 categories (sub-groups):
    1. Canadian-born
    2. Long-term immigrants: 10 Years +
    3. Recent Immigrants: 5 – 10 years
    4. Very recent immigrants: < 5 years
       - Separation of < 10 years
Summary of Results

- Builds on important research found in Vertical Poverty

- Importance of this housing stock for newcomers – a starting place in Canada
  - And long term renters

- 5 Themes:
  1. **Sample Characteristics**
     - Immigrants in this housing stock become more like Cdn born as length of time in Canada increases
  2. **Current Location / Housing**
     - High poverty neighbourhoods and clustering
  3. **Previous Housing Experiences**
     - Insight into immigrant mobility (& Canadian born)
  4. **Housing Satisfaction & Future Plans**
     - Satisfaction generally high, but movement more likely for Imms and for different reasons
  5. **Social Cohesion & Neighbouring**
     - Generally good news – many similarities across groups
I) Sample Characteristics

- Immigrants < 10 years
  - Better educated
  - Less English in home
  - Nuclear families
  - South Asian higher %

- Immigrants 10 + more like Canadian born
  - Older
  - Jamaican / Caribbean higher %

- Country of Birth & Ethnicity
  - Low Chinese % throughout
Table 1: Sample Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Canadian Born</th>
<th>10 + Years Immigrants</th>
<th>5-10 years Immigrants</th>
<th>&lt; 5 Years Immigrants</th>
<th>All Immigrants &lt; 10 Years</th>
<th>All Immigrants</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
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<td>372</td>
<td>649</td>
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<td>5.5</td>
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<td>12.8</td>
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<td>Sri Lankan</td>
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<td>3.0</td>
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<td>Filipino</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2) Current Location

In the sample:

- Immigrants under-represented in low poverty neighbourhoods
- Immigrants over-represented in high poverty neighbourhoods

High Poverty is > 40% below LICO

• City of Toronto Planning Areas
  Source: United Way of Toronto
## Current Spatial Concentrations

**Table 2: Neighbourhoods**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbourhood2 (% of Neighbourhood Cluster)</th>
<th>Canadian Born</th>
<th>10 + Years Immigrants</th>
<th>5-10 years Immigrants</th>
<th>&lt; 5 Years Immigrants</th>
<th>All Immigrants &lt; 10 Years</th>
<th>All Immigrants</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Scarborough (n=227)</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>75.8</td>
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<td>Dorset-Kennedy (n=246)</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>11.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weston-Mount Dennis (n=275)</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>12.6</td>
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<td>Jane-Finch (n=256)</td>
<td>21.1</td>
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<td>18.4</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
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<td>Rexdale (n=285)</td>
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<td>25.3</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>41.8</td>
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<td>86.7</td>
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<td>19.6</td>
<td>24.1</td>
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<td>62.0</td>
<td>81.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other High Poverty Areas (n=264)</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>12.1</td>
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<td>Non-High Poverty Areas (n=465)</td>
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<td>25.8</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Immigrants under 2/3s in low poverty neighbourhoods in sample
Immigrants usually 75 – 85 % in high poverty neighbourhoods in sample
3) Previous Housing Experiences

- **Main reason** for moving to current place:
  
  - Cdn born = more price consciousness
    - But we know from literature that affordability is greatest
      Immigrant housing issue
  
  - Imm < 10 years: importance of friends & ethnocultural presence
    - Especially < 5 years
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Housing Experiences Previous to Current Place</th>
<th>Canadian Born</th>
<th>10 + Years Immigrants</th>
<th>5-10 years Immigrants</th>
<th>&lt; 5 Years Immigrants</th>
<th>All Immigrants &lt; 10 Years</th>
<th>All Immigrants</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Places Lived in Past 5 Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>35.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>43.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<td>Five or more</td>
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<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of Time in Neighbourhood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>18.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 year to less than 2 years</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>17.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 years to less than 3 years</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>12.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 years to less than 5 years</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>14.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than 5 years</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>16.4</td>
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<td>Length of Time in Building</td>
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<td>26.2</td>
<td>16.4</td>
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<td>35.8</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>25.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 year to less than 2 years</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>18.4</td>
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<td>26.2</td>
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<td>19.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 years to less than 3 years</td>
<td>10.5</td>
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<td>16.8</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>18.1</td>
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<td>3 years to less than 5 years</td>
<td>11.4</td>
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<td>14.9</td>
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<td>1.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>26.5</td>
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<td>Top 5 Reasons for Moving to Current Neighbourhood¹</td>
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</table>
4) Satisfaction & Future Plans

- Good neighbourhood to live in: **all very positive**
  - 1/3 of all would stay in neighbourhood
  - **BUT** ~1/2 would leave

- Planned length to stay in building **longer** for Cdn-born & 10+ Immigrants
  - Sign of satisfaction in some cases
  - “Stuck” in unsatisfactory rental in other cases
  - Sign of “up and out” model development for Immigrants < 10 years?

- Most important reason would move away from building:
  - Expensive rent for Cdn-born
  - Desire to own for all Immigrant groups – so many long-term renters 10+ still want to make tenure move

- All positive with little difference for possible “why move” variables:
  - landlord treatment, maintenance, safety/security, etc.
  - But evidence of overcrowding appears in <10 year Imms
  - **Perceptions & expectations**
5) Social Cohesion & Neighbouring

- Cdn born know more tenants.
  - Imm <10 slightly more limited to friends/family

- Casual /mundane “neighbouring” lower for Imm < 5
  - Visiting more often though for Imm <5 & lowest for Imm 10+ (as found in literature)
  - Both within building & neighbourhood

- “Trust” quite high across all groups

- Getting along, feeling welcome, sense of place, & cross-cultural harmony all highly rated across all groups

- Presence/activity in common rooms low across all groups
  - But Immigrants <10 years most likely to use them

- For all Immigrants, religion is important
  - Newcomers <5 have more reliance on religious ties as part of social network
Recommendations

Retain quantity & quality of this stock
- Private rental where most newcomers start
- Inner suburban high-rises: important places of “integration”
  - Crucial stock for Immigrants at arrival
  - And also long term renting
- Toronto Tower Renewal initiative
- Insufficient supply of public/social housing

Privileged position of homeownership should be re-evaluated
- Housing trajectories not just a move to HO
- About improving circumstances in rental too for many immigrants
- Affordability (30-50%)
- Adequacy (state of repair)
- Suitability (crowding)
Recommendations & Discussion cont’d

Linking spatial concentration of newcomers to service delivery
- Services to reach best located in those neighbourhoods (& buildings?)
- Welcoming Communities Initiative – Teixeira & Murdie framework

Greater integration of immigration and housing policy
- Cannot be siloed if goals are econ dev & demographic renewal
- Greater policy ties
- Housing downloaded to municipalities in Ontario

Prioritize improvement of the “social” environment
- More services in building and neighbourhood – social network diversity & “weak ties”
- Safety & security, etc. can improve neighbouring and social inclusion

Demand side supplement options
- Affordability main issue for Imms
- Funds to help compete in private market

Results / findings inform local service providers at municipal levels
to meet requirements in Housing Services Act
- Many Imm “at-risk” of homelessness
- Place-based initiatives are important – but findings applicable to other regions
Conclusion & Future Steps

- Builds on important research found in Vertical Poverty
  - 2 lenses to discuss this research:
    1. Type & location of dwelling – high-rise, inner suburbs
    2. Immigrant focus

- Importance of this housing stock for newcomers – a starting place in Canada
  - High poverty neighbourhoods
  - Insight into immigrant mobility, satisfaction (+ findings), & future plans

- Continuing partnership with United Way of Toronto for PhD

- Ray & Preston, 2009
  - Neighbouring in Canada – high-rise apartments stands out)
Acknowledgements

- CPNet & Dr. Michael Buzzelli

- HSC: Margie Carlson & Lisa Oliveira

- United Way: Michelynn Laflèche, Laura McDonough, Vladimir Mikadze, & Jamie Robinson