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A Review and Interpretation**

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**The Social Geography of Immigration and Urbanization in Canada:
A Review and Interpretation**

by

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Abstract: The impact of immigration on Canadian cities since the Second World War has been profound, especially following the removal of barriers to non-European immigrants in the 1960s and the significant increase in the number of immigrants admitted since the mid-1980s. Over two million immigrants entered Canada in the 1990s and the vast majority have settled in just a few metropolitan areas, notably Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver. As a result, the social geography of large Canadian cities has been transformed, an issue that has attracted considerable attention from Canadian geographers. In this paper, research on these changes—published by cultural, social, and urban geographers between 1996 and 1999—is surveyed. This work is exceedingly diverse in emphasis and method, and has contributed a great deal to our understanding of the relationship between immigration and urban change, particularly in the areas of housing, the labour market, and neighbourhood life. In general, geographers are emphasizing the complexity of outcomes, highlighting on the one hand the importance of local contingency, and on the other the growing connections between Canadian cities and global processes. This research challenges traditional theories of immigration and urban structure, and in so doing will redefine the way we conceptualize urban spatial structure and urban social life.

Keywords: Immigrant settlement; Social geography; Suburbanization; Housing, Urban labour markets; Immigrant identities; Immigrants and poverty

Introduction

The study of immigrant settlement has been a persistent theme in Canadian, indeed North American, social science research throughout the twentieth century. This concern has been driven both by a desire to understand, intellectually, how society is remade as new people enter it, and also by the belief that academic analysis can, and should, inform public policy. The pursuit of research that engaged theoretical and policy issues was especially popular in the 1960s and 1970s, and was related to the ascendance of quantitative methods, new spatial theories, and the availability of machine-readable census data. However, this type of research waned as the 1970s unfolded and it became unfashionable in the 1980s, a time when social scientists embraced Marxist, humanistic, and post-structural approaches. Also, interest in immigration as a cause of social change was displaced by a growing fascination with economic restructuring and, within urban geography, the rise of the new middle class and its tendency to gentrify inner-city landscapes. Moreover, as social geographers turned to the pressing issue of gender relations, attention was deflected from what appeared to be the more traditional topics of immigration and ethnicity.

For a variety of reasons, though, interest in these issues has been rekindled in the 1990s. In the first place, planners and urban geographers began to pay more attention to processes of globalization and the emergence of 'world cities' which, in turn, led to a growing concern with the role of international migration. Meanwhile, cultural theory, which began to exert a growing influence on human geography, turned increasingly to the topics of social identity, racism, cultural hybridity, and the distinct experience of people living in cultural diasporas. Also, barriers between the study of class, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality began to dissolve as researchers developed new ways to conceptualize the multifaceted nature of identity. And, finally, the shift back to studying immigration and ethnicity reflects the changing demography of Canada: in the late 1980s, the Canadian government adopted a new immigration policy that led to the admission of much higher numbers of immigrants. Newcomers arriving in the subsequent decade have settled overwhelmingly in a handful of large metropolitan areas in Canada, creating new forms of social interaction and new cultural landscapes. In the wake of

this socio-spatial transformation, geographers have responded with a vigorous program of research on a wide variety of immigration-related topics.

Before surveying this literature, it is worth emphasizing one other crucial ingredient in the return of immigration as a significant research focus within Canadian geography. In the early 1990s, the federal government decided to increase its level of knowledge on the impact of immigration by stimulating academic research on the topic. In 1995, it announced a program to fund four centres of excellence devoted to policy-related research on immigration. The new centres were created the following year and, together with the group of policy makers who work closely with them, are collectively known as the Metropolis Project (they are headquartered in Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver, and Edmonton). Geographers, with their abilities to conduct both qualitative and quantitative research, and to understand the place-specific aspects of the immigration process, have become integral participants in this exercise. In effect, Metropolis has provided a vehicle for the expansion of geographical research, and the visibility of geography as a discipline has been enhanced in the process.

Basic immigration trends

Historically, Canadian immigration policy was designed to create and reinforce a European settler society. At first, this was primarily envisaged as a process of agricultural colonization, an ideal that was in place until well into the 20th century. After the Second World War, focus shifted to attracting immigrants to work in the manufacturing and construction sectors. Regardless of the particular economic emphasis, in the century following confederation, migrants from Europe, the United States, and selected Commonwealth countries were accorded preference. During the 1960s, however, this long-standing system of preferences gave way to a new method of immigrant selection. Legislation introduced in that decade refined procedures for refugee admission and created two streams of immigration: one to allow Canadians to sponsor family members, and another to assess independent immigrant applications on the basis of their demographic characteristics and accumulated human capital. The new 'points system' was designed both to remove racist bias in immigrant selection and to facilitate the entry of skilled immigrants during a period of labour shortage. Generally, it fulfilled both objectives: the proportion of European and U.S. immigrants entering Canada fell

dramatically in the 1970s,² while those coming from Asia, Latin America, and Africa increased; also, most of the immigrants arriving at this time found jobs quickly and enjoyed subsequent upward socio-economic mobility.

Another significant change was introduced in the late-1980s, when the Canadian government increased its annual targets for immigrants from below 100,000 to well over 200,000. By the end of the decade, the government also introduced a policy of five-year plans for immigration (as opposed to the traditional single-year plans of the past), which resulted in a much more consistent level of immigrant landings in the 1990s. Over the course of the decade, approximately 2.25 million newcomers came to Canada, generating an increase of nearly 10 percent to the national population.

As Ley (1998a) explains, together, the policy shifts in the 1960s and 1980s led to a dramatic increase in the number of non-European immigrants entering Canada. Whereas nearly 90 percent of immigrants landing in 1966 were from Europe and the US, by 1996 this proportion had fallen to just 20 percent, with 45 percent arriving from Asia in the latter year. Ley also notes that the socioeconomic composition of recent immigrant cohorts is considerably different from their earlier counterparts. In the past, most immigrants admitted to Canada came to join family members already here. In a typical year during the 1990s, however, around one-sixth of those landing have been admitted to Canada as refugees, about half as independent immigrants, and only around one-third have come through the family reunification program. Further, the Canadian government has been particularly interested in attracting a new type of immigrant. Within the general independent class, three sub-categories of business immigrants (the self-employed, entrepreneurs, and investors) have been created. Applicants to these programs are selected on the basis of their capital and/or business experience. While, as Nash (1996) demonstrates, the wealth that business immigrants bring to Canada may be overstated, the simple fact is that while some independent immigrants arrive with nothing but their skills (and these are frequently unrecognized in the labour market; see Hiebert et al. 1998), others are exceedingly wealthy.

² Note that the number of applicants from Europe also dropped in these years, as western European economies improved. See Rosenberg and Trono (1996) for a discussion of the Italian situation.

All of these issues are relevant when considering the social geography of immigrant landings in Canada. As already mentioned, most immigrants gravitate to large cities; in fact, 93.5 percent of those who arrived between 1991 and 1996 were located in a Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) in 1996, 77 percent in just four CMAs (in descending order of significance, Toronto, Vancouver, Montréal, and Calgary), and over 40 percent in Toronto alone (Murdie 1998). As a result, the ethnocultural composition of these centres is changing rapidly while the rest of Canada is hardly touched by the effects of immigration (Kobayashi and Peake 1997). The specific patterns of landings in these cities are complex, and are related to the historical geography of immigration in earlier periods, contemporary geopolitics, distance from source countries, economic performance of urban economies, and even climate. As Ley (1999) points out, Toronto receives by far the largest refugee intake in Canada; in contrast, few refugees settle in Vancouver. The latter city, instead, has been especially successful in attracting business immigrants in the 1990s. Similarly, Vancouver receives the highest proportion of Asian immigrants of any Canadian city, while the majority of Afro-Caribbeans settle in Toronto and people from francophone countries are, for obvious reasons, drawn to Montréal. These different trajectories of settlement are associated with place-specific requirements for program delivery, such as language and labour force training (Ray 1998, Hiebert 1999a). As Preston (1998) reminds us, they also reflect different settlement strategies pursued by immigrants, a complex issue that has not been systematically investigated.

In a preliminary and highly suggestive analysis, Bourne (1999) examines the relationship between immigrant settlement and internal migration between Canadian metropolitan areas. Prior to the mid-1980s, these population flows were generally complementary; that is, internal migrants and immigrants tended to move to the same places—those experiencing the highest rates of economic growth. In the 1990s, immigrants continued this pattern, and have settled in metropolitan areas that are the largest in the country, have the highest incomes and levels of educational attainment, and have well-developed service sectors. Conversely, they avoid places of high unemployment, dependence on government transfers, and urban areas in Québec other than Montréal. Non-immigrants share some of these predilections, but not all of them. In particular, internal migrants in Canada have generally not moved to the largest urban

centres in recent years, and Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver are experiencing large net inflows of immigrants coupled with either small net inflows of non-immigrants or outflows (on Montréal, see Marois 1998). While it is too early to declare that this is evidence of ‘white flight’, Bourne shows that the increasingly opposed migration systems of immigrants and internal migrants are contributing to a particularly rapid internationalization of the population of Canada’s primary cities and the aforementioned lack of diversity in smaller centres (Bourne 1996a). In fact, some time in 1999 or 2000, people of non-European descent will outnumber the traditional European-origin population in the City of Toronto (though it will take perhaps another decade for this to be true of the entire metropolitan region).

Urban transformation

Even if immigration would somehow have stopped in the 1990s, Canadian cities would still have experienced fundamental change. The forces of demographic change (family recomposition and aging) and economic restructuring would, no doubt, have been transformative in the absence of large-scale immigration—just as they have in other western countries. Similarly, the accelerated urbanization of First Peoples, would have taken place, with or without immigration. While there is no scope in this survey to consider the whole set of themes explored by Canadian urban geographers, I will briefly summarize three (gentrification, social polarization, and suburbanization), and show how each is connected, sometimes in subtle ways, with immigrant settlement.³

The topic of gentrification has long captivated Canadian urban geographers, a literature that is discussed by Ley (1996, chapter 2) and D. Rose (1996). In his recent, comprehensive study, Ley details the spectacular growth of the professional white-collar workforce and shows how this ‘new middle class’ has come to value inner-city neighbourhoods in large Canadian cities. Given its extensive economic resource base and political clout, the new middle class has been able to reshape the land markets, and landscapes, of their adopted neighbourhoods. Ley insists that this process is motivated both by an economic rationale and the development of a new bourgeois culture, and shows how the two are closely linked in his

³ For a more complete introduction to contemporary Canadian urban geography, see Bourne (1996a) and Caulfield and Peake (1996).

discussion of conspicuous consumption (Chapter 8). Canadian researchers have also focused on the role of local government in stimulating gentrification (Zacharias 1997) and the ways that municipal politicians and developers sometimes collaborate in planning projects designed to change the character of the inner city (Blomley 1997a). Damaris Rose (1996) also demonstrates that the particular course of gentrification is shaped by a number of contextual factors, such as the health of the urban economy, linguistic politics, and the nature of the housing market. Her analysis of Montréal shows, for example, that the redevelopment of inner-city housing in that city was often undertaken by, or for, a group she calls 'marginal gentrifiers' (who are decidedly less wealthy than the new middle class described by Ley; e.g., female-led single-parent families), a process that happens more rarely in Toronto and Vancouver. Finally, Canadian researchers have begun to explore the displacement of vulnerable populations that, almost inevitably, occurs in the wake of gentrification (Ley 1998, Blomley 1997b).

Although the issue of immigration is only indirectly discussed in these studies, there are at least two ways in which 'embourgeoisement' (Ley's term) and immigration are related. Traditionally, immigrants to Canada have settled in the inner city, in many cases in exactly the neighbourhoods favoured by gentrifiers; for example, Cabbagetown in Toronto gained its name from the 'cuisine of poverty' associated with the post-famine Irish community. As these neighbourhoods experience renovation and rising prices, they become too expensive for most immigrants, who must look elsewhere for housing (see below). Second, as Ley notes, many (though not all) gentrifiers make little effort to act in neighbourly ways and, as Blomley (1997b) discusses in more detail, are often intolerant of diversity (also see Ray 1998a, chapter 3). While this conjecture is based on reading between the lines of published work, together with personal observation (but not systematic research), I suspect new immigrants feel unwelcome in gentrified neighbourhoods, despite the avowed cosmopolitanism of the new middle class.⁴ Interestingly, as Lai (1996) demonstrates, the relationship is no less strained

⁴ Much the same applies for First Peoples, who typically need the same segment of the housing market as new immigrants. Unfortunately, the competition between the two groups for low-cost housing has not been examined in the Canadian literature.

between renovated immigrant settlement areas—in his case Victoria’s Chinatown—and homeless people living nearby.⁵

The study of income inequality and related polarization has become another significant theme within Canadian urban research. MacLachlan and Sawada (1997), for example, have found that the degree of income inequality in Canada has grown in the 1970s and again in the 1980s, a phenomenon that is registered in urban space. More particularly, the number of people living in wealthy neighbourhoods, and the number living in poor ones, is growing, while a declining proportion of the population lives in middle-income areas. Based on a different methodology, Bourne (1997) agrees with one of the central tenets of MacLachlan and Sawada’s analysis—he too finds that the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer—but finds no compelling evidence, at the aggregate national level, that the share of income received by the middle class is declining.⁶ However, Bourne argues that even modest amounts of income inequality become amplified in the particularities of housing markets, and that we should expect more polarized neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood patterns in cities than at the national scale (i.e., sharper distinctions between areas of poverty and plenty). This is especially true, he finds, in Canada’s largest metropolitan areas, even more so in those with high average levels of educational attainment and thriving quaternary sectors. In these places, inner city neighbourhoods are especially polarized, the product of pockets of gentrification against a backdrop of deprivation (also see Smith 1999).

Bourne also addresses, to a limited extent, the relationship between socio-spatial polarization and immigrant settlement. He notes that the national selection system admits immigrants from a wide socio-economic spectrum, ranging from destitute refugees to wealthy business immigrants, and argues that sub-groups of immigrants enter widely divergent

⁵ In this case, merchants and residents of the restored Chinatown were appalled to learn that a shelter for homeless people was established on the edge of the district. Fortunately, tension surrounding this issue dissipated once several Chinese-Canadians began to participate as volunteers in the shelter. For a more complete discussion of the redevelopment of Victoria’s Chinatown, and its distinctive architecture, see Lai (1997) and Lai and Madoff (1997).

⁶ There is an apparent contradiction between the gentrification and polarization literatures. The former refers to the growth of a new middle class while the latter frequently asserts that the middle class is declining in size. This is really a semantic issue related to the North American habit of defining almost everyone as middle class. Actually, when authors such as Ley speak about the ‘new middle class’ they mean people with managerial and professional jobs who generally earn incomes well above the average. Those who write about

segments of the housing market. In so doing, they contribute to the growing polarization of large urban areas (also see Murdie 1998). Moreover, Bourne contends that immigration is related to a secondary effect: as people confront growing socio-economic polarization, in the context of increasing ethnic diversity, they become more prone to congregate in enclaves where they share as much in common with their neighbours as possible (i.e., both class and ethno-cultural characteristics). Thus, his logic goes, we should find more extreme levels of segregation in large centres experiencing active immigrant reception. Murdie (1996) makes a similar point, when he briefly discusses the social ecology of metropolitan Toronto, particularly the high concentration of Afro-Caribbeans in social housing, living disproportionately in the older suburbs.

Over the past decade, urban geographers have been reassessing the nature of suburbanization. Increasingly, the dichotomy between city and suburban neighbourhoods is being challenged along with the standard assumption that suburbs are inhabited by homogeneous populations of traditional, white, nuclear families. On one level, suburbs are becoming more variegated as their housing stock ages and is selectively modified or replaced (Halseth 1996). But there is more to it. Based on years of detailed study of Toronto's suburbanization process, Harris (1996) shows that, from their inception, suburbs were a mix of homogeneous and heterogeneous landscapes in terms of class. Some, of course, were developed as tracts of virtually identical houses, row on row, which were purchased by middle-class families; others, though, were sold lot-by-lot to workers who built their own houses; still others were developed around large factories. Harris and Lewis elaborate this point in two papers (1998a and b), and point out that while *individual* early-20th-century suburbs were typically quite homogeneous, there were major socio-economic differences between the set of suburbs that surrounded a large city. While their analysis is concentrated on the dynamics of social class in residential differentiation, Harris and Lewis also note, in passing, that immigrants (principally from Britain) settled in some of these early suburbs.

Bourne (1996b) also believes that the clear distinction made by most researchers—between poor inner-city vs. affluent suburbs—is overdrawn. However, he argues that suburbs

the declining middle class refer to people in the middle-income range, who have a wide variety of white- and blue-collar occupations.

have recently become even more unequal, fragmented and socially polarized than they were in the past. In part, this is the result of demographic forces, particularly the growing prevalence of ‘non-traditional’ families. Also, the trend toward greater income inequality discussed above plays a significant role, sharpening the disparities between suburbs populated by wealthy residents (often protected by walls and gates) vs. others characterized by growing diversity. In addition to the more heterogeneous mix of class backgrounds and family arrangements in suburbs, they have become more important as immigrant reception zones. Whereas in the past (with exceptions noted above) immigrants generally gravitated toward the cheaper rents and the more extensive social institutions that facilitated their settlement in the inner city, they are now increasingly drawn to suburbs. This tendency is especially marked in Toronto and Vancouver, where the bulk of immigrants arriving in the 1980s and 1990s have settled. For example, 54 percent of all immigrants living in Greater Vancouver in 1971 resided in the City of Vancouver, a figure that declined to just 36 percent by 1996. Significantly, the proportion was the same (36 percent) for immigrants who arrived between 1991 and 1996; that is, approximately 2 out of every 3 immigrants arriving in Vancouver in the early 1990s found housing in suburban municipalities (calculations based on Hiebert 1999a).

New social geographies

Traditional theories of immigrant settlement were built on the assumption that suburbanization was an outcome of both cultural assimilation and economic mobility. Emerging patterns of suburbanized immigrant settlement in Canada (as in the US) suggest a more complex picture. In Vancouver, the tremendous growth in the number of immigrants living in suburban municipalities has actually been associated with a slight *increase* in the degree of spatial separation between ethnic groups (Hiebert 1999a).⁷ This finding corroborates the observation made by Kobayashi and Peake (1997), that the level of residential ethnic concentration in

⁷ The relationship between immigrants and ethnic groups is complex. In this and other sections I use the term immigrants to indicate people who, at some point in their lives, were granted landed immigrant status in Canada; in nearly all cases, this means they were born abroad. By ethnic groups, I mean groups of people who see themselves and are seen by others as culturally distinct (Hiebert 2000). Many people, and frequently journalists, assume immigrants, ethnic groups, and visible minorities (individuals of non-European ancestry) are interchangeable terms, an association that is unhelpful.

Canadian cities is rising, and also Bourne's contention that increasing diversity, in the context of social polarization, is likely to yield a desire for people to live 'near their own kind'. I have previously referred to the outcome of this tendency to cluster as a form of residential 'simplification' (Hiebert 1999a). Lo and Wang (1997) add a vital ingredient to this issue. In an intricate examination of the *internal* characteristics of individuals in greater Toronto who declared Chinese ethnicity in the 1991 census, Lo and Wang find different dynamics between immigrants living in the inner city vs. suburban neighbourhoods. The former, generally, tend to have lower educational attainment, work in blue-collar jobs, and suffer from higher unemployment; they are also more likely to have come to Canada from either mainland China or Vietnam, frequently as refugees or under the family reunification program. The latter, conversely, use their human capital to obtain occupations with higher rates of pay and are more likely to be from Hong Kong or Taiwan (and therefore have a larger proportion of residents who were admitted to Canada as independent immigrants). Significantly, while Chinese Canadian residents appear to be dispersed across Toronto's suburbs, Lo and Wang reveal that this is largely an illusion. When the Chinese-origin population is broken into birthplace sub-groups, the apparent dispersal is revealed as a series of sub-group-specific clusters, underlining the point that the degree of residential concentration is probably growing in Canadian urban areas. Finally, Lo and Wang refine their analysis by dividing the birthplace sub-groups of Chinese Canadians into arrival cohorts, and note that those who came to Canada after 1984 have been more prone to suburban settlement.

Immigrant settlement, then, probably contributes to the generation of more sharply divided urban landscapes in Canada. Several geographers have looked at this issue more directly. As part of a comparative study of immigrant settlement in Toronto and Montréal, Ray (1998a) presents a nuanced portrait of emerging socio-spatial patterns. The two cities share some common characteristics, namely that immigrants from non-European countries are more spatially concentrated than those who have come from more traditional sources. But this generalization hides much relevant detail. For example, in both cities, Central American and Vietnamese immigrants are the most isolated from the Anglo and French 'host' populations. Conversely, immigrants who identified themselves as 'Black' in the 1991 census were relatively dispersed in the general population—in marked contrast to the situation in the

United States. Again, though, there are deeper complexities. In Montréal, the two specific groups within his study that are the most geographically isolated from one-another are, ironically, immigrants from Jamaica and Haiti. The former are situated, very generally, in English-speaking districts while the latter are more strongly associated with the rest of Montréal's francophone population. This point, of course, reflects the critical importance of context; immigrants settling in Montréal enter a bilingual society that has always characterized itself as bicultural rather than multicultural (Ray 1998b). They tend, therefore, to 'take sides' in their residential choices. This, argues Ray (1998a and b), sets a climate of expectations that contributes to an overall higher level of ethnic and immigrant segregation in Montréal vs. Toronto. Marois (1998) interprets the selective intermingling of new immigrants with French and English groups in Montréal somewhat differently, arguing that it is breaking down the traditional separation of the two dominant groups, and that the differentiation between east and west Montréal is becoming less sharp. One other distinction is worth noting: the degree of immigrant suburbanization is markedly less in Montréal, which may be related to the particularities of gentrification in the two cities (noted previously; see D. Rose 1996) and also to the detailed geography of social housing which, in Toronto, is often located in suburbs.

Murdie (1998) and Hiebert (1999a) reach similar conclusions about the specificity of immigrant settlement in, respectively, Toronto and Vancouver. As in Montréal, there are pronounced variations in the degree of concentration/segregation between groups. In Vancouver, generally, European-origin immigrants have dispersed to suburbs and have become less concentrated over time. Visible minorities, as we have seen, have likewise become suburbanized but this has *not* been associated with a lessening of their degree of residential concentration (Hiebert 1998, Teixeira 1996).⁸ Therefore, European groups (with important exceptions) tend to conform to traditional theories of immigrant residential behaviour while non-European groups do not. In Toronto, this has meant that inner suburbs (defined by Murdie as the ring of municipalities that surround the old City of Toronto) are now as prone to ethnic residential segregation as the inner city.

⁸ Note that this differential is true even when we control for time of landing. For example, while both European-born and non-European-born individuals landing in Canada in the 1970s, and living in Vancouver in the 1990s, are about equally suburbanized, those of non-European origin are more prone to reside in ethnic

However, all of the authors I have just discussed, in different ways, add a crucial qualification: we cannot simply assume that residential concentration, or even segregation, is related to social deprivation or exclusion (a common assumption within both academic literature and the popular press). Groups with high degrees of concentration, such as Jewish Canadians in all of the cities discussed here, may enjoy high levels of educational attainment and income, just as some groups that are dispersed do not. The notable case in Toronto is the population declaring African and Afro-Caribbean ancestry, which are scattered across the metropolitan area (often in social housing; see below) but suffer high unemployment (Murdie 1998). Ray (1998a) adds that residential patterns, whether concentrated or dispersed, are the result of overlaying systems of choice and constraint and, therefore, must be interpreted with caution. Finally, in a similar vein, I have argued that we should see residential patterns as part of wider set of social relations (such as social interaction and occupational structure), and that segregation, in and of itself, tells us little (Hiebert 1998).⁹ We also should be wary of the logic that social problems of discrimination and exclusion would somehow vanish if ethno-cultural groups were residentially mixed rather than situated in clustered patterns.

Suburbanized residential settlement does not occur in isolation. As in the case of inner-city spaces of immigrant reception, ethno-cultural clusters in the suburbs are served by institutional and commercial services. While I have been somewhat ambivalent about declaring immigrant suburbanization to be a new phenomenon, these associated developments certainly have no precedent. For example, there is no early-20th-century equivalent of the Surrey-Delta Immigrant Services Society, a non-government organization dedicated to providing English language training and a host of other programs to immigrants living more than an hour away from downtown Vancouver. Several geographers have turned their attention to the commercial aspect of suburban immigrant settlement. Wang (1996, 1999) examines the new clusters of Chinese-Canadian-owned shopping centres in the suburbs of

concentrations. I have reached this conclusion by examining special tabulations of census data, which I will present in greater detail in a future paper.

⁹ Though, as Ley (1999) reminds us, the degree of residential segregation is correlated with occupational segmentation and the use of non-official languages in the home. That is, segregation is part of an ensemble of socio-spatial relations.

Toronto. He argues that these developments are based on emerging business practices that are changing some of the basic practices of retailing. In particular, the new shopping centres are typically sold in small units (much like residential condominiums) to individual entrepreneurs, quite a departure from the standard leasehold arrangement used in the rest of North American mall retailing. Lai (1999) emphasizes the same point in his portrayal of the remarkable concentration of nearly 50 'Asian theme malls' that has emerged in the northern part of Richmond, a suburb of Vancouver. As Olds (1996; also see Olds and Yeung 1999) demonstrates, while some of these developments are built by local entrepreneurs, many are the product of overseas investment. That is, they are connected to extensive networks of Chinese capital that extend across the Pacific Ocean, networks that exemplify globalization. Moreover, the new malls are beginning to attract tourists from Asia (Wang 1996), further reinforcing trans-Pacific connections. The new landscapes of Asian retailing therefore manifest the intricate, but poorly understood, relationship between global economic transformation, enhanced trans-continental mobility, and immigration.

Asian theme malls, dedicated as they are to Asian consumers, contain a culturally-specific mix of shops and restaurants and signage designed to appeal to this customer base. According to Qadeer (1998), about 80 percent of the clientele in these plazas and malls in Scarborough, Ontario are of Chinese descent (personal observation over the past several years in Vancouver suggest that the figure would be even higher in this metropolitan area). Predictably, some non-Asian residents have complained about these shopping centres in terms of the extra automobile traffic they generate but, especially, about what they see as their cultural exclusivity (Wang 1999). This criticism presents a potent challenge to planners, who have to weigh the extent to which it is motivated by 'legitimate' concerns (e.g. congestion) vs. racism against minorities.¹⁰ In effect, through this issue—and others enumerated below—planners are being asked to define, in locally-relevant ways, the meaning of Canadian multiculturalism: whose rights (developers and entrepreneurs seeking to serve a particular group, vs. other groups who may feel unwelcome or offended by proposed developments) should prevail?

¹⁰ I place quotes around the word legitimate because the boundary between 'legitimate' and other criticisms is extremely difficult to discern (see J. Rose 1999). Note that geographers Lucia Lo and Valerie Preston are currently engaged in a study of conflict surrounding the development of Asian malls in the Toronto metropolitan area.

This type of conflict reveals the power of geographic reasoning, as it illustrates and illuminates the intertwining of local, national, and international processes.

Geographers have also continued to pursue a long tradition of neighbourhood-scale, local studies of immigrant settlement. Brosseau and his colleagues (1996) sifted through municipal land records to shed light on the rapid redevelopment of Kerrisdale, a neighbourhood in Vancouver, in the 1980s and early '90s. Casting their study within a conceptualization of the built environment and social relations as mutually constitutive, they examine the tensions that arose as the cultural composition of the neighbourhood shifted from primarily British to Chinese in ethnic origin (also see Ley 1998b). Cultural change, in this instance, occurred in tandem with major landscape change, as approximately one in five houses was torn down and replaced—in almost all cases by much larger dwellings. Although there is no definitive data to verify this point, local residents and researchers alike draw a strong connection between these developments and the entry of business immigrants to Greater Vancouver. Brosseau et al. show that the new houses (initially called 'monster houses' by their critics, but later relabeled 'mega-homes' in an attempt to find a more neutral vocabulary) tend to be built in clusters, providing detailed block-by-block maps of the process. Of course this rapid level of redevelopment could only occur in the context of a vigorous pace of real estate sales, and Brosseau et al. consider the question whether Kerrisdale residents who sold their houses acted out of material interest ('cashing in' on windfall profits) or to escape what at least some people perceived as an unwanted 'invasion' of Chinese-Canadians. Given the methodology employed in their study, they are unable to provide a firm answer to this issue.

Ray, Halseth and Johnson (1997) take up the question of racism more fully in their study of Richmond, a mid-city suburban municipality a few kilometres south of Kerrisdale. Ray et al. initiate their analysis by documenting the rate of demographic change in Richmond. While Richmond was originally inhabited by First Peoples, by the early 20th century it had become a low-density landscape of a few scattered farms, a fishing village, and some river-based industry. In the post-war period it was developed as a fairly typical suburb, with rows of quickly-built housing punctuated by arterial shopping thoroughfares. In this era, Richmond was populated by the 'expected' white, family-oriented, middle-class residents, and it retained

that character until the 1980s. In that decade, however, Richmond began to experience dramatic population turnover that continued (at least) to the mid-1990s. Ray et al. trace this change to the 1991 census, and show that immigrants comprised just over one-third of the municipal population. They also examine four affluent subdivisions in Richmond in detail and show that the proportion of home owners with Chinese surnames rose from around 1 percent in 1972 to about 5 percent in 1988 and to over 20 percent in 1992. The entry of Chinese-Canadians into Richmond during this period was associated with frequently articulated resentment and criticism by many local residents. These feelings were especially targeted at pervasive housing redevelopment, where dwellings constructed in the 1950s-70s were torn down and replaced by much larger homes with a more 'boxy' style (the same type as the so-called 'monster houses' of Kerrisdale). Ray et al., in a complex argument that I simply cannot do full justice to here, interpret the criticisms voiced against redevelopment as displaced anger over the growing presence of Chinese-origin people, more than as a manifestation of concern for the local landscape, size of houses, etc. They believe that the extent and tone of local resentment reflected the residents' desire for a familiar, white suburb, the kind of place they grew up in and, at bottom, that these criticisms emerged out of a century-long tradition of racism in British Columbia.

This interpretation is contested by Ley (1997 and 1998b) and John Rose (1999). Ley, examining the Richmond controversy in the context of similar complaints in Shaughnessy and Kerrisdale (older suburbs that have been engulfed by subsequent urban development) argues that the connection made by Ray et al. between the history of racism in greater Vancouver/BC and contemporary opposition to landscape change is unproven. Instead, he points to a history of anti-growth sentiment in both areas, countering that it may lie behind the anger at housing redevelopment as much as—perhaps even instead of—lingering racism. John Rose, based on a fairly large number of interviews with long-term Richmond residents, makes a similar point. Many of Rose's interviewees raised the types of objections noted by Ray et al. but, significantly, long-term residents of Japanese and Chinese backgrounds held broadly similar views about recent immigrants to those voiced by people of European descent. That is, they too saw the influx of new non-English-speaking immigrants and the associated additional

traffic and landscape changes in negative terms. Rose asks, can we call it racism when whites make these comments if they are also made by non-whites?

This debate over the meaning of racism has only begun, in the sense that several authors have published different interpretations but have not yet engaged with each-others' views. It is worth noting, though, that the seemingly opposed interpretations of racism as a response to cultural change may, in part, be an artifact of research methodologies used in these studies. To build a portrait of 'host' community feeling, Ray et al. examined letters written to Richmond newspapers, and found numerous examples of stinging criticism directed at new immigrants (in fact, they note that newspaper editors screened out the most extreme authors). They found that these letters coincided with a history of ethnocentric views and conclude that they are an extension of them. Rose, on the other hand, interviewed some 50 couples who had lived in Richmond throughout the period of accelerated change. Questions arise, given these methods of research. Are people who send letters to newspapers representative of the wider population? Are people likely to voice racist views in an interview setting? Also, if researchers interact directly with interviewees, do they not develop a sense of empathy that could prevent them from characterizing their subjects as racists? I do not pose these questions to devalue, in any way, the methodological choices or interpretations made by researchers, but simply to point out that the choice of method is not incidental to the product of research.

Housing new Canadians

Just three years ago, Kobayashi and Peake wrote that the literature on immigrants and housing in Canada is scant and that “[m]ost of the information we have [on this subject] is anecdotal” (1997: p. 27). Since then, geographers have begun filling some of the key gaps in our knowledge of the way immigrants participate in Canadian urban housing markets. Lapointe and Murdie (1996) provide a general portrait based on the 1991 census and a series of focus groups held in Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver. They concentrate on housing tenure, noting that households ‘headed’ by immigrants, on average, are more likely to own their homes than those with Canadian-born parents, despite the fact that immigrant incomes tend to be lower. While this trait is not universal among all groups—it is most pronounced among immigrants born in Europe and Asia and least among those born in Latin American and the

Caribbean—it appears to be related to a strong attachment to ownership, articulated in focus groups across the three cities examined in the study. Lapointe and Murdie conclude that immigrants are able to realize their desire to purchase housing by pooling resources within families, in part by living in larger households that may include two families. While this strategy is successful, it causes those who use it special problems in the rental market while they are accumulating capital for a down-payment. That is, landlords tend to discriminate against large households, and most social housing units are too small to accommodate extended families.

Ray (1998a), in the most comprehensive analysis of immigration and housing to date, brings together research from the census, questionnaire surveys and interviews. In his study, funded by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, he explores the complex interplay between the spatially varied housing markets of Toronto and Montréal, the residential geography of immigrant groups in the two cities, and their consumption of housing. He is particularly interested in the ability of immigrants to purchase homes, and shows how this varies between socio-economic segments of the immigrant population, as well as between different birthplace groups. Examining four selected groups in more detail, Ray shows, for example, why so many Afro-Caribbeans reside in Toronto's social housing high rise developments. Throughout, he highlights the dynamic between constraint and choice in the housing decision. This issue comes to life particularly in his analysis of 'strong' and 'weak' social networks and their influence on the housing search process. These networks are, respectively, made up of kin and friends on the one hand and neighbours on the other, and play important roles in providing both knowledge about the market and material support. However, as Ray emphasizes, the extent and depth of these networks varies significantly between different groups, yielding a complex landscape of housing outcomes.

Whereas Ray provides a thorough, but mainly descriptive inventory of the immigration/housing scene, and poses fundamental questions about equity and appropriate policies to improve affordability and access, Murdie, Teixeira (both geographers) and two colleagues from the University of Toronto Faculty of Social Work attempt to model the housing search process, and its outcomes (Murdie et al. 1996, 1997). In this ambitious conceptualization they outline the interaction between what they call 'institutional

arrangements' (housing and labour markets, the welfare state, and so on), 'differential incorporation' (groups gain access to housing in different, unequal, ways), and the housing trajectories of individual households. Like Ray, Murdie et al. are engaged in a large-scale research project that will utilize a variety of methods to illuminate the various parts of their model. Specifically, they focus on the Jamaican, Somali, and Polish populations in Toronto, and highlight the multiple barriers (language, size of household, gender, income, etc.) faced by immigrants in uneven ways. Minority groups in particular face "fewer locational choices within the city, overcrowding, and overpayment for accommodation." (1996: p. 189).

In contrast to these large, comparative projects, two geographers have published important work on the housing situation of specific immigrant groups. These studies illustrate many of the points made above, but also add new dimensions because of their close scale of analysis. Teixeira and Murdie (1997) investigate the importance of Portuguese-origin real estate agents as gatekeepers in Toronto's housing industry through a telephone survey. They reach ambiguous results. On the one hand, Portuguese house buyers rely on the services of co-ethnic agents much more than the control group surveyed in the study. However, while these agents had a strong influence on some aspects of their clients' behaviour (e.g. steering them to Portuguese-owned mortgage brokers), they did not serve to strengthen the degree of residential concentration of the Portuguese population. This was the case despite the fact that the agents tended to show buyers more houses in Portuguese enclaves than outside them. Owusu (1998, 1999) examines the residential trajectory of Toronto's Ghanaian community, part of Canada's under-researched African immigrant population (also see Murdie 1998 for a brief discussion of Somalis in Toronto). In contrast with most other immigrant groups, Ghanaians have one of the lowest rates of home ownership in Toronto. Aggregated spatial data also suggest that Ghanaians are scattered throughout the metropolitan area. However, shifting to a much finer scale of resolution reveals an extraordinary degree of micro-level clustering: over 30 percent of the population resides in just 17 Enumeration Areas (out of about 7500) in greater Toronto! Typically, these households live in high rise tower blocks that are owned by private companies who charge below-market rents in return for reduced mortgage rates, a program funded by the federal government. Most Ghanaians have not lived in Toronto long enough to gain access to government-provided social housing (waiting lists

tend to be very long for this type of accommodation). Their residential location, therefore, reflects the distribution of limited dividend housing, which tends to be scattered through the suburbs in small clusters. Owusu also offers an explanation for the limited degree of home ownership among Ghanaians: in addition to the fact that they are poorly placed in the labour market, most expect to return to their country of birth. Purchasing housing, therefore, freezes assets that are intended to be mobile. Finally, Owusu notes that these tendencies are not universal: there are a relatively small number of Ghanaians who do not participate in co-ethnic networks, intend to remain in Canada, and live apart from the concentrations described here. That is, residential location is, in part, related to the motivations for migration and degree of community participation.

All of the research covered so far examines the way immigrants enter the housing markets of Canadian cities, in effect assuming that these markets exist prior to their arrival. To some extent, of course, that is true. However, by participating in housing markets as investors, buyers, sellers, and landlords, immigrants also *influence* the market. This important topic is only barely explored in the Canadian literature. Olds (1996) and Ley and Olds (1999) discuss the emergence of a “global residential property market” by examining the substantial flow of investment (mainly but not exclusively from Hong Kong) into Vancouver’s housing market during the 1980s and ‘90s. In Vancouver, this form of investment ranges in scale from the purchase of individual single-family dwellings to the multi-million dollar acquisition and development of the north shore of False Creek, and is generally associated with a network of Chinese-origin capitalists who operate global businesses. Ley and Tutchener (1999) investigate the question of immigration and the property market more directly, by assembling an extensive database of residential property transactions and a variety of other variables. They are particularly interested in the degree of correlation between the rate of immigration and changes in average house prices. In Vancouver, they find that these two variables were strongly correlated (an astonishing $r = .98$) between 1986 and 1996, a time of substantial immigration. The relationship in Toronto was statistically far weaker (in fact insignificant), essentially because large numbers of immigrants continued to settle in the metropolitan area during the deep recession—and associated market collapse—of the early 1990s. However,

Ley and Tutchener argue that the lack of correlation is spurious; they believe that the relationship between immigration and the housing market is weaker there because of Toronto's particular mix of immigrants, which contains a much higher ratio of refugees (who tend to be poor and unable to purchase houses for many years after their arrival). Vancouver, in contrast, receives few refugees but many business immigrants, who tend to enter the housing market—often at the top end—very quickly. They also suggest that Toronto's real estate crash would have been much worse in the absence of sustained immigrant landings in that region during the recession, again emphasizing the point that international connections are vital to the local housing markets of global cities. In fact, they believe that the housing markets of Toronto and Vancouver, the primary immigrant reception cities at the present time, have become more intimately linked to global events and migration flows than local and national ones (e.g. unemployment and interest rates).

Immigrants and the labour market

As in the area of housing, geographers have turned their attention to the participation of immigrants in Canadian urban labour markets and the ways that immigrants reshape these markets. Much of this work falls under the general rubric of labour market segmentation theory, which I have discussed in general terms in another paper (Hiebert 1997). I have also presented an overview of ethnic and gender patterns in the labour markets of Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver (Hiebert 1997 and 1999b), along with a consideration of how these are affected by immigration, based on special tabulations of 1991 census data. The patterns revealed by the census are exceedingly complex. There appears to be an unambiguous triple jeopardy situation where women, immigrants, and visible minorities all receive lower incomes, relative to their level of education, compared with white males born in Canada. However, even this is complicated by the fact that immigrants entering Canada come from a wide spectrum of class positions. Thus while the incomes of recent immigrants, on average, are lower than those of non-immigrants, these averages conceal huge variation. The distribution of ethnic groups in the labour market is similarly ambiguous. On one level, people of British and northwestern European descent are over-represented in the most remunerative occupations, while most visible minorities are over-represented in much less desirable types of

work. On another level, though, the situation between these two extremes is, to say the least, messy. Blacks are more spread across the labour market than might be expected, for example, while people of Portuguese origin are highly concentrated (in construction, manufacturing and janitorial work). Kobayashi's (1996) comparison of the trajectories of Italian- and Japanese-Canadians is also instructive in this respect. While the two groups were similarly positioned in the labour market prior to the Second World War, Japanese-Canadians experienced acute discrimination during the war, culminating in the confiscation of their property and their internment. However, since the war, people of Japanese descent have achieved rapid economic upward mobility and now earn, on average, more than British-Canadians.

Moreover, the specific occupational patterns of individual groups vary internally. The situation of immigrants from Mainland China illustrates this point well. In recent years, immigrants from that country have entered Canada under the family reunification, assisted relative, and independent categories, as well as under the refugee program (see Norcliffe and Liu 1996). Little wonder that Chinese-Canadians have a variegated pattern of labour market participation. In some cases, this in-group variation coincides with particular urban labour markets. Vietnamese Canadians, for example, have different jobs in Toronto and Montréal, a fact that reflects complicated historical geographies of migration (e.g. middle-class, francophone Vietnamese professionals tended to settle in Montréal, refugees in Toronto) and, in turn, the changing selection criteria used by Canada over time (Hiebert 1999b).

Murdie (1998) focuses on the Toronto case, and is particularly concerned with the response of immigrants to economic recession and industrial restructuring. Groups, such as Portuguese- and Indo-Canadians, who are disproportionately occupied in the manufacturing sector, are especially vulnerable to these circumstances. Preston and Giles (1997) also explore the issue of immigrant exposure to changing economic conditions, and highlight the situation of women in Toronto in the 1981-1991 period. They identify three clusters of immigrant women in the labour market: those from northwestern European countries who have generally desirable positions in the labour market and above-average incomes; those from southeastern Europe who have the lowest average incomes and are locked into occupations in manufacturing and personal services; and those from 'non-traditional' source countries who have middle-level incomes, on average, but a bifurcated labour market profile

with many in both desirable and undesirable jobs. They also note that the effects of restructuring and immigrant selection policy are impossible to disentangle in their study of industrial change. The same authors, in another paper (Giles and Preston 1996) argue that restructuring is intensifying the scope of the informal sector, which in turn is causing a resurgence in the number of women engaged in homework. Based on a sample of a dozen detailed interviews, they conclude that the shift to homework has been, on balance, beneficial for Portuguese-origin women in Toronto but has made life worse for Chinese-Canadian women.

One of the most easily identifiable patterns in the Canadian labour market is the preponderance of immigrant women as childcare workers and domestic servants (Hiebert 1999b). As a number of authors have shown, the Canadian government has facilitated this situation by creating the Foreign Domestic Movement Program in 1981, redefined as the Live-in Caregiver Program in 1992. Well over 100,000 overseas workers have come to Canada under this program, many because of its provision allowing them to apply for landed immigrant status two years after their arrival (Stiell and England 1997, England and Stiell 1997, Pratt in consultation with the Philippine Women Centre 1998 and 1999). In contrast to the statistical methodologies that dominate the general studies of labour market segmentation, researchers have employed focus groups, participant observation, and interviews to investigate the characteristics of domestic work. England and Stiell (1997) and Pratt (1997, 1999) show how assumptions built into the Live-in Caregiver Program and, significantly, the activities of agents who organize the movement of domestic workers from overseas, reflect and reinforce racial stereotypes. The program is designed, of course, to recruit workers for jobs Canadians themselves do not want. The requirement that domestic workers live in the homes of their employers also establishes potentially exploitative work situations, where nannies are frequently asked to provide more hours than they are paid and perform tasks not in their formal contracts. Also, the fact that the overwhelming majority of individuals who take up these undesirable positions are women from the global south reinforces widely-held stereotypes about women of colour. Further, as England and Stiell demonstrate, recruitment agencies make clear distinctions between European-origin nannies (portrayed as stern and intellectually stimulating) vs. those from third-world countries (portrayed as unskilled despite

the fact that many have tertiary education, but caring). Pratt (1997), however, argues that the stereotypes used by nanny agencies are ambiguous and have complex effects (e.g., British nannies as capable, but unwilling to do extra housework and also judgmental of the families they work for). All of the authors agree, though, based on interviews with nannies and agencies, that the power relations between employers and domestic workers are heavily weighted against the latter.

The other aspect of immigrant participation in the economy that has captured the interest of Canadian geographers is the propensity for immigrants to become self employed. This is a major research topic in the United States and Razin and Langlois (1996) have made an effort to compare the dynamics of entrepreneurialism between the two countries. They find, using the public-use sample of the 1991 census, that the general rate of self employment in Canada is slightly lower than in the US, but that immigrants in both countries are over-represented in this type of work. Also, certain groups—Koreans and Jews, for example—have high rates of self employment in both countries while others—e.g. Latin Americans—do not. Langlois and Razin (1997) continue their analysis by examining the differences in the level of immigrant entrepreneurship between Canadian cities, and find that immigrants are most prone to this form of work in two types of metropolitan areas: those that have high rates of self employment among non-immigrants; and small, peripheral CMAs where immigrants are a tiny fraction of the population. They speculate that, in the first case, immigrants are simply responding to economic opportunity while, in the second, they may be forced to create their own opportunities. That is, self employment becomes an alternative for those individuals who are treated poorly in the ‘regular’ labour market. Teixeira (1998) expands this point, by arguing that visible minorities are usually propelled into self employment by discrimination while European groups (in his case Portuguese) gravitate to entrepreneurialism as a means of upward mobility.

Walton-Roberts and Hiebert (1997) explore the family dimensions of immigrant self employment among Indo-Canadian house builders in greater Vancouver. They find that, contrary to the myth of entrepreneurial independence, most small business owners rely heavily on their spouses and children for labour. This has both positive and negative effects: while family-run firms are highly competitive and act as entrepreneurial incubators, these businesses

also often lead to family tensions. Moreover, in the residential construction industry, widespread self employment has led to intense competition and extremely narrow profit margins. Thus, far from solving the problems of discrimination and/or exploitation experienced in the 'regular' labour market, self employment, for many, simply generates a different set of difficulties and often leads to self-exploitation.

Immigrants and poverty

Research on polarization, poverty and immigration is brought together in a series of papers by Ley and Smith. In the first of these (1997a) they summarize the large, and polemical, body of literature that has developed around the 'underclass' concept in the United States and, to a lesser extent, Europe. While scholars differ in their explanation of the process, most agree that the extent and depth of poverty is increasing in the US. Moreover, they find a depressing set of associations between minority groups, low educational attainment, high unemployment, the disintegration of traditional family units, and poverty—and claim that this has become a self-perpetuating system, especially in American inner cities. Based on an elaborate set of custom census tabulations, Ley and Smith show that this ensemble of characteristics was, to a degree, apparent in Canadian inner cities in the early 1970s but had virtually vanished by 1991. By that time, as we have seen, gentrification had led to more variegated inner city landscapes and more dispersed geographies of low income households. That is, there is almost as much poverty in Canadian cities as there is in the US, but it is considerably more dispersed in Canada. They explore the place of immigrants in this emerging social geography and find weak to modest correlation coefficients between the proportion of immigrants and the incidence of low income in census tracts. The association between immigration and poverty is strongest when newcomers—those who arrived in the 1980s—are isolated, especially in Toronto (1997a and b). However, based on the results of a multiple regression analysis undertaken at the tract level, they argue that the distribution of poverty is primarily established by a set of socio-economic processes that are relatively independent of immigration. Variables associated with education, income, and so on contribute significantly to the regression model while immigrant and minority status do not.

Ley (1999) adds an important qualification. After showing that several forms of 'social isolation' (residential segregation, labour market segmentation, use of a non-official language in the home, and the prevalence of in-group marriages) are strongly inter-correlated, Ley emphasizes that the relationship between immigration and poverty, while weak in aggregate terms, is stronger for members of disaggregated minority groups. Significantly, though, even these results are ambiguous—they hold when incomes are measured on an individual level but not when they are measured for households. This is another example of the income-pooling strategy commonly used by immigrants.

Immigrants and community

Researchers in Montréal, more than anywhere else in Canada, have made an effort to understand the formation and role of immigrant networks and social ties. Damaris Rose (1997) sets the scene for this work by explaining the peculiar situation in Québec, where the francophone population sees itself as a North American minority struggling to maintain its language and culture, but is also a 'host' to immigrants from a variety of other cultures. As she demonstrates, multiculturalism, a term used universally in English-speaking Canada, has different resonances in Québec, where the provincial government has adopted a somewhat more assimilationist approach to immigrant settlement than its counterparts in other provinces. This political stance, in combination with sharply constrained budgets, has led the government to alter its expectations of (and financial support for) immigrant settlement organizations.

The vast majority of immigrants to Québec settle in Montréal, increasingly in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods where no single group dominates (Rose 1997; also see Marois 1998, and the internet atlas produced by Archambault et al. 1999). Researchers have studied the intricate process of settlement and integration in Montréal by focusing on the social networks established by immigrant women. As Rose (1997) argues, this effort follows the understanding that women typically perform the 'work' of integration by taking a primary role in raising children, and interacting with neighbours, schools, and settlement organizations. Chicoine et al. (1997) introduce a research project involving interviews with approximately 50 immigrant women from four selected groups (Latin American, Polish, South Asian and Vietnamese). They ask women to reconstruct their network of contacts of 'strong' (family,

kin, and friends) and ‘weak’ (acquaintances, neighbours who are not close friends) ties. Chicoine et al. show that these networks vary between different ethno-cultural groups, that, for example, South Asian women rely primarily on strong ties for support while Polish women have much more extensive networks of weak ties. The authors of this study contend that the type and geographical range of these networks is crucial to the integration process. In particular, immigrants who have few weak ties tend to form closely-knit but isolated groups, while those with many weak ties integrate more fully with other ethno-cultural groups. There is a clear geography to these social networks. Chicoine et al. find that groups in more peripheral locations in metropolitan Montréal are more insular than those who live closer to the inner core—demonstrating, again, that suburbanization is not necessarily related to assimilation. This finding corroborates a point made by Preston (1998), that suburbanized immigrant women are often isolated and face considerable difficulty entering the labour market.

This issue is explored more fully by Rose et al. (1998) and Carrasco et al. (1999), where the experiences of the Latin American women they interviewed are highlighted. In these papers, the ways that weak ties are acquired are explained, along with an examination of the importance of neighbourhoods as settings for the development of casual contacts and information exchange. The authors conclude that women who develop diversified networks of both strong and weak ties are able, ironically, to exert the greatest degree of independence in their settlement process.

Séguin (1997) considers a different aspect of multi-ethnic neighbourhoods, focusing on the identity of ethnic groups and tensions between them. She criticizes the long tradition of urban social geography inspired by the Chicago School, which classifies neighbourhoods according to their largest ethnic group, arguing that this logic silences and excludes smaller ethnic groups in multicultural settings. Séguin instead calls for a redefinition of territoriality that acknowledges, or rather emphasizes, ethnic diversity. This is a tall order, given the tremendous hold that the ethnicity/territory link has on both the academic and popular imaginations (e.g., the growing celebration, complete with heritage signs, of places like Little Italy, Punjabi Market, and Chinatown).

Cultural complexities

A number of studies of immigrant settlement in Canada fall under the general rubric of the 'new cultural geography', taking inspiration from recent developments in post-colonial and feminist theory. Collectively, as we have seen in research on domestic workers by Pratt, England and Stiell, these authors advocate an approach where social and spatial processes are seen as mutually constitutive, and where social identities are understood as dynamic and multiple (also see Ruddick 1996; Creese, Dyck and McLaren (1999) use a similar approach in discussing the changing nature of the family among immigrants to Vancouver). Pratt (1998), for example, engages cultural theory to make a similar point to Séguin's (in the previous paragraph), that the traditional portrayal of the city as a 'mosaic' of cultures fixes people in terms of one aspect of their identity (ethnicity) but glosses over others. Hyndman and Walton-Roberts (1999) use the concept of transnationalism to investigate the settlement of Burmese refugees in Vancouver. They contrast transnational and traditional push-pull perspectives on immigration and, quoting Goldberg, argue that immigrant communities should be conceptualized as "dense fields consisting of people, money, goods, and information that are constituted and maintained by migrants over time, across space, and through circuitry which repeatedly cross borders." (p6). From this vantage point, borders between nation states are seen as "spaces of possibility" as well as spaces of control, and diasporic groups are seen as having identities based on their experience of multiple places (often 'global cities'). That is, identities are formed by *movement* as much as they are by the long-term relationship between people and place that is usually celebrated by geographers. One implication of this process is the extended network of political and economic linkages that have emerged between Canada and other parts of the world. For example, many temporary residents and immigrants to Canada send remittances home, contributing significantly to the economy of certain regions of India and China. In the Burmese case, economic transfers are accompanied by a political dimension: Burmese people living in Canada actively support human rights movements in their 'homeland'.

In another essay inspired by post-colonial theory, Walton-Roberts (1999) explores a controversial incident that occurred in Surrey, British Columbia, in 1993 when Sikh veterans were prohibited from entering a Legion hall because their turbans (seen as 'hats') were

interpreted as disrespectful. Yet, as Walton-Roberts shows, the British military bureaucracy was instrumental in reshaping and formalizing Sikhism in the late 19th century and in so doing reinforced the use of the turban as a symbol of the ‘fighting Sikh’. In fact, the first Sikhs to visit Vancouver were brought by the British and displayed in a military parade. The identification of Sikhs as loyal soldiers of the empire was especially prominent in the First World War, when some 100,000 served in the imperial forces. Thus, “the British were instrumental in *enforcing* the very symbols of religious adherence that less than a century later would be the focus of *exclusion* from the realm of military honour and remembrance in Surrey.” (p25). Walton-Roberts therefore places the Surrey incident in a long history of colonial relations, where the dominant group has maintained its power by occasionally ‘changing the rules’ to serve its own purposes. This is an important insight: the cultural tensions of today, which might appear as simple expressions of racism, often have complex antecedents. Walton-Roberts (1998) extends this point, adding another layer of complexity to her argument, by investigating the multiple meanings of the turban within the Indo-Canadian community itself. On the one hand, the turban is often seen as a mark of Sikh fundamentalism by those who choose not to wear it; but on the other it has become a symbol of Sikh pride and is even used by some—e.g., in real estate brochures—as a marketing tool.

Post-colonial and feminist scholars also challenge researchers to consider the relationship between the methodologies they employ, the subjects of their research, and the political consequences of their scholarship. D. Rose (1998), for example, presents the findings of a Metropolis workshop devoted to the salience of gender in immigration studies. Participants of the event—academics, policy makers and activists—advocated models of research that give a larger role to the people who are being studied. There are two prominent examples of this approach within recent geographical work. Pratt conducts research on Filipina nannies with a non-government organization that advocates on behalf of the group (Pratt, in collaboration with the Philippine Women Centre 1998 and 1999), a research arrangement that has brought the practical issues of the Live-in Caregiver program into sharp focus, but has also allowed for considerable theoretical reflection. Similarly, Hyndman and Walton-Roberts (1999), in their study of Vancouver’s Burmese refugee community, recruited members of the group to act as research assistants. In addition to informing the research process by incorporating the

experience of ‘insiders’, they see their approach as part of a trajectory of community development: their project provided a small amount of employment and income to a group suffering chronic unemployment and also gave research assistants valuable training on how to document their experiences. Yielding even a small portion of academic independence in a research project is never easy, of course, and all of the authors discussed in this paragraph have reflected on the effort required to form ‘real’ research partnerships.

Conclusion

The published output of Canadian geographers on immigration and the city is impressive, especially when judged against the relatively small number of researchers involved. Clearly, this amount of work reflects the salience of immigration as one of the fundamental socio-political issues of our time. There are some obvious gaps in scholarship, though. Whereas the volume of research in Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver is high, the experience of immigrants in other urban centres has hardly been addressed in the time period covered here.¹¹ Most importantly, the situation of medium-sized Canadian cities with relatively high numbers of immigrants is being largely ignored; for example, as of 1996 there were 170,000 immigrants living in Calgary, 160,000 in Ottawa-Hull and Edmonton, and nearly 150,000 in Hamilton—with virtually no coverage in the published literature in recent years. We also know little about the experience of refugees. Further, while geographers have paid some attention to the changing role of the state in providing services to immigrants (e.g., Morris 1997, Murdie 1998), this crucial topic has been under-emphasized.

Finally, the geographic specificity of immigration-related research in Canada is both a strength and weakness. As we have seen, researchers in Montréal have made particular efforts to understand multi-ethnic neighbourhoods and the formation of immigrant communities; researchers in Toronto have emphasized issues of social polarization and immigrant access to housing; in Vancouver, the social geography of settlement, immigrant impacts on the property market, and work inspired by cultural theory have all been at the

¹¹ There are some notable exceptions, but they are mainly historical surveys rather than analyses of the contemporary situation of immigrant settlement. See Spina and Lehr (1997) on Winnipeg and Saarinen (1997 and 1999) on Sudbury’s Finnish community.

forefront of research. A few topics are pursued in at least two places, notably studies of immigrants in the labour market (Toronto and Vancouver), gentrification (Toronto and Vancouver), general surveys of immigrants and the housing market (Montréal and Toronto), and suburbanization (Toronto and Vancouver). Only a few studies look at all three metropolitan areas together. These different research concentrations illustrate the familiar geographical claim that context is important, that research cultures are, at bottom, local creations. However, the fact that distinct issues are highlighted in different cities means that geographers are rarely able to generalize beyond local experiences. While this lends us credibility as local experts, it also tends to limit the impact of our research in national-level policy debates.

Turning again to what *has* been accomplished, the work by geographers is based on a remarkably diverse set of methodologies that include participant observation, structured and unstructured interviews, focus groups, landscape evaluation, media studies, questionnaires, descriptive data analysis, and statistical hypothesis testing. One clear trend is to employ several of these approaches within the same study in order to develop multiple perspectives on a particular issue. Another common element in this large body of work is an impatience with received theories about ethnicity, immigration and urban structure. As I have tried to show, the standard finding in contemporary studies of residential settlement is that traditional models of city-suburb differences are outdated (if they were ever relevant in the first place). Similarly, most of the authors investigating the labour market have concluded that human capital theory is of marginal relevance in the current context of ethnocultural diversity. Basically, the grand theories of the past have given way to a strong emphasis on contingency and complexity.

However, in this skepticism of meta-theory another, quite intractable, problem is becoming apparent. As we saw in the incipient debate around racism in Richmond, scholars have not agreed on the basic question of how racism should be recognized. Similarly, I have made the point (Hiebert 1997) that we have no clear conception of what exactly an equitable labour market would look like (i.e., does equity mean that all groups are distributed evenly across all occupations, that all groups earn equivalent wages, that each individual receives an 'appropriate' return for her or his human capital, or something else?). And Preston (1998) has noted that we have never really asked the question, What does residential integration, in

the context of a multicultural society, look like (all groups evenly distributed, a rich variety of cultural enclaves, or something else?)? There are no straightforward answers to any of these questions, and yet they are absolutely central. How can we discern inequity in the labour market without a clear definition of equity? If we accept the Canadian government's recent invitation to academics to play a larger role in policy development, we will increasingly be required to give advice on when and how intervention should occur. For example, it is easy to see that research documenting the differential access of various groups to the housing market is relevant to policy makers but much more difficult, in the absence of a broad vision of how the market operates, to design specific policy initiatives that will improve the situation. Nearly all of the authors surveyed in this review have, in one way or another, connected their research with a desire for social justice.¹² Ironically, the pursuit of this ambition may require us to move beyond emphasizing contingency and complexity and return to the 'big picture' conceptualization that has become so unfashionable. From this vantage point, the momentum of scholarship generated by Canadian geographers, based on an engagement with pressing social issues, and increasingly done in consultation with policy makers and community organizations, is an excellent step in the direction of academic relevance.

¹² This concern takes many forms, including worry over increasing social polarization, media portrayals of immigrants, racism, etc.

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Note: those with an asterisk have been funded, in whole or part, by the Metropolis project, or one of its federal government partners. Most of these studies can be found on the websites of the relevant Metropolis centres (Montréal: im.metropolis.net; Toronto: ceris.metropolis.net; Vancouver : riim.metropolis.net).

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