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

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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
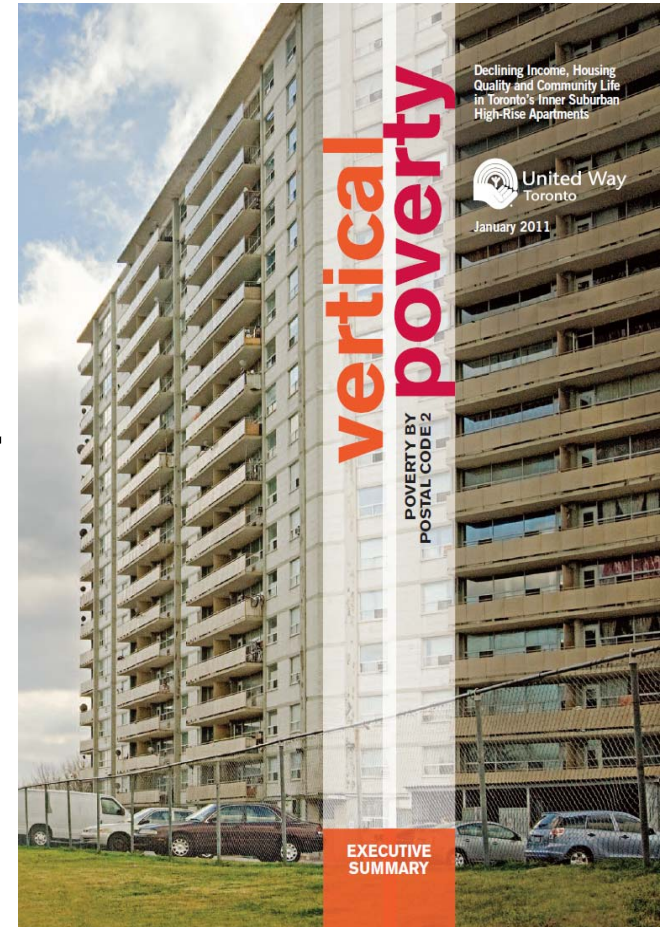
Immigration Trends & Theory

- **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 & <u>Private</u> 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

1) 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
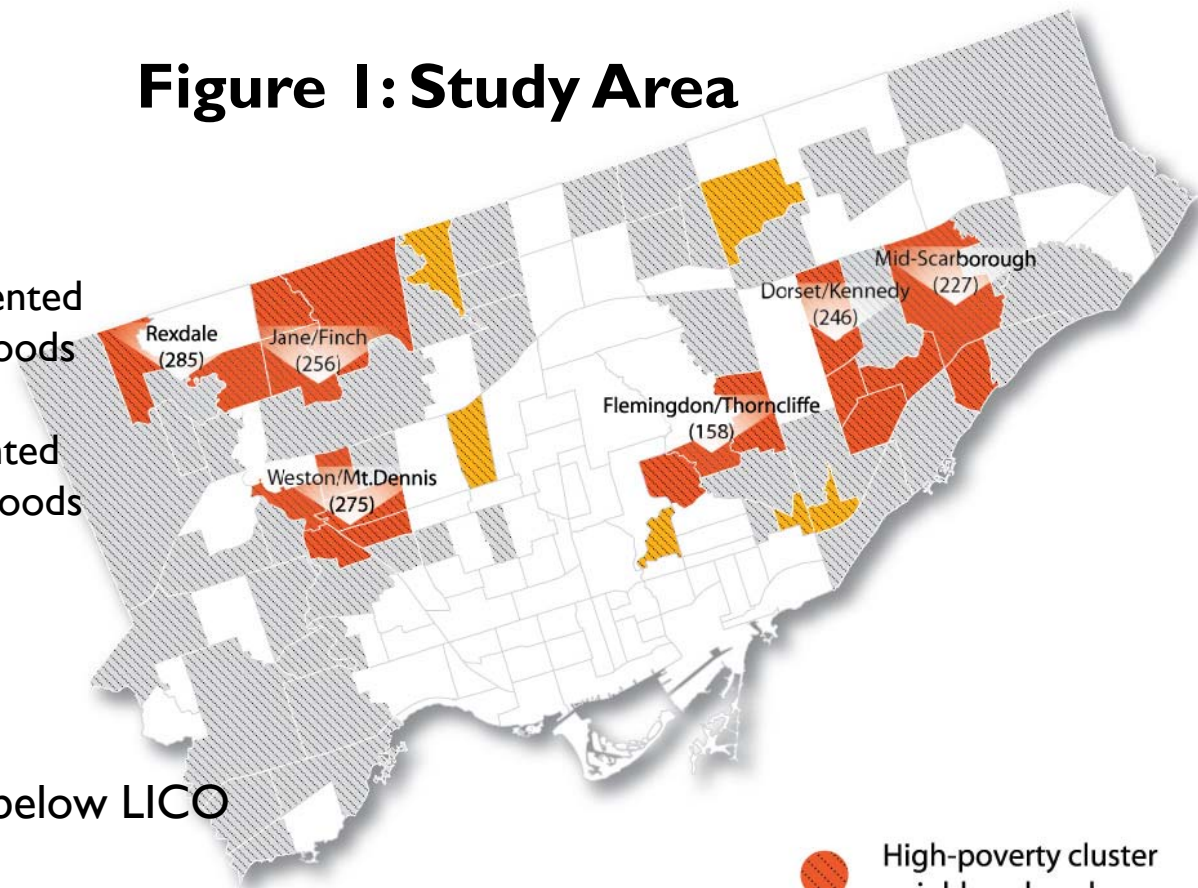 - **Low Chinese % throughout**

Table 1: Sample Characteristics	Canadian Born	10 + Years Immigrants	5-10 years Immigrants	< 5 Years Immigrants	All Immigrants < 10 Years	All Immigrants	Total Sample
Marital Status of Repondent	543	597	376	652	1028	1625	2168
Married or Common Law	37.4	47.9	70.5	76.1	74.0	64.4	57.7
Single (Never married)	38.1	27.3	19.1	18.3	18.6	21.8	25.9
Parental Status	549	598	376	653	1029	1627	2176
Single Parent Families	23.3	23.4	13.3	11.9	12.4	16.5	18.2
Two Parent Families	22.2	32.6	60.9	62.9	62.2	51.3	44.0
Language most often spoken at home	543	597	376	651	1027	1624	2167
Non-English	6.8	38.9	72.1	81.1	77.8	63.5	49.3
Main household income source	531	593	371	648	1019	1612	2143
Employment	57.6	63.9	85.2	70.7	76.0	71.5	68.1
Pension	13.7	13.5	1.3	0.3	0.7	5.4	7.5
Social Assistance	21.1	14.7	8.1	17.9	14.3	14.5	16.1
Ethnicity[4]	537	593	372	649	1021	1614	2151
Canadian	66.7	2.0	0.8	0.2	0.4	1.0	17.4
Indian	1.9	6.2	15.1	24.5	21.1	15.6	12.2
Other West Indian/Caribbean	3.4	21.8	11.3	5.5	7.6	12.8	10.5
Jamaican	6.3	15.9	5.1	2.5	3.4	8.0	7.6
African	1.5	5.6	7.5	12.2	10.5	8.7	6.9
Pakistani	0.4	3.5	11.8	7.2	8.9	6.9	5.3
Sri Lankan	0.2	5.9	7.3	5.2	6.0	5.9	4.5
Filipino	0.6	4.4	2.4	4.2	3.5	3.8	3.0
Chinese	0.2	1.5	5.1	3.1	3.8	3.0	2.3
Aboriginal/Métis/Inuit	2.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.7

2) Current Location

Figure 1: Study Area

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

Rexdale (285)
Jane/Finch (256)
Weston/Mt.Dennis (275)
Flemingdon/Thorncliffe (158)
Dorset/Kennedy (246)
Mid-Scarborough (227)

High-poverty cluster neighbourhoods

Other high-poverty

Low-poverty

Not in study

Current Spatial Concentrations

Table 2: Neighbourhoods	Canadian Born	10 + Years Immigrants	5-10 years Immigrants	< 5 Years Immigrants	All Immigrants < 10 Years	All Immigrants	Total Sample
Neighbourhood[2] (% of Neighbourhood Cluster)	549	598	376	653	1029	1627	2176
Mid-Scarborough (n=227)	24.2	27.8	22.9	25.1	48.0	75.8	10.4
Dorset-Kennedy (n=246)	32.1	21.5	14.6	31.7	46.3	67.9	11.3
Weston-Mount Dennis (n=275)	26.2	39.6	14.9	19.3	34.2	73.8	12.6
Jane-Finch (n=256)	21.1	32.0	18.4	28.5	46.9	78.9	11.8
Rexdale (n=285)	13.3	25.3	19.6	41.8	61.4	86.7	13.1
Flemingdon-Thorncliffe (n=158)	18.4	19.6	24.1	38.0	62.0	81.6	7.3
Other High Poverty Areas (n=264)	23.1	25.8	16.3	34.8	51.1	76.9	12.1
Non-High Poverty Areas (n=465)	34.6	25.8	13.5	26.0	39.6	65.4	21.4

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 3: Housing Experiences Previous to Current Place	Canadian Born	10 + Years Immigrants	5-10 years Immigrants	< 5 Years Immigrants	All Immigrants < 10 Years	All Immigrants	Total Sample
# of Places Lived in Past 5 Years	477	524	356	597	953	1477	1954
One	34.0	44.3	30.6	32.3	31.7	36.2	35.6
Two	36.1	40.5	49.7	47.6	48.4	45.6	43.2
Three	18.4	10.5	13.5	16.1	15.1	13.5	14.7
Four	5.0	3.1	3.4	2.5	2.8	2.9	3.4
Five or more	6.5	1.7	2.8	1.5	2.0	1.9	3.0
Length of Time in Neighbourhood	547	598	376	652	1028	1626	2173
Less than 1 year	17.7	11.7	14.4	28.8	23.5	19.2	18.8
1 year to less than 2 years	15.2	8.0	16.0	29.8	24.7	18.6	17.7
2 years to less than 3 years	9.0	8.5	11.7	20.2	17.1	14.0	12.7
3 years to less than 5 years	12.1	11.7	17.3	18.7	18.2	15.8	14.9
More than 5 years	46.1	60.0	40.7	2.5	16.4	32.5	35.9
Length of Time in Building	545	597	375	651	1026	1623	2168
Less than 1 year	26.2	16.4	18.9	35.8	29.6	24.8	25.1
1 year to less than 2 years	17.2	11.6	18.4	30.7	26.2	20.8	19.9
2 years to less than 3 years	10.5	11.2	16.8	18.9	18.1	15.6	14.3
3 years to less than 5 years	11.4	15.4	18.4	12.9	14.9	15.1	14.2
More than 5 years	34.7	45.4	27.5	1.7	11.1	23.7	26.5
Top 5 Reasons for Moving to Current Neighbourhood[1]	544	597	376	653	1029	1626	2170
Affordable Rent	27.4	20.6	23.4	16.4	19.0	19.6	21.5
Family in Area	20.0	20.8	15.2	18.1	17.0	18.4	18.8
Friends in Area	9.6	7.7	15.7	20.8	19.0	14.8	13.5
Ethno-cultural Group in Area	2.9	6.0	8.8	13.3	11.7	9.6	7.9
Size of Unit	8.8	8.5	11.2	4.3	6.8	7.4	7.8

4) Satisfaction & Future Plans

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

- Planned length to stay in building <u>longer</u> 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:
  - ◦ <u>Expensive rent</u> for Cdn-born
  - ◦ <u>Desire to own</u> 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**)

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