The Geography of Immigrant (Dis)advantage: Future Strategies and Coalition Building for the Settlement Sector, Housing Agencies, and Policymakers

Executive Summary

The goal of this paper is to link the theoretical concepts of the ethnic enclave and the ethnic ghetto with newcomers’ experiences in Canadian neighbourhoods, particularly in Alberta, in order to map future housing strategies for the settlement sector, housing agencies, and policy makers. Subsequently, the strategies that conclude this paper seek to: recognize the inherent geographical disparity induced by housing market development and discrimination; generate instrumental coalitions and networks among local actors; and target the urban development process. A variety of services, policies, and projects are explored in Winnipeg, Calgary, and the Greater Toronto Area, are preceded by an overview of recent studies exploring newcomers’ experience of Canadian places. The emphasis on place in the discussion of desirable, appropriate, and affordable housing expands possibilities for strategies that aid immigrant settlement and integration. This paper finds that a number of criteria are highly useful in evaluating any future housing strategy, service, or project.

These criteria include:

- Fosters a sense of community among immigrants with shared experiences to provide a social buffer from discrimination.
- Ensures information services are accessible to clients, e.g. through on-site provision and in multiple languages.
- Situates housing near critical social and physical infrastructure, such as other social services and public transportation.
- Addresses economic circumstances of low income immigrant groups through services such as income-geared rent, rent subsidies, and access to interest-free loans.
- Counteracts the negative consequences of gentrification and low-income displacement by incentivizing affordable housing provision.
- Encourages grassroots coalitions among more informal networks, e.g. landlord groups and community leaders, to reduce neighbourhood stigma.
Introduction

Housing has frequently been identified as a key determinant of immigrant integration; housing stress and instability can increase the risk of homelessness, may negatively impact mental health and settlement trajectories, and can hinder access to integral services and neighbourhood assets. In 2015, the Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary (a project of AAISA) published a report titled “Where Settlement Lives: An Exploration of Housing Challenges for Newcomers in Calgary.” In a span of two years, the ISCC Housing Committee collaborated with a diverse group of local settlement and integration agencies and the University of Calgary’s Faculty of Social Work to better understand some of the barriers and challenges that immigrants face when arriving to Calgary. Inequitable access to existing rental units, a lack of adequate supply in the rental market more generally, and discrimination in the rental housing market are key findings in Calgary and elsewhere in Canada. Moreover, visible minority status is a key group distinction in immigrants’ housing experiences; those who are visible minorities are more likely than those from all European ethnic origins to live in low-cost apartment housing, though there are substantial differences among subgroups. In addition to housing affordability, challenges for newcomers also encompass the experience of place and welcoming communities.

Neighbourhoods can act as critical spaces for integration if they are socially inclusive, provide social and physical infrastructure, and encourage upward mobility. Evidently, newcomers often settle near co-ethnic communities, groups with shared values such as common beliefs, cultural practices, linguistic traditions, and/or shared history. However, a more disturbing explanation of settlement finds that newcomers are being forced into low-income neighbourhoods due to a lack of available affordable housing elsewhere. A neighbourhood change analysis in Calgary visualizes this complexity (Figure 1). What was found in this study was that, from 1981 to 2006, younger suburban immigrants have become segregated into Calgary’s Northeast quadrant while inner city neighbourhoods are seeing both new and entrenched middle and elite classes. Subsequently, newcomers are prevented from accessing the amenities and infrastructures concentrated in the city’s core areas such as green space, efficient public transportation, social services, decent housing, and health care facilities. In fact, researchers who have studied refugee settlement in Calgary argue that the places and relations refugees use to negotiate resettlement are highly influential in their experiences. Similar findings have been found in other major metropolitan areas of Canada. In this paper we will explore how place impacts newcomers’ housing challenges with the intention of providing insights for settlement and integration professionals and policy makers in Alberta.
Figure 1: Neighbourhood Change in Calgary from 1981 – 2006
The first part of this paper will explain the terms ‘ethnic enclave’ and ‘ethnic ghetto’ as well as the distinction between them. We will then link this theoretical discussion with empirical studies that investigate the lived experiences of newcomers in urban neighbourhoods. The urban context is especially pertinent given the significant amount of immigrants who, if not initially settled into urban areas, often end up in larger urban areas such as Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver through secondary migration. The third component of this paper will then assess a number of successful strategies being utilized by policy makers and settlement and integration professionals in the area of housing. More specifically, we will identify how these successful integration strategies address the challenges identified in previous studies of newcomers’ place-based experiences. Lastly, these key findings will be linked to a number of recommendations for future strategies in the area of housing and place-based integration. The strategies that conclude this paper are placed and relation based. Successful strategies recognize the inherent geographical disparity induced by housing market development and discrimination; generate instrumental coalitions and networks among local actors; and target the urban development process. The overall emphasis of this paper is to therefore frame strategies in terms of their spatial and social impact. As Smith and Ley assert,

“we see possibilities for place-based interventions that could improve immigrant lives, foster inclusion, and facilitate the experience and perception of national citizenship for both newcomers and established Canadians, who are increasingly distanced both socially and spatially from the plight of impoverished immigrants.”

It should be noted that while this paper frequently refers to the situation of settlement and integration organizations and housing agencies in a limited number of cities, the trends discussed and strategies proposed are transferable to any large metropolitan area. As such, the specific examples discussed here have implications for any large urban area. Furthermore, investigating how key institutional actors address newcomers’ needs in a local context is critical in the development of more broadly based strategies. Settlement and integration organizations, local housing agencies, and urban policymakers are often the first to confront the unique challenges of their constituents and clients. No two places are exactly the same; evidently, strategies must be flexible and adaptive to the geographical specificity of the issues they seek to address. However, broad trends in urban development overall can inform these strategies in a systematic way. The existence of ethnic enclaves and ethnic ghettos displays a degree of commonality and shared experience that policymakers and local actors may find useful.

**The Enclave and the Ghetto**

There are some critical distinctions between the ethnic enclave and the ethnic ghetto. An ethnic ghetto is described as an involuntary concentration of a particular group while an ethnic enclave is the result of a voluntary choice that promotes economic, social, political, and cultural development. Ethnic enclaves can help minority communities protect their way of life and for immigrants in particular, help them overcome the disadvantages of initial settlement. A number of authors similarly identify the value of informally networked support, realizing cultural goals and group identity, co-ethnic familiarity, a shield from discrimination, social capital formation, and
access to ethnic-based services. The ethnic ghetto, however, refers to the segregation of minority populations who are disadvantaged in terms of income and social assets. The proliferation of ethnic ghettos in Canadian cities has been attributed to discrimination in housing and labour markets. Discriminatory real estate practices of the past, such as redlining, blockbusting, and steering have played a significant role in present-day segregation.

More recently, rental market discrimination against visible minority families with children in Alberta and denying the foreign credentials of immigrant newcomers in the labour market are also two examples that have been linked to the formation of ethnic ghettos and housing affordability issues. Moreover, the circumstances of immigrants residing in ethnic ghettos are further compounded by stigmatization. Through focus groups with newcomers to Canada in nine poverty districts through Toronto and Vancouver, one study found that gatekeepers such as the media, police, and educators played a significant role in the stigmatizing effects of labelling neighbourhoods as ethnic ghettos. In this sense, structural barriers intersect with social discrimination in powerful and oppressive ways. The ethnic ghetto therefore also invokes the reality that residents are not in control of the representation of their neighbourhoods.

**Newcomers and the Neighbourhood**

While the distinction between the ethnic enclave and the ethnic ghetto is useful, the experience of place is highly variable and not always so definitive; enclave formation can be both voluntary and involuntary. In partnership with umbrella organizations such as the Ontario Council for Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), one research group hosted a number of focus groups with newcomers residing in poverty districts. They point out that a spatial mismatch between people and opportunities is an important factor in the geography of poverty; central city accessibility was frequently contrasted with isolation in the suburbs. Suburban participants highlighted their limited access to centralized resources such as settlement and integration services and public transportation that could connect them to mainstream opportunities. They also perceived that their entrance into suburban neighbourhoods was the cause of Canadian born residents leaving the neighbourhood. Similarly, another study finds that the unique housing choices of immigrant in large cities, where crowding, poor housing conditions, and affordability conditions are tolerated in conjunction with a desire to live in an ethnic cluster, creates a magnet for newly arriving immigrants and a reason for others who feel excluded from the ethnic group to move out. Whether this was the case in Smith and Ley’s study does not change how perception can damage immigrants’ understanding of their reception in Canada. More generally, these studies indicate that the character of the social and physical environment in which immigrants live has a significant effect on activities and perceptions of life. These authors also emphasize how parents are particularly conscious of how neighbourhood effects, such as crime, violence, and negative peer influence, impact the long term trajectories of their children. Such negative experiences can

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be inappropriately amplified by cultural elites and the media; disparaging stereotypes impact both native-born and immigrants’ perceptions of particular neighbourhoods. Such forces can empower existing segregation and make positive neighbourhood change more difficult as outsiders become avoidant and policymakers regard such areas negatively. On a more positive note, authors emphasize the promise of neighbourhoods as spaces of hope. The local provision of social services such as settlement and integration services and nearby access to public transportation, shopping, and schools helps generate the social capital useful for launching immigrant careers, and facilitating a sense of citizenship and belonging.

Studies in Greater Toronto and Calgary have similarly documented that the location of settlement services in relation to residences of housing and work is crucial. Religious institutions in particular have been cited in these studies as a means to cope with stress and loneliness in a large urban place such as Toronto. Other significant factors uncovered were affordable rent, appropriate amount of bedrooms in a dwelling, a safe neighbourhood, and the relative lack of racism in a neighbourhood. Many of these authors stress that planners and policy makers should pay more attention to concepts of multiculturalism and the significance of social infrastructure when addressing neighbourhood and community needs.

Similar findings were uncovered in a study of immigrants’ perceptions of housing discrimination in Toronto. Both foreign- and native-born members of visible minorities managed rental market housing discrimination by seeking housing within their own ethnic community neighbourhoods, made accessible by relying on friends, landlords and informants from their own ethno-cultural community. However, such communities are not necessarily equipped with efficient services and infrastructure. While ethno-cultural networks mitigate the housing challenges of immigrants, they do not change the fact that visible minority immigrant groups are initially discriminated against on the basis of income. As many are forced to live in inadequate housing in a less desirable part of the city, inequitable access to educational opportunities for adults and children, fewer and less desirable employment prospects, and poorer access to health care and transportation services pose significant challenges to long-term settlement and integration. This author highlights the need to press policy makers on issues of racial discrimination in housing and to provide better housing for all city residents more generally. Publicizing findings of housing discrimination to government and organizations, including realtors and landlords, can generate corrective actions. The author also explicitly suggests policymakers encourage “more effective and responsive urban environments”.

A study of segregated Bangladeshis in Greater London and Central Americans in Los Angeles County highlights the advantages and disadvantages of clustered non-profit housing and overcrowding strategies in immigrant integration. These findings inform the literature on ethnic ghettos in that “enforced immobility does not necessarily equate with powerlessness.” Immigrant community space, therefore, can be simultaneously enabling and constraining. This study finds that avoiding homelessness was significantly easier for Bangladeshis in Greater London due to the provision of local authority council estates. By contrast, Central Americans in Los Angeles were found to be a community that were never accepted as legitimate refugees or deserving of
government assistance. Subsequently, the author concludes that overcrowding was more frequently employed by Central Americans as a strategy to avoid homelessness in place of formal welfare supports. The social, mental, and familial tensions generated by involuntary overcrowding housing strategies have been documented elsewhere.\textsuperscript{50,51,52,53}

What is important to note here is that the degree to which immigrants are considered legitimate citizens is reflected in the \textit{places}, or types of housing, where they live.

Many studies among immigrants in Calgary and elsewhere in Canada have observed ‘overcrowding’ as a strategy aimed at securing housing affordability.\textsuperscript{54,55,56,57} Such behaviour is often referred to as “hidden homelessness,” whereby immigrant households vulnerable to homelessness avoid shelters by relying on co-ethnic and familial networks via high-density living arrangements.\textsuperscript{58} Such strategies are usually confined to low income neighbourhoods.\textsuperscript{59} However, immigrant households are also typically larger, are more likely to live in multi-family arrangements, and have greater bedroom requirements.\textsuperscript{60,61} As Haan asserts, “the term [overcrowding] is subjective and culturally specific, and ... it is difficult to impose a universal definition on heterogeneous populations.”\textsuperscript{62}

The phenomena of overcrowding, whether voluntary or involuntary, can potentially invoke negative stigma by native-born Canadians who are confronted with an alternative conception of what is ‘appropriate’ density in a household and initially are unfamiliar with alternative lifestyles more generally.\textsuperscript{63} Looking at a predominantly Muslim immigrant group’s experience in Toronto’s rental market, one study emphasizes “that whether housing is adequate, suitable, or even affordable is not merely a socioeconomic issue, but also a cultural one.”\textsuperscript{64} The influx of diverse migrants and upward pressure on housing markets in rapidly growing cities such as Calgary and Edmonton means the traditional, nuclear Canadian family is frequently encountering non-traditional cultural conceptions of appropriate household structure.\textsuperscript{65} As such, immigrant housing strategies are constrained by conditions of the rental market and the prevalence of discrimination in certain neighbourhoods. Place-based coalitions among actors in the rental market and community groups may mitigate this discrimination and construct a different narrative about newcomers’ housing needs.

What becomes clear in all these experiences is that place is an integral component of immigrant integration and settlement. Both market and non-market forces play a role in the geography of poverty and social capital. The goal of decision-makers is to mitigate the negative conditions of the former while taking care not to compromise the latter. Evidently, the hardships surrounding undesirable crowding and a lack of choice in terms of location and supply are a structural issue that can addressed by evidence informed policy strategies. In a market-based housing system, low-income groups are the last to enter the market in terms of choice due to their disproportionate buying power.\textsuperscript{66,67} They also subsequently lack effective demand over housing production more generally. As such, they become a spatially segregated class from which key institutional actors in the housing market may extract the maximum rent, or surplus value. For landlords, it makes little economic sense to upgrade such rental structures: the goal is to maximize surplus (rent) and minimize costs as to attain the highest profit possible. The inability of low income housing to spread to other parts of urban areas contributes to its low quality

\textsuperscript{4} According to World Health Organization, overcrowding refers to a situation in which more people are living within a single dwelling than there is space for, so that movement is restricted, privacy secluded, hygiene impossible, rest and sleep difficult.
and relatively high price tag, which destabilizes affordability for low income groups. Most critically, this spatial organization is a product of social relations; the distribution of low-income housing is not a ‘natural’ phenomena but the product of social relations among planning administrations, developers, real estate agents, financiers, and landlords. It is here that we find opportunity for intervention. Similarly, Walks and Bourne describe the geography of poverty as the following:

“With increasing inequality among visible minorities and recent immigrants, it is likely that the poorest among each minority group are filling up the lowest cost and least desirable housing ... As the level of inequality within minority groups increases, the odds that the poorest end up becoming more segregated in the lowest cost areas also increases, whereas wealthier members of each group are able to afford to own their own home and with it potentially a more desirable location for the formation of more homogenous ‘ethnic communities.”

Spatial Strategies: Settlement and Integration Organizations, Housing Agencies, & Policymakers

Given our understanding of urban ethnic ghetto formation, it becomes clear that housing strategies for newcomers must be mindful of place. More specifically, housing for newcomers can better mitigate geographies of disadvantage through inclusive design, culturally appropriate programming, and efficient locations. Many successful strategies, programs, and coalitions among policy makers, housing agencies, landlords, and the settlement and integration sector can be effective in addressing the housing challenges of newcomers – especially when such strategies make a concerted effort to consider place. These programs can address politico-economic structures, social discrimination, or both simultaneously. I will now turn to a brief overview of some best practices and exercises among these actors. Wayland breaks down the housing challenges faced by newcomers into primary, secondary, and macro-level barriers; for the purposes of this paper, we can think of how the neighbourhood contributes to these barriers (Figure 2). Primary neighbourhood barriers include the stigmatization of and discrimination against places that are demographically distinct from the mainstream for example high concentrations of visible minorities, women, families with children, etc. Secondary neighbourhood barriers refer to the spatial segregation of newcomers into areas where the ability to improve economic and social circumstances is compromised. Suburban/inner-city distinctions are usually critical in this regard. Lastly, macro-level neighbourhood barriers refer to urban development processes that produce a neighbourhood pattern of income inequality, a lack of housing diversity, decline, and gentrification. These barriers also encompass government-led public engagement and planning policies that empower socio-spatial discrimination. Newcomers are often faced with multiple, intersecting instances of these barriers. As such, the classification is useful for evaluating strategies aimed at addressing immigrant settlement and integration through housing. Furthermore, projects and programs that seek to address the housing challenges of newcomers are often funded with a combination of governmental, non-profit, and/or private financial support.
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<th>Wayland’s Typology of Housing Barriers Faced by Newcomers</th>
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**Promising Practices**

It is relatively rare to find housing support within the scope of settlement and integration sector services or housing agency projects that explicitly target newcomers’ needs. For the settlement and integration sector, this is often due to a lack of funding and the absence of a mandate to provide housing services and a lack of control over housing markets more generally. Subsequently, most agencies who work with immigrants’ housing challenges provide workshops on
landlord-tenant relations (often in multiple languages), rent banks with information about the rental market, access to landlord networks, and orientations to high-density living. Housing agencies often aim to provide housing for low-income groups overall rather than focusing on the unique needs of newcomers. However, there are some leading practices that specifically target housing for newcomers.

In Manitoba, both the Living Gospel Church Family Place and Marie Rose Place provide quality affordable housing explicitly for immigrant and refugee families. Living Gospel Church Family Place is owned by Manitoba Housing and managed by Living Gospel Church Holdings Inc.\textsuperscript{22} Marie Rose Place is funded by a combination of private and public investment.\textsuperscript{23} This included a federal-provincial agreement, Investment in Affordable Housing 2011-2014 (IAH); the City of Winnipeg’s Downtown Residential Development Grant Program; and the contribution of Hagrave Holdings Ltd. Worth noting is the fact that both these developments are located in Winnipeg’s Downtown Core. Marie Rose Place in particular was a component of downtown revitalization. Nearby amenities include a public library, shopping centres, park space, educational facilities, health services, places of worship, and public transportation.

We can begin to understand how these projects address all three types of neighbourhood barriers (Figure 2). In terms of primary barriers, both projects not only provide housing for a group traditionally discriminated against in the rental market on the basis of race, ethnicity, and gender, but create a legitimate place for a specific type of community in the heart of urban society. Marie Rose Place in particular is designed to provide support for immigrant and refugee women with low-to-moderate income, but moreover is a ten minute bus ride away from the Women’s Hospital and other social infrastructure particularly useful to single parents, such as grocery stores and elementary schools. The co-location of groups with similar ethnic, gender, and/or racial backgrounds fosters familiarity, community, and a shield from experiences of discrimination. Proximity to diverse employment opportunities and social services in the downtown enhance these immigrants’ and refugees’ ability to address secondary barriers in that income, language skill, integration, and knowledge of rights and responsibilities can be realized more efficiently over time. In terms of macro-level barriers,

Marie Rose Place and Living Gospel Church Family Place not only provide a unique supply of affordable housing into the market but pull together multi-scalar government financial support and create legitimacy for group difference in the allocation of socially and economically valuable downtown space. More generally, what these projects demonstrate is possibilities for fostering inclusivity and social capital among co-located immigrant and refugee groups while simultaneously alleviating their economic hardships.

The IRCOM House Ellen project in Downtown Winnipeg is another interesting initiative sponsored by a settlement and integration organization, the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba Inc. (IRCOM). Opened in 1991, IRCOM House Ellen is an apartment building that provides transitional housing for newcomer families for a period of 1 year, with the possibility of renewal for another 2 years.\textsuperscript{24} All 66 units are either 2 or 3 bedrooms, and the building itself is conveniently located near schools, libraries, shopping, places of worship, social service agencies, government offices, and recreational facilities. Rent is subsidized under the Manitoba Housing Renewal Corporation’s Rent Geared to Income Program (RGI). Since IRCOM House Ellen works with people from many diverse backgrounds, approximately 20 languages are spoken among the staff, who themselves are from all around the world. Multiculturalism is openly celebrated through on-site cultural programming such as the IRCOM House Summer Celebration. Other on-site programs include: an After-School Program for children and youth; a Community Resource Program connecting
members with employment, education, and various health resources throughout Winnipeg; and a Newcomer Literacy Initiative consisting of daily English as an Additional Language classes, with free childcare. Funding is provided from a variety of both governmental, non-profit and private sources including the Manitoba Immigration and Multiculturalism, the Royal Bank of Canada, and United Way Winnipeg. Active celebration of difference and inclusivity for a diverse range of ethnic groups, the provision of family-friendly dwellings, a variety of programs that foster societal integration, rent geared income, and the provision of residential space in Winnipeg’s downtown core make the IRCON House Ellen project ambitious on all three different types of barriers newcomers face in regards to housing and neighbourhood amenities.

The North York Housing Help Centre in Toronto is similarly an innovative program in terms of immigrant housing. Although not explicitly designed for immigrants alone, the Centre is located within an immigrant settlement agency (COSTI). Subsequently, newcomers comprise the bulk of the Help Centre’s clientele. Services include outreach to landlords, vacancy postings, landlord-tenant conflict mediation, financial management, and training on tenants’ rights issues. The North York Rent Bank Access Program also supports low-income households and prevents eviction and homelessness through access to interest-free loans and energy arrears grants. Staff are fluent in English, French, Italian and Spanish, with other languages made available upon request. Clients can also simultaneously access COSTI’s educational, social, and employment services in the same location. Programs and services are oriented around children and youth, employment, family and mental health, language training, problem gambling, seniors, settlement/citizenship, skills training, and women. The centre not only successfully bridges housing and immigrant settlement sectors but is well-located geographically to serve newcomers who need housing assistance. The predominant barriers being addressed here are primary and secondary; the co-location of both housing and immigrant integration services make this one-stop service model highly regarded. While less involved in promoting the positive aspects of ethnic enclaves, the interest-free loan access and landlord-tenant relations training provided by the Centre mitigates involuntary overcrowding, a lack of choice in the rental market, and exploitation via the threat of eviction.

In Alberta, the settlement and integration organizations which provide temporary housing accommodation explicitly for newcomers is Catholic Social Services and Calgary Catholic Immigration Society. The Reception House Program in Edmonton provides temporary accommodation and orientation services for newly arrived government-assisted refugees in the downtown core. Newcomers are linked with financial, health, and education services, and also receive their Alberta health care and Social Insurance Numbers at this location. In Calgary, the Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) manages the Margaret Chisholm Resettlement Centre with similar services. It is located near the downtown core of Calgary and accommodates up to 80 government-assisted refugees (GARs) for up to 19 days until more permanent accommodation is secured. Services provided include a free public telephone, public access computers, a dining hall, a children’s playground, laundry facilities, and a Refugee Health Clinic. Refugees are provided with 3 meals a day, 7 days a week in addition to services under the mandate of the Resettlement Assistance Program. The primary target here in terms of newcomer housing needs (Figure 2) is secondary barriers: the Centre provides an efficient location to aid the language skills and societal knowledge of newly arrived GARS. Nearby amenities useful for the immediate needs of refugees including an Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada office, the Calgary Immigrant Women’s Association, the YWCA of Calgary, banks, registries, public transportation, and various other social services.
Strategies for Policy Development

While the promising practices discussed so far target housing challenges for newcomers through direct programming, policies at the municipal and provincial level can also aid immigrant settlement and integration more broadly. In the next section we will pay specific attention to ongoing municipal-provincial negotiations as they pertain to growth management and municipal housing provision. In terms of newcomer housing needs (Figure 2), these policies target the macro-level housing barriers for newcomers with an attention to place-based strategy.

A study of growth management policies in British Columbia brings newcomer housing strategies into the realm of urban policy and planning. More specifically, the study investigates whether immigration trends are considered in growth management policies, such as public transportation investment, and how such policies affect immigrants’ housing and transportation choices in terms of affordability and transit-accessibility. In a general sense, transportation infrastructure can provide spatial equity and a valuable social benefit to local residents who extensively rely on public transportation to meet their daily commuting needs. The installation of such infrastructure has been shown to trigger gentrification which can compound housing affordability issues for those living near such valuable infrastructure.

Thomas contends that urban growth management strategies that involve public transportation investments should incentivize the preservation and development of affordable housing near transit so that those who need public transportation the most are able to continue to live nearby. She advocates for housing ordinances, Tax Increment Financing, and Community Benefits Agreements. There is potential for Canadian cities to begin considering such strategies. However, these measures will require changes to Alberta’s Municipal Government Act and current urban growth management strategies. There is also a need to expand the financial resources for municipal housing companies to purchase urban land. At present, City Charter negotiations are currently underway between the provincial government, the City of Edmonton, and the City of Calgary. City Charters would provide municipalities with increased revenue sources and land use controls that induce more affordable housing, e.g. inclusionary zoning. In sum, a variety of urban policy and planning initiatives can produce positive housing outcomes not only for newcomers but all low income groups.

At a more local level, the Greater Forest Lawn Landlord Group was a relatively informal, volunteer-based network of landlords providing housing in a neighbourhood that sees high concentrations of visible minorities and indigenous populations. With the support of a City of Calgary Community Social Worker, this group met routinely to provide existing and potential tenants with information about tenants’ rights, lease agreements, and the rules and regulations about rental properties more generally – often in multiple languages. To the knowledge of the author, this was the only group of its kind in Calgary. Many members are also community leaders and work to counteract the negative stigma attached to the area and local rental property relations. To date, the group is on hiatus. However, members are still active in the rental market and are involved in the resettlement of the recent influx of Syrian refugees. This particular initiative is a

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*Housing ordinances require every one in four residential units be made available to residences making no more than 30% of the median area income. [http://community-wealth.org/strategies/panel/tdc/index.html](http://community-wealth.org/strategies/panel/tdc/index.html)

†Uses future gains to re-invest in distressed or underdeveloped areas where development would not otherwise occur. [http://community-wealth.org/strategies/panel/tdc/index.html](http://community-wealth.org/strategies/panel/tdc/index.html)

‡Agreements that involve coalitions among communities, developers, and/or government entities to ensure affordable housing [http://community-wealth.org/strategies/panel/tdc/index.html](http://community-wealth.org/strategies/panel/tdc/index.html)

§Refers to municipal and county planning ordinances that require a given share of new construction to be affordable by people with low to moderate incomes.
unique strategy for addressing the housing challenges of newcomers, as well as other marginalized groups, for a number of reasons. It is a grassroots, neighbourhood-based mobilization that not only empowers tenants’ knowledge of the law, the rental market, and their rights, but also involves landlords as key institutional actors to address the negative stigma often levied against disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Members were brought together to combat the stereotype that all landlords are unethical; this is a critical social force needed to combat many of the negative attitudes and stereotypes levied against rental properties all over the city. The fact that the City of Calgary provides necessary social work expertise suggests that such initiatives would be supported elsewhere and with governmental support. There is potential for the municipalities or non-profit organizations to expand upon such initiatives. Moreover, such initiatives offer considerable potential in light of the fact that urban rental markets are increasingly comprised of the ‘secondary sector.’¹

**Future Coalitions and Strategies: Policy Maps for Key Actors**

There is widespread consensus that affordable housing is a critical prerequisite for successful immigrant settlement. However, where housing is located is equally important. Segregated ethnic ghettos disadvantage newcomers through inequitable access to resources such as public transportation, employment, and health facilities. Oftentimes high-density, subsidized housing is provided in such neighbourhoods because they lack effective political resistance, they possess hazards such as industrial land uses, and subsequently prove relatively cheap to provide affordable housing. Enclaves, on the other hand, can help mitigate hardship and foster inclusive communities through a celebration of culture and robust social networks. Given our understanding of these different types of places, we can conclude that housing strategies are most effective when they foster co-ethnic solidarity and are combined with beneficial social and physical neighbourhood infrastructure.

Settlement and integration providers, housing agencies, all levels of government, the private sector, and community leaders all have a role to play in the provision of suitable, affordable, and inclusive housing for newcomers. Following the innovative housing projects and services discussed in this paper, settlement providers, housing agencies, and policymakers may find it useful to focus on the following criteria when assessing the merits of a housing service, strategy or project:

- For housing agencies and settlement and integration providers managing newcomer housing projects: foster a sense of community, either by building design and/or cultural programming, among immigrants with shared experiences in order to celebrate multicultural diversity and provide a social buffer from discrimination.

- For settlement and integration providers operating in newcomer housing projects and programs: provide certain services (e.g., information about educational opportunities, childcare, employment access, orientation to government supports, information about tenants’ rights) on site, and in multiple languages.

- For providers of newcomer housing projects and programs: locate as efficiently as possible near critical social and physical infrastructures such as training programs, schools, grocery stores, religious institutions, recreational facilities, public transportation, and health care services.

• For housing agencies and policy makers: address the economic circumstances of low income immigrant groups and their lack of choice in the housing market through strategies such as income-geared rent, rent subsidies, access to interest-free loans (e.g. micro-credit banks), and energy arrears.

• For urban and provincial policy makers: integrate the needs and circumstances of low-income immigrant neighbourhoods in the urban development process by mitigating the negative aspects of gentrification and incentivizing the production of affordable housing near critical social and physical infrastructures.

• For community leaders, landlords, housing agencies, policy makers, and settlement and integration providers: encourage grassroots coalitions with key actors in the rental housing market, such as landlords and community leaders, to reduce neighbourhood stigma and mobilize non-discriminatory rental market practices for the integration and well-being of newcomers.

These criteria link research about newcomers’ experiences in housing markets and urban neighbourhoods with projects and services that have been pursued in Canadian cities successfully.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed ethnic ghettos and ethnic enclaves in order to highlight critical neighbourhood aspects of housing that facilitate successful immigrant settlement and integration. This emphasis helps us expand what we consider to be pragmatic interventions, at all levels of government and in both formal and informal contexts. The diversity of projects, services, and social networks that address the housing challenges of newcomers in a variety of Canadian cities are responsive to empirical studies of immigrants’ experience with neighbourhoods and their respective housing. This diversity is also representative of the fact that strategies do not necessarily have to be uniform to be effective; urban environments always possess a degree of uniqueness and will therefore require adaptation and flexibility when it comes to adopting best practices. Urban areas within Alberta are incredibly diverse and may therefore adapt the recommendations of this paper to their own contexts. Policy makers who create guidelines for future projects should be mindful of this and allow for a degree of flexibility when it comes to successful solutions for newcomer housing. From a research perspective, there is significant value in studying these innovations so that we may continue to learn from stakeholders in other provinces and countries. As a suggestion for future research, the newcomer community would benefit significantly from learning about housing practices that address immigrant integration within rural contexts and expanding research possibilities to other parts of the world. Canada is a unique environment to investigate immigrant integration and housing needs in that we operate within an explicitly multicultural political context; this fact implies both opportunities and challenges. Our hope is that the strategies discussed here can help key actors along with what is already an often ambitious goal.
End Notes


15. Dion, “Immigrants’ perceptions of housing discrimination,” 536.

16. Walks and Bourne, “Ghettos in Canada’s cities?” 289.


24. Walks and Bourne, “Ghettos in Canada’s cities?” 276.


28. Walks and Bourne, “Ghettos in Canada’s cities?” 276.


30. Ibid.


37. Mensah and Williams, “Ghanaian and Somali Immigrants in Toronto’s Rental Market,” 118.


41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Preston et al., “Immigrants and homelessness,” 300.

44. Wood, McGrath and Young, “The emotional city,” 27.

45. Mensah and Williams, “Ghanaian and Somali Immigrants in Toronto’s Rental Market,” 118.
46) Dion, “Immigrants’ perceptions of housing discrimination,” 535.
47) Ibid.
49) DeVerteuil, “Survive but not thrive?” 931.
54) Preston et al., ”Immigrants and homelessness,” 301.
60) Ibid.
64) Mensah and Williams, “Ghanaian and Somali Immigrants in Toronto’s Rental Market,” 116.
66) Harvey, Social Justice and the City, 62-65.
67) Walks and Bourne, “Ghettos in Canada’s cities?” 294.
68) Harvey, Social Justice and the City, 170-171.
69) Walks and Bourne, “Ghettos in Canada’s cities?” 294.
75) Wayland, The Housing Needs of Immigrants and Refugees in Canada, 27.
80) Ibid.
83) Thomas, Integrating housing, 7.
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